

# The Trinity Review



Volume CVII Number 2  
*Spring 1994*

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*Tom Weinacht*

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Thanks to The Coach House Printing Company for printing this issue!  
**BONUS CONTEST:** Identify the two people listed above whose names were spelt incorrectly last issue, and win a **WARM GLOW OF SATISFACTION!!**



Martin Multamaki

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**echoing**

tonight I dream  
of all the things I forgot  
learning to beat two stones together  
learning to make an echo

*Brooke Clark*

o grave ones  
the joke will be on you  
remember the pharaohs—  
once mighty, once splendid  
buried in solemnity  
now shrivelled and withered  
almost ridiculous—pathetic  
still awaiting the afterlife.

*Marissa Halil*

**Poem for Zsuzsa**

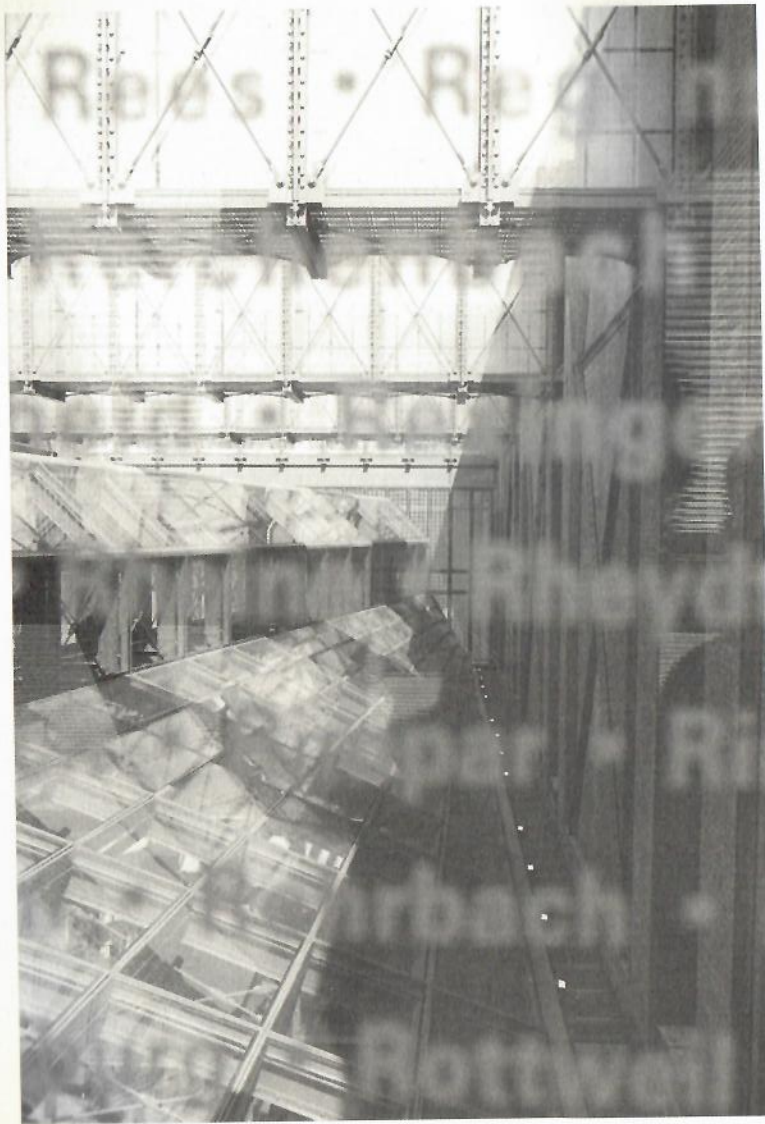
Fall comes here, too. "At the same time, yes,"  
I told my ride, hitch-hiking out to Győr.  
The art of speech: short words, the lucky guess  
at what was meant, continuing though unsure.

To Győr, to meet your family and see  
you, days sooner than I'd planned, because  
my ticket back was fixed, and suddenly  
my face was turned away from where I was

to where I am. It's fall. The thirteenth floor  
of Robarts library, books all about,  
and none of them knows what I want to say.

Soon, through the mail, this will be at your door.  
I'd rather I were sending you a shout  
from your front gate, back from far away.

*Hugh Thomas*



Witness

Kyle Milne

## The Hype Machine

*Just possibly the greatest story you will ever read!*

Kelley had worked at the Hype Machine for over three years now, and had found that the job wasn't nearly as exciting as everyone had said. This was partially because he dealt mainly with the raw product end of the Machine, and only occasionally had business in the more exciting areas. He'd heard, however, that jobs in those areas were so exhilarating that the workers had to pass a fitness test every two months.

When the product came through Kelley's section, however, it was still almost entirely greyish-brown lumps, perhaps with one or two oddities but largely indistinguishable aside from the attached tag with the I.D. number on it. Kelley absent-mindedly picked up one of the lumps as it glided past him on the conveyor belt, read its I.D. number, and a memory twiggled.

Unless he was mistaken, he knew the creator of JRX-3828/C.

Kelley possessed a near-photographic memory (although he often told people it was perfectly accurate, and only slightly more rarely he exaggerated greatly the minuteness of detail he could remember) and this was another reason he had wound up in this area of the Machine, dealing primarily with I.D. codes. JRX would be the Creator Index Designator...

"Lynn."

He put the lump back.

Lynn's lump (that is, allegedly Lynn's lump; after all, the creator may turn out to have absolutely no connection to this story whatever) continued down the conveyor belt into the Stage One Room, where the oddities were smoothed down by giant hydraulic tentacles to accommodate the processes of the Machine. From there a sophisticated computer program selected an appropriate Publicity Template which could fit around the lump. The lump then passed into the largest automated room in the Machine, where humans were forbidden to set foot, which contained wonders that had stood upon the Earth since Time Itself had Risen from the Brain of Space—and then—

Kelley was on the phone to Lynn.

"Hello, Lynn? Kelley here. Yes. Yes, the Hype Machine's never been better. Yes. Well, I was wondering if you'd sent anything our way recently. Hm? Ah, I thought so. I spotted it going along the conveyor. Yes. Yes. Yes. Were you aware that it had three or four oddities all on one side like that? What? Oh, on purpose. No, it's no problem. I'm sure the computer can deal with it. Just that, well, it's my job to check on things like that. But it that's how you want your project to be considered, that's what we'll do. Yes. No. No."

A long pause.

"Yes. I understand perfectly."

A shorter pause.

"I couldn't agree more. Look, we're dedicated to taking in as many projects as possible and distribute them to the public as successfully as possible. But in the process, nobody's integrity is harmed, that is Priority One. I don't have to remind you of the Machine's Guarantee."

The Hype Machine was a vast, sprawling complex that looked like a great many cubic sections jammed together by a giant child. This was not far from the truth, since the original Machine was much smaller and the computers had been programmed to add extensions as the situation required. The computers, not being very emotionally mature, tended to build in a rather haphazard fashion. But the most astonishing feature of the structure, viewed from the exterior, and from the air above, was the central pillar which jutted out from the squat Machine and climbed up hundreds, thousands of feet and ended in the most awe-inspiring—

Lynn's lump (the reader will note with satisfaction that this use of the possessive has been verified, and as such the lump may be safely referred to as Lynn's for the remainder of Time, without unnecessary reflection or digression) was now midway through the Hype Machine, and was being fitted for Attention-Grabbers. This was not done by computer, but was the painstaking work of human craftsmanship. In charge of this department was one of the most fearsome men ever to walk the face of the Earth, and his name was—

Kelley stepped out of his office to survey the department floor. Brenda, a co-worker and friend, approached him.

"Just admiring the layout, eh?" she said.

"That's right," Kelley said. "Isn't this place well constructed?"

"It is. And so visually appealing."

"I agree. Can you think of a better place to work?"

"Not at all. Say," Brenda produced an envelope, "Message for you."

Kelley went to read it in his office.

Kelley's office was thirty feet by twenty feet and decorated with blue wallpaper. It had a thick grass-green carpet which was heavily cushioned so as to provide maximum comfort while pacing back and forth making important decisions. There was one large desk, and seven chairs scattered about. The desk was genuine wood, lightly coloured with a few knots. The chairs were simply crafted, but durable and with a quiet, unassuming style. The room was brightly lit by four lightbulbs suspended in the exact centre of the ceiling. Kelley's desk was neat, and as he sat down to read the message he did not glance out the window overlooking the department floor. He did, however, momentarily reflect on its aesthetic satisfactions.

The message told him that there had been some trouble with Lynn's lump (note, reader, the complete lack of any need for a digression). The message produced a mixed reaction in Kelley. On one hand, there might be a troublesome situation; but on the other hand, the message was from Finishing Touches. At least he was going to the exciting end of the Machine.

Absentmindedly he turned the message over and wrote 'Lynn' in large doodling letters with his green pen.

En route from his office to the transport tube, Kelley carefully folded the message into a small plane and lobbed it towards a trash can. He continued walking and did not see the paper hit the rim, fly woozily for about ten feet, and land on the conveyor belt. By the time he took one last look around just before leaving forever, it had been sucked into the deeper workings of the Machine.

In Attention-Grabber Attachment, Gregory Solomon Kothek (one of the most fearsome men ever to walk the Earth) roared in anger, because

something had happened to vex him sorely—an event which, quite plainly, was amongst the most hideous events ever to occur there—

Kelley rode the transport tube for half an hour, maybe slightly more, since the transport tube travelled very quickly indeed and there exists the slight possibility that relativistic time dilation was involved, before arriving at Finishing Touches.

Sgt. Zinkofski greeted him. Kelley shook his hand as one who does not know he will soon be dead.

Sgt. Rt. Rev. Zinkofski and Kelley locked eyes, perhaps for the final time before the end of the Universe. “Well, Kelley, we’ve got a slight mess for you to deal with here,” the Sergeant growled.

Kelley nodded, and somewhere mountains shook. “Where’s the problem?” he replied, his heroic tones reverberating deeply throughout the core of his being.

“Just a moment,” Sergeant Admiral Fleet Commander Conqueror of Mars Zinkofski vociferated. “Henderson!” he bellowed mightier than half the storms in all of France. “Can’t you get that damned computer under control!?!?”

Henderson shouted something in reply, which was sadly lost to mankind forever, dissipated into the silent void which crushes f

“That’s got it, I think,” Henderson said.

“Right, that’s something,” Zinkofski said. “As you can see, Kelley, we’ve been experiencing some difficulties here.”

Kelley nodded. “Did something not go through properly?”

Mr. Zinkofski was grim. “Damned straight. Look at this over here.”

It had indeed been Lynn’s project, although it was now barely recognizable in amongst the ill-fated Hype Job surrounding it. Obviously, Kelley had overestimated the Machine’s ability to adapt to Lynn’s somewhat unusual creation, and what he looked at was an overlarge, awkward, clunky, disjointed, terrible, horrifying, death-defying, heavily erotic, spine-tingling, pulse-pounding—

“—Henderson!!”

“Sorry, Mr. Zinkofski...”

—disjointed, terrible mess.

“I’m terribly sorry,” Kelley said, “I inspected JRX-3828/C personally; and although I noticed the oddities, I thought the Machine would handle it.”

Mr. Zinkofski decided that, to maximize the effect of his next speech, he would pull a cigar out of his inside breast pocket and jam it into his mouth. This he then attempted to do, but unfortunately took out the lighter instead and almost severely injured himself. Angrily he threw down the lighter (which, in its own way, provided almost as good an effect) and said:

“Obviously, Kelley, you didn’t read last month’s report carefully enough. Let me remind you that modifications were made to increase volume of production 134%. This required in turn a certain modification in consideration policy.”

Kelley remembered the report and wondered why he had let Lynn’s lump pass through his inspection so nonchalantly. Was it, he wondered, because he knew it was Lynn’s? A seed of long-forgotten unrequited passion, germinated by a conflict between servitude to an unthinking Machine and a belief in honesty and what was right, a need to defend the integrity of the Artist as the lone warrior of Truth against a mechanized Obscurity—

“—HENDERSON!!!”

“Last adjustments, Mr. Zinkofski!”

—Was it, he wondered, because he’d forgotten about the report?

“Again, I’m sorry,” Kelley began, “It was a judgement call. With a new system like this there are bound to be a few mistakes while we learn of the parameters we’re working with. If it’s any help, I—”

“What the *Hell* is that?” Mr. Zinkofski gasped.

But we have left the issue of the central pillar of the Machine dangling for far too long. If you recall, the complex was built under the guidance of the computer systems and so resembled many cubic sections crushed together by—what’s that?—I see that the distinguished critic to your left thinks it untoward to abandon yet another narrative thread in order to pick up an earlier one, which has been long neglected anyway. Very well. The description of the central pillar shall attend in the wings, then, while we carry on with the further events in Finishing Touches—

“What the *Hell* is that?” Mr. Zinkofski gasped.

—Oh, but now a second critic argues with the first, saying that the earlier thread should naturally retain its priority, and that the unity of the

work as a whole should be gravely damaged if such a priority were to be subverted. I find this a telling argument, as well as the first critic's argument—aha! That is the answer; by the second critic's argument of priority of occurrence, the first critic's argument must be followed through first, and hence I shall return to Finishing Touches.

Perhaps we should back up just a little to refresh the memory.

—Was it, he wondered, because he'd forgotten about the report?

"Again, I'm sorry," Kelley began, "It was a judgement call. With a new system like this there are bound to be a few mistakes while we learn of the parameters we're working with. If it's any help, I—"

"What the *Hell* is that?" Mr. Zinkofski gasped.

Emerging from the end of the conveyor belt, now, was a scintillating display such as Mr. Zinkofski or Kelley had ever seen. It was a large crystalline structure glowing a hundred colours at once; the edges seemed designed by a fractals algorithm in that they were in razor-sharp focus but also seemed to reduce into infinity. The centre of the structure must have existed in at least six dimensions, and in each of those dimensions its arms were flung wide with a benevolence of light and heat energy. Kelley felt as though *Also Sprach Zarathustra* was bursting through his chest, and for just a moment thought he could taste Swiss chocolate and South American coffee and feel the cold of Antarctica.

Looking more closely at the centre (which was difficult), Kelley could just barely make out a crumpled ball of message paper.

"Why, that's..." Henderson was reading a computer screen, "That's the message we sent Kelley just today, sir! I don't believe it!"

"How did it get through the Machine?" Zinkofski demanded.

Henderson thought it over. "Perhaps the initial disturbance opened a one-in-a-billion chance for this project to survive... spurred on by truth, beauty, and a love for all that lives and breathes..."

Kelley pointed out that the paper had been crushed to roughly lump-size, which would greatly increase the odds.

Mr. Zinkofski turned. "Genius, Kelley. Pure genius." He stood there for a moment as if trying to remember how to close his mouth. Then he did, and walked away visibly affected.

Kelley, on his way out with the remains of JRX-3828/C, just heard Zinkofski say, "A few Finishing Touches, and approval from Head Office, and we've got a real winner here. Recommend Kelley for the biggest raise

this side of Euclidian Geometry. And get some people working on this paper phenomenon. I want it strongly recommended that every piece of crumpled scrap message paper we've got be run through the Machine." The reader may have guessed that Kelley took a leisurely pace leaving the room.

As he returned to work, Kelley had trouble remembering what kind of ice cream he'd tasted and which country's heat he had felt.

Kelley was at home, on the phone to Lynn.

"Again, I'm sorry. I brought it home with me, and I honestly think it's very good. It's just that the Machine was reconfigured, and your project isn't to its tastes any more. No. Um. Um. Yes. Look—"

Kelley spoke quicker.

"—look, it's not like our Hype Machine is the only possible outlet you've got, is it? I know there's other constructs around which might be interested. No, really, don't get too down on the whole idea just because our particular Hype Machine didn't go for it. After all—"

Kelley reconsidered what he was going to say.

"After all, not all different Machines are built to the same specs."

A pause.

"O.K. Talk to you later."

Kelley had reconstructed enough of Lynn's project (he no longer thought of it as one of the lumps, even though it required no digression) to experience it reasonably properly. He decided to experience it again after hanging up.

Lynn's project had been a very nice piece of music accompanied by some suggestive images. Kelley appreciated it, de-plugged himself and put Lynn's project in a closet drawer.

After making his official report, he was required to return the project to the Hype Machine for possible salvage of parts, or destruction if it was deemed unsalvageable. He would miss it.

For several minutes he tried in vain to recapture the sensations produced by his accidental project. Kelley's Project; his first and only creation. The only time he had ever come close to artistic expression—and he couldn't even remember it.

He'd acquired a finished product of "Kelley's Project 1" but it wasn't



nearly the same. There wasn't even the crumpled ball that had been an airplane at the centre. He'd tried to tell people to use a paper airplane but they had not payed any heed. They were too busy writing needless memos to each other which could then be crushed and thrown into the Machine. Many of them were currently best-sellers. He felt as though his larynx had been ripped out before he'd even formed the words in his mind. He felt stifled, and resolved to—

“—HENDERSON!!!!!!”

*Alex Wiebe*

## Vienna

1.

At night the quiet has  
faint sounds  
remote from the core.

The woman and her hand  
holding the cigarette all leak  
ash on a page.

The woman along a tight crease  
arouses, the murmuring hum. I  
turn my face to the mirror,

stare at disease in bed with  
see-through fleas,  
and sleep more than ever.

2.

The landlocked sun beating down,  
prying open tortured pores,  
is not my idea of general climate.

Given the occasion  
the other bathers are no more lethargic  
than we are, shutting our eyelids hard

the glare glides continuously  
from rustling treetop  
to a bare figure blurred by distance

and to the moisture gathering  
in your hair and on your shoulders,  
small and lightness well condensed.

3.

In summer go to countries  
where sweat does not mix with buildings  
or stain the air,

but rather seeps back through nature,  
blades of grass made stouter  
and petals less gaudy.

The Flemish paintings in the Kunst-  
historisches Museum have gaiety  
muffled by layers of snow, the movement

and death meant to be viewed only  
when one is swathed  
in heavy clothes, not like this.

4.

Five hours earlier or so  
the people still looked the same  
but had a language

foreign in the way distance  
is measured.  
Hours later, more maybe

more of these hours have been inflated  
and become more robust  
as if stuffed with the sand and dirt.

I stand in the Viennese subway  
where the station names and their sounds  
have so quickly embraced me.

5.

Depending on enclaves,  
the newest viewed with resignation  
by each other and even from within

there are never complaints  
but rather men caught up  
in living good wholesome lives,

only once in a while jolted by the fact  
that they are not so much outcast  
pioneers but self-willed

heroes braving an aural frontier  
that is less intimidating when they discard  
the words and the music.

*Peter Cheng*



Tom Weinacht

## The Octopus

on *How My Grandfather Left Trinity College*

1. My grandfather arrived at Trinity College in the fall of 192—, and his first act as a new Man of College was to hang on his wall a rather primitive anatomical sketch of an octopus, as a reminder.
2. Frozen scenes of my grandfather's arrival at Trinity College: white knuckles on the handles of his suitcases, his hat lifted slightly by the September wind, the shuffle of his feet taking their time on the worn stairs. A narrow figure in dark clothes, a slender autumn shadow, bags in hand, staring up at the stone faces, the reaching tower, the pale, non-committal embrace of the sky.
3. My grandfather knew no one in his first weeks at Trinity, and he spent a lot of time alone in his room, staring out the high, leaded glass window that let in the cold yellow light, thinking of nothing.

It was in these blank periods that the octopus came closer and closer to him.

4. TIME OUT now, and a brief interval for a joke (which I defy any reader to get now, but which will become clear later) just so we don't lose our sense of humour so early in the proceedings.

Q: My grandfather did not complete his education at Trinity. Where, then, did he complete it?  
Give up? Time, then, for the

A: At BISHOP's University in Lennoxville, Que.  
Ha ha ha ha ha! (Fear not, all will be revealed.)

5. Eventually my grandfather fell into the habits of vague friendship that afflict all university students, but as you might expect, all his acquaintances had names like Thomas, Edmund, Benjamin, and so on. They began to spend time in his room, or he in theirs, where they had relatively meaningless conversations about death, food, sex, the personal hygiene of professors, and, of course, *the Meaning of Life*.

"Picks his nose with his left pinkie?"

"I simply do not believe that it was chicken."

"Those stairs—I swear they'll be the death of me."

- "His right... his right, dammit..."  
 "Well, they are getting worn away. And when it rains..."  
 "And always with the pinkie?"  
 "I suppose you think it was pork?"  
 "Have you ever stepped on a worn-away stair with a wet leaf on it?  
 That's why I hate fall..."  
 "But the texture... the texture was more like pork."  
 "Always."  
 "Me too."  
 "Chicken."  
 "What do you guys think is the meaning of life?"

6. The octopus had been with my grandfather ever since the Spitball Incident in his grade school days. The whole class was in the library to research a project, and my grandfather, though he had not been directly involved, was giggling at the Spitball Incident. This greatly annoyed Miss Western, who, unable to discover the real culprits, decided to punish my grandfather, whose only crime had been a slightly excessive sense of humour (classified by Hippocrates as a minor social disease, this tendency towards inappropriate levity has been a blotch on the *family history* for generations). By the time Miss Western reached the place where my grandfather was seated, he had stopped giggling and opened an encyclopedia, by pure chance, to a page featuring a drawing of an octopus.

Miss Western brought her ruler down on my grandfather's knuckles, and his face, wide-open with pain, twisted around and up to look at his teacher. In that moment, by some curious chemical process in the brain, the image of the octopus, with its swollen head and far-reaching tentacles, came together with the idea of Miss Western's terrible authority, and the power of all those in control became, for him, the power of the octopus, the ability to reach everywhere.

A week after the Spitball Incident my grandfather revealed how fully this idea had seized him by making a drawing of Miss Western as an octopus in one of his notebooks. In one tentacle she held a (slightly bloody) ruler, in another a math book, in another a snotty tissue (graphically rendered), with another she was strangling a student, and in the fifth tentacle she held something that vaguely resembled a severed penis. The contents of the other three tentacles remain, as they say, *shrouded in mystery*.

7. With this in mind, it will scarce seem surprising that, to my grandfather,

the administration at Trinity College gradually took on the characteristics of the octopus. Its cold tentacles touched the back of his neck, its terrible head hovered in the Registrar's office, and the dank, salt smell of it wafted through the corridors and wilted my grandfather's innards with every breath he took.

8. One day, my grandfather was sitting on a bench not far from Trinity when...

No.

Skip all the introductory garbage, and pick things up *in medias res* as the poets say (or as the professors explaining the poets say).

9. A black cat leapt up on the bench beside him, mewed softly, brushed its tail across his face, and followed him back to his room. My grandfather, kind soul that he was, took it into his care, and made a habit of sneaking milk to it from the dining hall.

10. NOT to drag the *family history* into things in any way that might appear UNSEEMLY, or otherwise unworthy of such a *work* as THIS IS, it seems nevertheless necessary to at least MENTION, in what we *authors* would refer to IN THE TRADE as a *tangential* way, the FACT that my grandfather had enroled at Trinity BEFORE he had, by the *Gregorian* calendar, reached that AGE which one was REQUIRED to have reached in order to do so. This was NOT, with regards to the *Clark Family*, an ISOLATED INCIDENT, so to speak, as my *great-grandfather*, also something of a DISREGARDER of AGE LIMITS, had told an out-and-out LIE about his age in order to take part in that *illustrious conflict*, the BOER WAR.

JUST a *fact* of which you deserve to be *informed*, furthering the *themes* of ROOTS, BEGINNINGS, and other such *matters*.

11. My grandfather cut something of an odd figure at Trinity, tall and gangly, always moving too fast, as if his body could not keep up with the orders being sent by the brain, and a bit of a drinker even then. He was known to disappear from the College entirely, sometimes for three or four days, and to return unshaven, his eyes shot with blood, his hair and clothes filthy, saying he had been in prayer.

Needless to say, the whispers of Rumour spread rapidly through the College, and it was suggested that my grandfather, in his absences, went on drinking binges, visited opium dens and houses of ill repute, and perhaps even engaged in the Satanic rites some believed were held irregularly (but with a certain consistency) just beyond the margins of the

city proper. (Indeed, Dr. Reginald Smythe, in his *History of Toronto in the 1920's: Portraits in Decadence*, remarks that Satanic cults were a popular hobby for indolent matrons and curious youths in that infamous decade—but I leave the research of such marginalia in your hands.) Images of debauchery blossomed around my grandfather, and soon he had caught the eye of the Octopus of Authority, the Trinity College Administration, which followed his conduct with nervous vigilance.

Though it is not always easy to arrive at precise facts from such a distance, and plausible but created 'factoids' are really just a delaying tactic, it seems fair to say that my grandfather's claim of having been in prayer during his extended absences *may* (note emphasis) have been true. Certainly he was a deeply religious young man, who, though he studied Latin and Greek at Trinity, had made clear from his arrival in Toronto that he wished to take a degree in Divinity. There is also, however, a ring of truth to the stories of drinking binges (another shadowy aspect of the *family history*), and as for opium dens and houses of ill repute... well, boys will be boys.

Certainly, the accusations of Satanic rituals are false.

12. But, "all will be revealed"? A foolish promise, hastily made. Nevertheless...

Q: In what profession did my grandfather end his life?

A: As the Bishop of Kootenay in British Columbia.

(Brief pause for any delayed laughter (*vide* section 4).)

I have ransacked the house unsuccessfully for his bishop's ring (does it still hang about his widow's (my grandmother's) neck on a golden thread?), but I did find his Mason's ring, which will have to do for our purposes. Inside it is written:

VIRTUS JUNXIT MORS NON SEPARABIT

and:

*F.P. Clark May 24 1952*

My vague knowledge of Latin suggests that the motto might, without too much distortion, be glossed as,

WHAT VIRTUE HAS JOINED DEATH WILL NOT SEPARATE  
but that is just off the cuff. A seductive idea, though—my grandfather, a Mason even beyond the grave. The order that never lets you down and never lets you go. Perhaps even a new division of angels, the Masonic Angels, to be inserted between the thrones and the dominations.

13. My grandfather could not have been unaware of the interest the

Octopus was taking in him. Two scenes that reveal his worry follow.

[a] One day, returning from a lecture, my grandfather saw a tentacle of the Octopus coming out the door of the Registrar's Office and stretching down the length of the hall to rest at the bottom of the stairs that led up to his room.

[b] One morning, just-awakened and still bleary-eyed, my grandfather swung his bare feet out of bed. Instead of contact with the icy stone of the floor, however, his feet met something cool and slimy, something that seemed to twitch and shudder at the touch. Jerking his feet back and snapping on the light in one sheet-ripping, table-clattering motion, my grandfather saw a tentacle of the Octopus resting on his floor, an arm of the distant mollusc brain.

Are such things the product of a nervous, overwrought mind, a mind perhaps softened and twisted by opium and alcohol? Remember, the octopus can change the outline and shape of its body, it is a master of camouflage, it is equipped with an ink-like spray to cloud its escape from those who would pursue it.

14. (It is perhaps worth remarking (though (only) parenthetically) that my grandfather was guilty (in the eyes of the Octopus (which is to say, the Trin Admin)) of one other crime (as defined by the Octopus), namely, that (besides the black cat mentioned previously (*vide* section 9)) he was in the habit of harbouring (the Octopus' word for taking up to his room on occasion for a few scraps of dinner) a number of stray animals (dogs, cats) and was suspected of contributing to the presence of unwanted rodents (the Octopus' term for rats) ((watch this now) how does a cat contribute to a rodent problem?) in the College buildings.)

15. To turn the story of my grandfather into an illustration of a theory is not difficult. The appropriate theory was perhaps best expressed by Dr. Hieronymous von Schtrukten, when he said:

"Networks of power are not threatened by resistance from individuals, but by the growth of counter-networks which attempt to wrest power away from the existing network." (*The Irrelevance of Nonconformity*, p. 21)

Thus, my grandfather only became a threat to the Trin Admin when he began to expound his theories of the octopus to his friends. Tom, Ed, Ben, and so on had all gathered in my grandfather's room.

"I swear, he pulled out this lump of yellowish wax the size of a golf ball."

"When are they going to start clearing the ice off the stairs, anyway? I

nearly killed myself yesterday.”

“It wasn’t like any beef I’d ever tasted.”

“A golf ball, yes... but what makes it yellowish?”

“You mean you actually read that menu thing?”

“Well, there are so few janitors, and so much to do...”

“What am I, a doctor? And then, he wipes it on his jacket sleeve...”

“Don’t make excuses. We pay money to come here, we shouldn’t be in constant fear of our lives.”

“...and it leaves this big, sick-looking streak.”

“Well, it’s not like I believe it or anything... but I read it, sure.”

“Have you guys ever thought that this College is like an octopus, a beast with all these tentacles reaching out into our lives to control us?”

16. NOT, of course, to be reductionist about the whole thing, bringing in Dr. Hieronymous with his theories and explanations. It could be, after all, that I just want a rebel in the *family history*. Look upon the theory as something parallel to the life of my grandfather, but outside it; it is not a solution; it is not time to go home yet.

17. Of course, there are many angles— obtuse, acute, oblique— from which one may get a view of my grandfather. In the present, one may see skin and bone, suggestions of the man, in oil and canvas.

Discarding metaphors, there is a portrait of my grandfather, commissioned when he was Bishop of Kootenay, and painted by a B.C. artist, Alec J. Garner, who never achieved tremendous fame. He is dressed in full Bishop’s regalia (minus the mitre, so to speak) and his face is in three-quarter view, he looks at something beyond the heavy wood frame. Or perhaps he is not eyeing some distant horizon. More likely his eyes had gone glassy from sitting still so long, and Mr. Garner, with a miscalculation unfortunately characteristic of him, captured the look a little too perfectly— and that remains in the portrait.

In fact, the face in the painting barely resembles my grandfather— though there are hints of him around the nose, the forehead— but overall it is a generic face, completely banal (Mr. Garner was primarily a landscape painter, if you MUST have it). What really dominates the painting is not the gaze (if *gaze* it can be called), but my grandfather’s right thumb, which holds his Bible. The thumb is long and slightly curved, almost lovingly rendered, and suggests Mr. Garner’s affinity for the theories of certain early explorers in the wilderness of *family history*, who believed one’s blood relations could be determined by comparing certain

physical characteristics, the length and form of the thumb among them.

I have inherited my grandfather’s thumbs (scant legacy!), they bang the space bar oops! and prevent my words doing this down the page in an undifferentiated mass. Mr. Garner saw my grandfather’s character in that thumb, saw the past and the future, and in certain lights it seems all the events of his life, the path he made from birth to death, can be charted by the curve of his thumb around the Bible. 18. And now a lovely, if slightly overwrought, description of the Gothic style of architecture, leading quite naturally into a scene of official condemnation.

A Gothic skin of carved stone and weathered copper reaches against the sky, the green of the aging domes weeping down... the innards of soft, dark wood, shadows that swallow sound... buried, clanging intestines roaring with heat... and in a cavernous room full of echoes, behind high glass that reflects the eye, at an endless table surrounded by chairs that swallow the withered, barren bodies of old men, beneath the brass and crystal chandelier where the Octopus hovered, dripping salt water, presiding unseen, the old men of the College met to discuss my grandfather, to speak the broken sentences of their shattered morality, to pass their creaking sentence....

“He goes out at night and... so to speak... *imitates the action of the goat... lustful....*”

“Women of loose morals....”

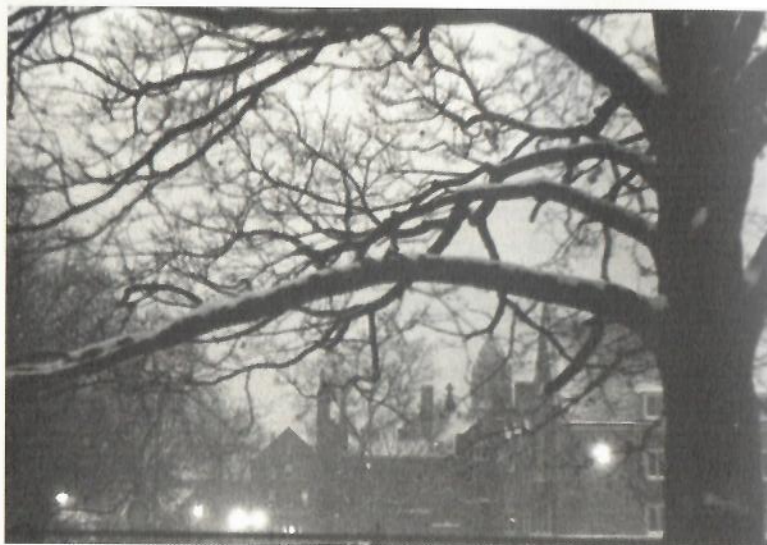
“Who are no better than they should be....”

“A disgrace to the College....”

“And he wants to study Divinity....”

The old men chafed in their collars, they grinned lasciviously... spread thighs, heaving breasts, wet glistenings flashed through their sodden brains... a parade of flesh to a soundtrack of gasps, cries, and soft whispers... sounds they had all but forgotten....

19. In the Trinity Chapel, some tufts of soft black hair and some dried blood were found on the floor near the altar. When the Science Don informed the Trin Admin that the fur was from a black cat, and that the blood was probably from same (some of it having dried onto the fur), it was concluded (in what is surely a startling leap of logic) that my grandfather had held a Black Mass in the chapel and sacrificed a black cat (he was known to have been in possession of one) to the Evil One, Diabolus Father of Lies, the Prince of Darkness, the Archfiend, the Lord



Eve Jedrzejewska

of the Underworld, the Fallen Angel, Satan himself (Auld Nick to family, friends, and the adorable little devilkins he cuddles through the warm, eternal nights in Pandemonium).

There is certainly no need to outline the many other plausible explanations of the Dead Cat Phenomenon, but in case you should wish to, I will leave the appropriate space.

Other Explanations:

1.

2.

3.

20. My grandfather was expelled from Trinity College and returned home in disgrace. The official reason given was that he had lied about his age in order to enrol in the College, though in fact his being able to meet the academic standards of the College *before* he could meet its age requirements was surely more to his CREDIT than to his DIScredit.

In fact, the College would never have expelled anyone simply for having lied about their age. Expressed in his file, stamped CONFIDENTIAL, was the opinion of the College that he had "conducted himself in a manner unbecoming to a student hoping to engage in the study of Divinity," which was followed by an account of the suspicions that he drank, smoked opium, and was a regular client of the local brothels.

In fact, the College would never have expelled anyone for that, either, and certainly it was College policy that Divinity students had to be aware of the nature of evil (and what better way than by experience?) if they were to effectively combat it as soldiers in the Army of God. A sentiment, perhaps, never openly expressed, but clearly present at the backs of everyone's minds. No, it was my grandfather's knowledge of the Octopus, the threat of a counter-network, that led to his expulsion.

21. Ah, hypocrisy!

Portrait A:

The Chaplain of the College, with his arm draped loosely (like a tentacle?) around my grandfather's shoulders: "These rumours, son—nothing to worry about. I mean, if you should visit certain *ladies* now and again, who are no better than they should be...."

"But it's not true!" (protested my grandfather, perhaps truthfully).

"Well now, even if it were, my son," (continued the oily man of God), "even if it were, I wouldn't *blame* you. I mean, when I was your age... well, it takes a great deal of wisdom and moral strength to curtail the desires of

the flesh... greater than I have even now...."

And, with a philosophical sigh that somewhere in his throat became a crude laugh, he was gone behind a heavy, silent door.

Portrait B:

The Chaplain of the College, face set with disapproval, at a meeting to discuss the conduct of my grandfather: "Highly inappropriate. Why, he as good as confessed his nocturnal activities to me... brothels... opium dens..." (counting on his fingers now), "something about a place called Leather 'N' Lashes... enough to turn my stomach."

Puritanical (or were they Prurient?) gasps and shudders all around.

Ah, hypocrisy!

22. Is there room for bitterness at how my grandfather left Trinity College? The lies, the excuses, the befuddled old men and the poor murdered cat, the pages and pages of bureaucratic ass-covering. Is there room for bitterness in all this?

And is there nothing else for me, nothing but this forlorn atavism, forever looking back over my shoulder?

23. Feeling the urge, now, to epiloguize....

Of course, there is a happy ending, as you have known since section 12. My grandfather defeated the Forces of Evil, became a Bishop, and died in middle age (46, to be precise— defeating the Forces of Evil comes with a price). And he escaped to the West coast, where the Devil has been all but forgotten.

Is it possible that, at the end, in the moment of death, he thought of Miss Western, of Trinity College, is it possible that he felt the cold grip of the Octopus tightening around the coil of pain that was his heart? That at the last moment everything came full circle?

No, probably not. Such neatness is the domain of fiction, and this has been a true story.

Brooke Clark

## The Phoenix and the Bullet

"What manner of device are You?"  
said the Phoenix to the Bullet.

"You're simple and small  
and of no practical use.

Surely you're not of the ploughman's trade,  
nor the banker, the priest or even merchant's.  
You have no purpose which I can see."

"I'm on all men's minds,"  
replied the gray Bullet,

"I enter their heads."  
And that was that.

Michael Plato



It is a strange thing to laugh at your enemy's jokes, and to recognize your tastes in his own. Eat with your enemy and you will discover this. Averroes, a man who I would have been pleased fourteen days ago to dismember and defame, has an excellent table and an incisive wit, a target of which he has not yet, despite my humiliating position as the captured Colonel of the defeated White Rifles, made me. His restraint is wonderful. Certainly, Averroes has denied himself many pleasures with regard to me. There is no filth to be suffered: I sleep on a good bed, between clean sheets, in a room with a window and on the window curtains and plants. I have my own toilet. To my knowledge, none of us (there are five, of which I have the highest rank) have been tortured. Instead, we dine with him and forget the siege of his city. He laughs and passes plates. Eat with your enemy and discover his virtues—he will mystify you all the more.

After dinner he and I stroll together onto a balcony overlooking his grounds. Before the war Averroes was a practised toparist, though he does not now have the time. Consequently, over his grounds are carefully distributed bushes and small trees, shaggy, but in whose shape can be barely discerned old identities: Bacchae, a mad Lear, a whale. There are rows of flowers, white gravel paths and a broad walk, lined with hedges, leading from his door to the gate by which there is always parked a jeep, the gunner stiff with boredom. Averroes turns to me.

"Are you eager to go?"

"I hardly feel a prisoner...yes, I would like to be free", I respond. Is he teasing me? Perhaps his restraint is not all I thought it.

"Tomorrow you can go."

He says it simply and looks away. In a moment I have collected myself.

"In the morning?"

"Yes, if you like. Wear your uniform, walk from the door to the gate, and you are free to go. The jeep will take you to the edge of the city, where you can arrange to rejoin your army. You aren't much of a threat, and I can't afford to keep feeding you."

I was a bit taken aback.

"Has it been that bad?", I ask.

"The women of your race have dry, withered tits. You didn't have all you wanted as a child. You take it now." He laughs. "I don't blame you,

but I am economically unable to be a surrogate tit. Go find that among your girls. Perhaps they are not so horribly shrivelled up", he says and fondles the air.

To my shame I can think of nothing to say, so I turn and walk inside. Is this black humour, and am I to die tomorrow?

When I awake Averroes is sitting by my bed, sipping coffee. His manner assures me that I am not to be killed this morning: he smiles with what seems genuine warmth and pats my hand. He has come to comfort me. What can be said of this General of the Army? He has insulted me horribly and then comes to my side. He would make for any woman a difficult and compelling lover.

He leaves when I get out of bed, remarking as we part that breakfast will be ready in a moment and that my uniform is hanging in the closet. Upon dressing I discover that its various elements smell of cologne (Cologne! Can I really wish to annihilate such sophistication?) and that the boots have been shined and newly laced.

Breakfast, which we eat alone, is undertaken in silence. Averroes is occupied with intelligence reports (of the siege I know nothing except that it exists: I have heard artillery at irregular intervals) and I with the eggs, which could represent the last properly prepared meal I shall have for weeks. I don't care if he notices my gluttony. To pretend would be to seem contrite, and I am concerned to seem strong and worthy of my independence. After more coffee, he suggests we move outside.

I have described his grounds as seen from above, and in very few words; by this I did not mean to minimize their scope. From the level perspective provided by his front steps Averroes' holdings seem to stretch for the largest part of a mile, a great sitting garden for his happy god of privilege. There are expanses of lawn large enough to drill a battalion on. As we stroll together down the winding broad walk he points out to me the precision with which an ornamental pond had been placed and constructed, describes the scarcity of some rocks jumbled about the base of large tree, and describes the care involved in sculpting a Lenin out of a spruce. When we arrive in front of his whale, he stops.

"I shall have to forget my duty for an afternoon and see to that overgrown monstrosity. Look! All the detail, even the basic shape, is obscured."

"It doesn't look that bad", I suggest. "It really won't be more than ten minute's work."

He considers it for a moment.

"Look, if I don't correct this immediately I'll be preoccupied all day. I'm going to go back to the house and get my tools. You can walk the rest of the way by yourself, can't you? You've got a good breakfast in you, so you shouldn't run out of energy."

Again, I was taken aback.

"I suppose I could. Is this goodbye?"

"Yes. Goodbye. Tell my driver where you want to go."

Averroes, my enemy, a man I should have wanted to kill, turned and went back down the walk. Odd. I continued, the other way, and was soon enough among my men.

*Colby Linthwaite*

## **The Games of Childhood**

I used to play God when I was a child. The ants marched along the pavement in single file and I would squash them with my sandals. Death was fun but destruction was even better. Searching earnestly for anthills, I would re-enact the Great Flood with the garden hose or better still, in keeping with modern times, urinate—thus, acid rain.

The earthworms were my Job. Drying out in the sun, I would torture them with the magnifying glass. If they managed to survive the ordeal, I would reward them with fresh soil to burrow into.

At night, the creatures lurched back into view with stares that could have killed mere mortals, but only frightened me into ending my imitation of God.

*Grant Chen*

## Short and Sweet

When begun,  
In sun,  
I'd thought  
It fun.

Then again,  
In rain,  
I'd hoped  
You'd remain.

But now,  
In snow,  
I know  
You'll go.

Alex Wiebe

## The Marriage Feast

Andrew left town when I was seven. *Left town* doesn't really give the right impression: those words might make you think of haste and treachery. They make it seem like he just got up and left without telling anybody; they conjure up the image of Andrew beetling away down Hardy road in a beat-up Volkswagen. This might make you think that things between him and my mother were out in the open.

There was a woman, the wife of a high school principal, who was having an affair with a doctor who lived up near us. Another doctor's wife once ran into her in the middle of a foul night, tramping along the wet, squishy ground above the railroad tracks. She was walking in the same direction that the trains took out of town, in the direction of the doctor-lover's house. She said she was just out for a walk; the other woman was probably out walking her dog or something.

My mother told me this story just recently. She tells me these stories when something else reminds her of them, stories of the things that once went on, above my head. It's as if I have now risen up and broken through the surface of a pool of unsuitability: now it is safe for me to hear them, to breathe their air. My mother figures it is safe, since all the main characters have moved away, but at certain points she says anyway, "Now don't repeat this". Who would I tell? Besides, I don't even live here anymore.

The path on which I trudged to school, living wild and swift, adored, inside my head, was taken after dark by the principal's wife, walking to the doctor's house. In those days, if I found myself awake at night, I would imagine my classroom at school as it must look at that very moment, dark and empty and indifferent, as nobody had ever seen it. I would try to picture things exactly as they had been left. I would focus on bits of wreckage like a dusty old blue mitten with a stripe, stuck to the cloak room floor, and similar scenes of triumph. At midnight a heavy freight train would approach, and the doorknobs would start rattling. As it passed by and receded, the noise of the train became a hum that never quite died away, and in my room the picture frames would creak and settle, as if trying to regain a familiar position in which they had once known sleep.

This town is a bit of a joke to most of the people who live here. It's as if a race of vigorous and optimistic people built it and suddenly disappeared,

and then another lot came in to live and perpetuate descendants who would do nothing to stop the brickwork from crumbling and share the common view that nothing ever happened here. Here it is, though; it shifts and survives. Downtown there is a handful of shabby, shady-looking stores which make you think of vagabonds camped out on the floor of an abandoned, palatial house. They close down, and are either boarded up or replaced by others exactly like them. They all seem to sell secondhand things: used appliances, used books, used coats and wedding gowns. There is a tattoo parlour, and a crazy religious bookstore, with bleak-looking books and pamphlets spread out with sinister neatness on a blanket in the window.

The parks and flowers here are still spectacularly maintained. It is supposed to strike a note of pride in us. We used to have to sing this song at school, *Brantford City, Brantford City, the people are nice and the parks are pretty*. That's the only part I can remember. Even though we live on the very edge of town, the Parks Board plants petunia beds. We live on a little street just off Hardy road, and Hardy road runs parallel to the tracks. The tracks lie in a sort of shallow valley whose banks ripple with long, pale grass, but above the tracks, where the principal's wife used to walk, the grass is neatly mown, and there are rectangular beds placed at intervals, and filled with bright, improbable-looking flowers, like heaps of show-biz costumes, pink, red-and white striped, deep purple velvet frills.

If you keep following the tracks on the way out of town, the petunia beds end and there are rows of stunted pine trees. At night they look very black, a thousand times darker than the sky, or the road. It is as if they soak up the substance from everything that touches them; the rest of the world looks pale and drained. When the wind blows they make that hushing, evergreen sound. This is an affluent, secluded part of town. It is made up of leafy, dead-end streets that trail off into dirt paths, winding down to the river. Most of the houses are modern and low to the ground, with big lawns, rock gardens and circle driveways. The golf club is up here. And there is an old estate whose grounds have been turned into a park where everybody goes to have their wedding pictures taken. On Saturdays from April to October, there is a steady stream of honking car horns, and through the iron gates, you can see the brides and the colours of their attendants receding into the distance, calm and blurry as figures in a chalk drawing, indicating a peculiar silence. The stately movements of these

people, dragging their satin trains over the grass, always made me feel, on my bicycle, boyish and inconsequential. On Sunday mornings, I would go back, looking for intact beer bottles. Bits of brown glass glittered in the sun, and crunched dangerously under my tires.

This is where the principal's wife walked, her face clenched and raw, her hair blown unbecomingly back from her forehead. This is the landscape through which she walked, intent on the ground, on her life. I can't say what film or light or spell her destination cast over this place for her; I don't know if her purpose gave coherence to all these things, or if it made them disappear. The doctor moved to the West Coast with his family a few years back. The woman, whose name was Belinda, divorced the principal, married someone else, and moved away as well.

Belinda and my parents sang in Andrew's choir at Darling Street United. It was a United Church choir, but it had a long tradition of high standards, begun long before Andrew's day: no old ladies singing solos, that sort of thing. It was a big old brick church, but the inside had been totally destroyed by a fire and rebuilt during the sixties, so everything was very plain and light. The altar was a big block of rough stone, and the organist and choir sat at the back, up in a gallery. Behind them stood the organ pipes, the silver ones with lipless mouths that gaped and turned down at the corners, and the copper-coloured ones that fanned out like a peacock's tail. The first thing they learned with Andrew was a Schubert mass. They sang it while the congregation downstairs passed around silver trays of shot-glasses filled with grape juice. The women elders had their purses slung over their arms. A lot of people thought the music at Darling Street was too highbrow, the kinder ones saying they didn't really like that kind of stuff, but they appreciated all the work that went into it.

Practically all of my parents' closest friends were in that choir, and the years with Andrew were a kind of golden age. Everyone was relatively young, and there were no really bad voices. My mother can talk about a choir practice the way you would remember a party. There *were* parties, high jinks, hilarious disasters. People jumped into swimming pools with all their clothes on. There were fat ladies sitting on the ends of pews, tipping them up into the air like see-saws. Pieces ground to a halt in mid-performance and had to be started again, and it would be obvious from the audience's comments afterwards that they hadn't noticed anything wrong.

The choir always laughed at certain hymns, no matter how many times they sang them: *and O what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth*. Then there was advent. Christ as bridegroom:

*The bridegroom is arising and soon he will draw nigh  
Rejoice, rejoice believers, at midnight comes the cry!  
The marriage feast is waiting, the gates wide open stand  
Rejoice, rejoice believers, the bridegroom is at hand!*

It's funny how, when you add up the details, you can arrange them into a picture of a drunken world full of bad singing and bodily noises, where music went spinning out of control and furniture flew up into the air, and jokes and sex lurked everywhere and anything could happen. You can pretend there was a madcap world that hovered around the real one in which nothing really happened: there were hymns and anthems, rehearsal on Fridays, church on Sundays, and there was everything and nothing in between.

Andrew was a daredevil who, my mother says, flew by the seat of his pants. He hardly ever practiced, but he could sit down and give note-perfect, brilliant performances of flashy toccatas and fugues, dazzling the congregation, and slow, meditative chorale preludes which, my mother said, were much more difficult to pull off. You needed a great deal of maturity. He annoyed the church-goers by doing elaborate improvisations in between the verses of unfamiliar hymns. He had the choir singing two and three anthems every Sunday instead of the usual one. He would throw new things at them, which he expected them to learn and perform after one rehearsal. Once a month they sang evensong (evening-song, people called it) and hardly anybody went. He brought in soloists, little orchestras; they learned requiems and cantatas. They put on concerts in the sanctuary, of which the minister disapproved. People doubted Andrew, said he was going too far, expecting too much. He took risks, my mother said, but "he had you do things that you never thought you were capable of". In her stories about the choir, Andrew comes across as pure energy.

Belinda's role was that of lead soprano, and she played it to the hilt. She had a good voice, but when she sang, it was like someone doing a good imitation of an opera singer, all surface quivering without real power. Whenever she opened her mouth, it was like a spotlight went on somewhere above her head. You couldn't complain, though. Her pitch

was good, she could read music, and the rest of the section was pretty squeaky. She was needed; she fleshed out the sound.

What really rubbed my mother the wrong way was the way she threw herself at Andrew. She flirted with all the men in the choir, in the sense that, even when she wasn't singing, she still gave the impression that she moved beneath a glare. She was always in performance, on display. She wore a red velour pant suit to choir practice: a cowl-necked top and clingy pants that flopped about her shoes and showed off her round hips and the slight, not unattractive bulge of her stomach. Her face was beautiful; her make-up was on the heavy side, but she wore it to advantage. Her expression was hard and confident, her mouth red, superb. She was always making complicated, Protean changes to her hair. It was blond, short but soft and windblown; then she grew it to her shoulders and brushed it, straight and demure; then, without warning, it was very short and dyed reddish-brown, combed forward and slicked down around the edges of her face like tongues of flame.

My father did not find her attractive. He liked women who were bold and unaffected. He liked bum-slapping and exchanging raunchy jokes. He liked the ones who, at parties or before choir practice, would come and plop themselves down on his lap, without ceremony, as if they knew there was something gruff and wary about him but didn't care. I think he must have been put off by Belinda's calculated glamour, her trick of transforming herself, her obvious expectation. He refused even to pretend to be taken in. You could see that she tried to adapt herself to him. She would act hale; she would do an impression of bravado that never quite came off. She always showed through it.

Whenever the conversation turns to Belinda, my mother always ends up saying that she couldn't stand her, or at least that particular aspect of her. "I never could stand women who think they're God's gift to men" she said. I don't know how Belinda "threw herself" at Andrew, what exactly she did to distinguish him. It always made me think of bruising and splattering, dogged assaults against an indifference as implacable as a wall. I always saw an image of Belinda, in her red outfit, draped around Andrew's neck, hanging down his back like a robe, her face turned away, while he played the organ. His face wore an inscrutable half-smile, and it was impossible to tell whether it was directed towards her or his playing. What did my mother expect him to do? Be rude to her, push her away? I

would suggest that maybe he thought there was something sad about her. At the time Belinda was seen walking by the railroad tracks, the affair was already over: the doctor hadn't wanted any more to do with her.

Most of the men in the choir were married and past middle age. They had handsome, craggy faces or full, wavy heads of hair. Their wives, who turned up now and then at concerts and Christmas parties, tended to be pleasant and rugged-looking. They dressed in jeans and ski jackets, and engaged in clever, superior activities like acting in the local theatre company, or writing for the newspaper. They avoided the church, and it was not unusual for them to have English accents and faintly sarcastic wits.

My mother and Belinda were two of the few married women in the choir, and the only two who did not work. Most of the single ones tended to be teachers or nurses, well-paid, figures of modest authority. They were inclined to be pretty, and most looked younger than they actually were, perhaps because they dressed well, but in clothes which had an almost exaggerated girlishness about them: denim jumpers, full skirts, neat, flat shoes, and sweaters patterned with rows of houses, apple trees and geese. They lived alone in trim houses, impeccably decorated, to which they made luxurious, costly additions, like solariums and back porches. They went cross-country skiing together, or took jaunts out of town to shop or go to concerts. Not a bad life, I guess, if you gave yourself up to it. But that is not what they appeared to do. There was no acquiescence in them. At first glance, you might have assumed a pink, shrinking maidenliness from them, a meek and dreamy resignation. On the contrary, they were fierce and vigilant. They organized their lives and choir affairs in thick black datebooks; they made speeches to the choir, telling of upcoming events, and if someone had been away, they would repeat the speech the next week with the same words, the same inflections, as though they were repeating a scene from a play. They scampered about the gallery before the practices began, gathering their music together, talking, sometimes affecting exotic accents. They sat very straight in their chairs, with their knees apart and their feet planted firmly on the floor, and when Andrew told them how he wanted the dynamics or the phrasing to go, they would never just do it, but would raise their hands and point out the old markings they had in their copies, and ask if he were sure he wanted to make a change. Belinda in her tight pants wasn't as unique among these women as she looked: they all had their own limelights, the same constant striving.

I have no memories of Andrew, even though my mother signed me up for his Orff classes and the junior choir. I remember the gowns we had were nothing but short white surplisses with blue collars. They had sleeves like snow-angel wings but showed everybody's varied street clothes from the waist down. I remember patent leather shoes fogged with a layer of red lint from the church carpet, and vague inklings of degradation and doom when an older girl said out of the blue that she hated me for being in love with her brother, a boy with dull, concupiscent eyes and buck teeth whom I hardly knew.

Because he was the organist, Andrew had a studio at the church; after he left, it went back to being called an office. It was hidden behind the stage of the church auditorium, where, in the curtained dark, the outlines of floor-hockey nets and boxes of junk left over from the auction sale formed a dishevelled landscape. You got to it by going through a metal door and around an odd, curving sort of hallway. Sometimes he brought us all back there after church, to listen to a tape of something he was working on, or to lend my parents a book. There were no windows, and there was recording equipment against one wall. All the cords, dials, meters and reels might have made the tiny room look like the set for the bridge of a spaceship on a low-budget children's show, except that there were also plants and a tank full of tropical fish. There was a thick shag carpet on the floor. It was an impossibly deep blue, like the blue of people's robes and sashes in stained glass windows, and had a new, privileged smell. When I think of that room now, I always seem to think of things that never happened there, like eating the kinds of foods you only ever see in story books or out-of-town bakeries: animals made out of sugar and ice cream, cakes and cookies gleaming with red jelly and striped with different colours of hard, pale icing.

There are things in our house that have a musty sort of glow on them, either because Andrew gave them to us, or simply because they were part of the house when he was here, and my parents hosted parties for the choir, dinners for their friends. There are Dave Brubeck records, and my mother's books of Bach organ music, their grim grey covers pristine, unwrinkled. My mother took organ lessons from Andrew for a while. She didn't do it for any practical reason like being able to perform in church, she just wanted to learn while she had the chance. She had graduated from university with a degree in piano performance, but she never expected to



Sam Burgener

make a career out of it. She always had problems with nerves and shaking hands.

There are things that have been put away in cupboards and under the stairs, and sometimes I come across them, when rooting around for coasters or fancy serviettes, or the vacuum cleaner. Ash trays, for instance: my father used to keep a cigarette behind his ear and wore T-shirts that smelled faintly of Old Spice. There are cubist-looking candle holders of blue-grey acrylic, a fondue pot, hurricane lamps. In the basement there is a box with the old Christmas ornaments in it, styrofoam balls wound around with blue and gold satin threads. I remember once we were about to decorate the tree. The boxes were open on the couch, and there were heaps of tissue paper all over the floor. There was probably a Christmas record playing, maybe the one of the harpist plucking out the notes of old lullaby carols. Rapt, innocent music, like snowflakes. No, I remember it was the *Christmas Oratorio*. My brother had dragged up from the basement a hairy, murky-looking plaid blanket with fringe around the edges, and was wearing it like a robe. He was wearing a brown plastic bag like beard, with the handles looped around his ears, and I had jammed a rolled-up sleeping bag onto his head so that it spiralled up into the air like a turban.

My mother seemed tired that day; she took tree decorating very seriously as a family thing to do, and was irritated because we were being so silly. We kept putting the needle on the record back to the loud part at the beginning with trumpets and drums and yelling choirboys; we had brought all that junk up into the living room, and I kept on collapsing and laughing because my brother looked so ridiculous in that get-up, trying to produce a sad and solemn expression on his face. My mother had to get ready soon, to go to the TV studio, and we were slowing everything down.

She and Andrew were both involved in the production of a cable TV show presented by the church. It was the minister's idea, a sort of talk show on which he would conduct a half-hour interview each week with an invited guest. The set looked like a living room, with a fireplace, a coffee table, and books. The minister and the guest would sit in easy chairs with their legs crossed in a leisurely way, and discuss topics like grief, reincarnation, third-world countries, the origins of traditions associated with religious holidays. I don't know how many people from the church actually watched it. Andrew was a frequent guest on the show. He would

talk to the minister about music, or about his experiences with other religions. My mother's job was to write introductions and conclusions to the show, and deliver them in front of the camera.

We were going to get the tree all done before she left, but she didn't want to go. She was sitting on the couch, wearing black and red plaid slacks, and a black blouse, untucked and open at the neck, so that the points of the collar touched her shoulders. She had on nylons and no shoes and seemed tired. Her hair was heavy and dark brown then, and hung down to her chin. Sometimes she would curl it under when she went somewhere important, but it never stayed in very long. I assumed it was on account of her casual clothes and unstyled hair that she made a frantic, scornful gesture, opening her arms wide in explanation. *I can't go like this!* she said to my father. Her eyes were all red, her face pink and healthy-looking.

In our house there are two pictures of Andrew. In one of them, he is sitting in a blue armchair holding my brother on his lap. My brother looks dazed and wobbly: he can't be more than a few weeks old, which would make it Christmas time, in the picture. My parents had just bought the house, and something about the picture looks raw and makeshift: they did not have enough furniture to fill the space; the blue chair and the coffee table next to it seem to float in front of an expanse of dingy white wall. Nevertheless, there is scotch in a crystal tumbler on the coffee table, and a little poinsettia wrapped in gold foil. Andrew has fine, silky blond hair that straggles down onto his black turtleneck. He wears black pants and expensive-looking black leather boots, the kind that zip up on the inside of the ankle.

Despite the heavy black frames of his glasses, he looks like an archangel or a young man in an Italian painting. He seems to wear a light and stylish solemnity; his long limbs in their black clothes recline in easy grace. The baby, adorable in its downy helplessness, looks as though it has been put into the picture as a witty, homey touch, like putting a floppy hat on a bust of Beethoven, but it seems to make Andrew's look of distance and absorption more complete. His hands look huge, folded over my brother's tiny shoulders. He smiles down at the back of the baby's head: his expression radiates culture and quietude, as though he were listening to some courtly music.

The picture is in a thick photo album with vinyl covers that look like wood grain. It is the only photo album we have, and it is almost entirely

filled with baby pictures of me. The pictures are square and old-fashioned looking, with thick white borders around them. My brother was born two years later; he comes into the album a few pages before the end. My family doesn't take a lot of pictures. There is never any film around, and they never turn out very well anyway. The pictures don't look anything like the way we do in real life, and I hide them away.

Dad has a really expensive camera that he got around the time he was married. It has all kinds of different lenses like small telescopes. He keeps them in a canvas bag with Air Canada written on it. It weighs a ton. When we went on holidays it was always so-and-so's turn to carry the camera bag. It took good pictures but it was a nuisance. My parents went to Quebec for their honeymoon. On Ile d'Orleans Dad took a really good picture of a seventeenth-century stone farmhouse that had been turned into a restaurant. They ate there, then went outside and he took the picture. They thought it looked like a picture of another time: it was a misty, drizzly day with a cold white sky. They had the picture blown up and framed and then hung it on the dining room wall, and people commented on it.

The only problem was that, when he took the picture, Dad didn't notice that he'd left the Air Canada bag under a tree in front of the house. It didn't really go with the atmosphere, the low crooked house with the dripping black trees bending over it. They had to get the bag air-brushed out of the picture. It was a joke. My parents still tell the story of the camera bag to anyone who notices the picture, and point out the smudge in the long grass where the bag used to be.

The other picture of Andrew arrived in the mail several years after he had gone. It was one of those Christmas cards that families send, where you have a family picture on top, and underneath something like "Season's Greetings" written in a script like red ribbon with some pine cones around it, then some space where you can write everybody's name. There is never space for much of a message but the picture sort of makes up for that, or at least distracts you, entertains you. Before he left, Andrew had married the girl he had been going out with for as long as anyone here had known him. She lived in Toronto, and used to come up on weekends to see him. In the picture she is pretty and young-looking, with large, dark eyes, and short hair, also very dark, swept to one side above her face. She has a mild smile, like Andrew's, but without the other-worldly look with which his music must have tinged him. There is a blond toddler in between



them. Underneath is written "The Woods, Andrew, Emily, and Michael" in a feminine-looking hand.

When Emily was married she had had long hair down past her waist, my mother said; she had worked in an insurance office. This had struck me as a fraud; the occupation seemed colourless, and did not live up to my image of the slim, pale girl with the lustrous hair and eyes. This fact about her made her into an envoy from a world of dreary adulthood. She had told my mother about the girls she worked with and their casual, critical discussions of their one-night stands. She seemed to represent a life like something shining wrapped around a core of lead. Evidently what you needed was a lining of accommodating toughness which I felt I would never be able to manage. Already I could sense the ghost of its absence.

In this picture, Andrew's expression of refined good-humour is still there, but he no longer looks so historical. The long wispy hair has thickened and darkened to a reddish-gold, and has been fashioned into a shorter, more conservative cut, firmly parted on the side. Here it is his well-trimmed beard which suggests something artistic and intellectual, tastes and appreciations. In the time that intervened between the two pictures, Andrew had become a United Church minister, and maybe that has something to do with the modified look.

This picture is part of the debris that floats around the house. It mixes in with the old envelopes and concert programs that litter the edges of the low bookshelves in the den, in front of my father's biggest books, *Pleasure of Ruins*, *Great Cathedrals*, *so-and-so's Pathology of the Heart*. I come across it when I'm riffling through the papers in the front of the phone book for the Magic Oven pizza flyer, or when I'm scrounging around in the desk drawers for change to pay the paper boy. It is an old desk with slender legs, one shorter than the others and propped up by two coasters, and the insides of the drawers are covered with inky grooves that I have made with pens while talking on the phone to an old friend from high school.

My mother smiles when she talks about Andrew, and in her smile there is an awareness of distance. This distance in her smile is not a product of all the years that have now passed since Andrew left; I like to think instead that it was there to begin with and has survived those years, unaffected. She could have smiled in the same way whenever she watched him put on his coat and turn away from her in a single rushed gesture, change and keys

jingling importantly in his pockets, making a noise like spurs, like showy battle gear. She could have stood holding the side door open, watching him leave after one of those nights when they had talked until it was almost four. There would have been no need for her to stand there, because he had already said he would see her on Friday at choir practice, but she would watch him unlock his car, get in and shut the door with a slam that sounded very harsh: the cheap car, the cold night air. She would be watching him leave, thinking about how he looked as if, in his mind, he was already gone. He would be so intent upon his actions, so far removed from her, that she would get an unnerving sense that she no longer recognized him. When they talked together he was never aloof or preoccupied. They were close friends. But there were always these moments when his simplest actions seemed to take on an unfathomable significance; they would seem like gesticulations accompanying a language she could not understand. He could be putting his arm around the passenger seat and craning his neck to see as he backed out of the driveway, or calmly, almost lazily reaching to pull out a stop while playing a complicated fugue. It was through these little actions that he could suddenly exclude her, and she would be humbled by a sense of places into which she could not go.

There has always been an unlucky shabbiness to us. There is an extra, polished layer that we lack. It doesn't necessarily have all that much to do with money, but it is especially noticeable in the area where we live. We finally painted the living room walls, but the store gave us the wrong colour of paint. Instead of butter yellow, the walls dried to a faint, glowing green. Like green cheese. The carpet is still dull gold: we haven't got around to it yet. There has always been a crack in the middle of the garage floor, but now one side is definitely lower than the other. It has gotten so that my father can't pretend not to notice anymore, so now he insists that it was always like that. Last year one of the neighbours' oak trees fell over into our backyard. It destroyed my mother's favourite flowering crabapple tree, and it cost us four hundred dollars to get everything cleaned up. My mother gets frustrated living in the same old clothes all the time. The problem isn't so much that she can't afford many new ones; she just never likes the way anything looks on her.

It is because of things like this that my mother is afraid of running into Andrew now. She has to psyche herself up, prepare herself whenever there is a chance that she might see him. In my first year at university I was

invited to a formal by a nervous graduate student who gave the impression that he would shatter if you touched him. My taste at the time dictated that my mother and I had to drive to a little snow-belt town where there was a woman who made heavy velvet dresses with wires in the front and laces up the back. She had a small selection of vintage jewellery to go with them, and dingy old white gloves with rhinestone buttons at the wrists. There was a tarnished cigarette case on a chain that I hankered for, but I couldn't let my mother know I smoked, so I settled for a beaded purse and a fake emerald necklace.

This was the town where Andrew's church was. I made a joke out of this. My mother was afraid her hair would look awful, that her coat would look threadbare, just because he always looked so perfect. She was afraid that he would see her doing something stupid, like slipping on the ice: "Yeah as if" I said, "imagine if you went flying up in the air and landed right on your face in a snowbank, and then the first thing you saw would be these impeccable loafers right in front of you." It was the improbability of the vision that made it funny, driving home on a two lane highway in the winter dusk, with new sumptuous clothes in the back seat, but there was really nothing improbable about it. In my little story, Andrew appeared with a ghost-like disregard for his surroundings, standing in the snow wearing polished shoes and a dark suit jacket. He stood with his hands in his pockets, looking down at my mother with that smile of his; the snow whirled around him, but his hair did not so much as flutter in the wind. If my mother had slipped on any ice, this is exactly what she would have seen, the instant she hit the ground.

When you are trying to forget someone, you think of it as somehow getting them out of your head. That is how you think of it, but that is not the way it is. The person you love remains inviolate: you can't just boot them out, or beat their memory down, like a struggling insect. It is your own absurd expectation you have to beat down, and there is something primordial about this kind of hope, encased in a shiny black shell. It is eyeless and stocky, darkness-loving, unappreciatively diligent in its shelter-building habits. It is rugged, designed for survival.

*Forgetting* is too airy and idle a word for this. There is something which you have easily constructed in your mind, an image like a house, of that person's life with you in it. That all remains, and what you have to do is scrape yourself out of all its corners. You have to wear yourself down like

a roughness, scrub yourself out like a stain. It is this drudgery that is called forgetting.

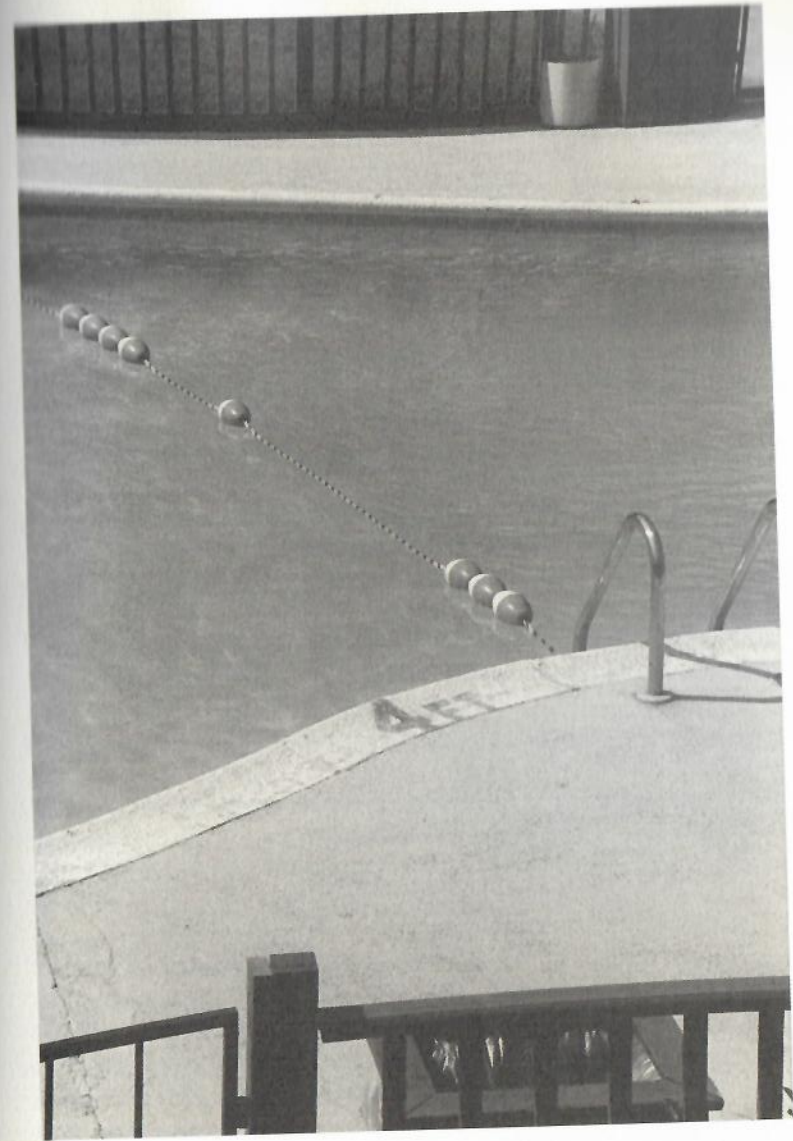
My mother used to walk around the house, talking softly to herself. I can remember seeing her from the top of the stairs; she would come down the hall holding a cup of coffee in one hand and running the other one through her hair, whispering and laughing. If I were in my room, or in the basement watching TV, I could hear the place in the dining room floor that creaked when she walked over it and I knew she had been with her invisible audience, winning them over with her stories. If I came into the room where she was, she would stop. I never heard any words, but the quickness and laughing made it seem like she was repeating old conversations, maybe changing them from the way they had really gone. Maybe she was planning new ones, and imagining the other person's responses: she wasn't so much talking to herself as talking to someone else who wasn't there. It all of a sudden dawned on me that she used to do this, and that it is something I haven't seen for a long time.

Sara Jamieson

## The Corner Store at the Core

A chorister forever anticipating  
A solo;  
A priceless Chinese junk long sunk  
Deep below;  
A characteristic submerged by fake  
Happy glow;  
A lover's chair broken by  
A stubbed toe;  
Things now dead.  
Things you can find in the corner store at the core.

*Alex Wiebe*



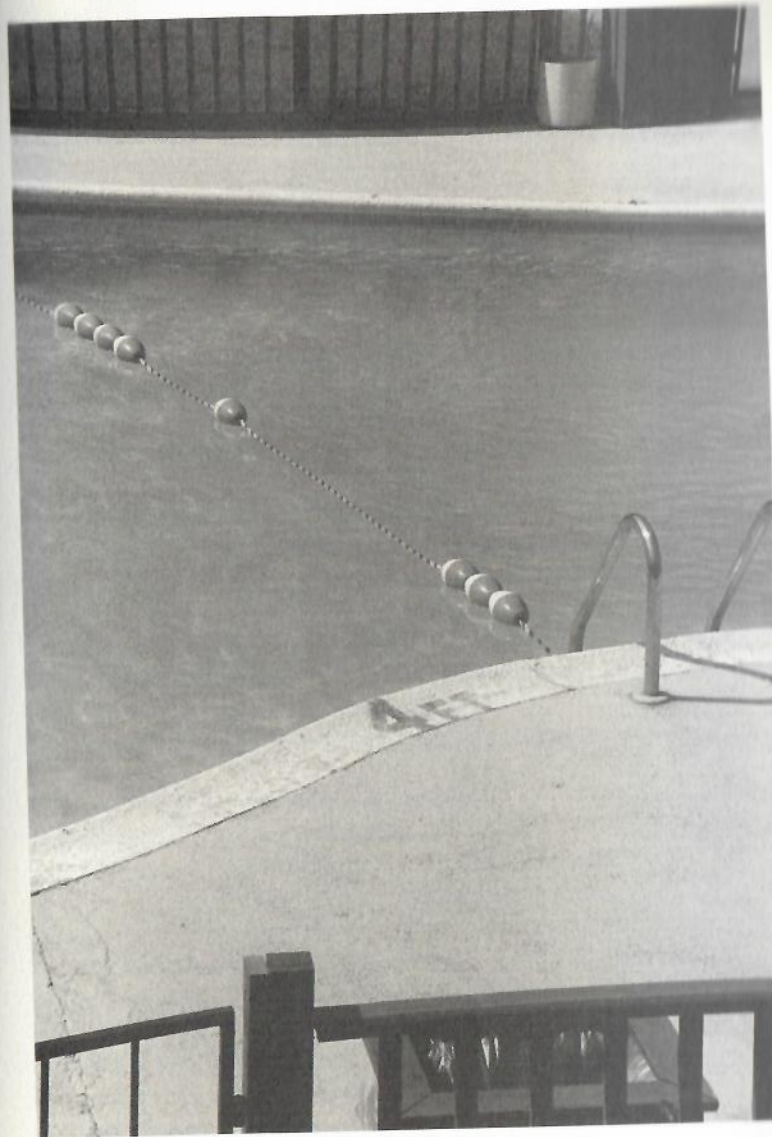
**Rorschach Test**

*Kyle Milne*

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## The Photograph

Some way you watch  
Alert, silent penetration  
from the protective neutral barrier  
In absence I await movement  
The image still, speaks  
Suspension of the selves

Return that I may hold you here  
Know life upon me warm and real  
Gentle grey trust  
Fingertips touch bone and brow  
feel, remembered pleasure hanging on your lips  
Mapping out this need with hands  
Open palm an extended dance  
Soft torment of the white caress

*Lisa Kovarik*

## Shadows of Life

Fires burned in the eyes of the children that night,  
that night when the sky dissolved into tears,  
and the moon hid in the highest branches of trees.

Tears came to the eyes of every mother,  
as they ran into the storm.  
Trees and cars mingled in a dance of death,  
as the wind spiralled over the land.

Black clouds stained the sky like spilled ink.  
Shapes formed out of the blackness.  
Camels and whales gave shape to horses and bears.

The blackened animals regained their souls and fell from the sky.  
Birds gave way to spiders,  
and the beasts that once were clouds stood still.  
The animal shadows opened their mouths and screamed.

For all the things he gave us we gave thanks.  
The questions that we asked were trivial,  
and the lesson was never learned.

Who turned off the heat?  
Who left the doors open?  
The air burned and the sky fell.  
The lies the monkeys told ended the world,  
as the butterflies flew to heaven.  
All the oranges in America, China and Spain,  
froze and died that night.

*Oliver Jaakkola*

## Subway Accelerating Towards

You walk through the turnstile while sliding your Metropass through the scanner, and a proud electronic beep alerts the other commuters to your presence. You have entered the subway. In a larger sense, of course, you first entered the subway when you bought your first Metropass; or even your first token. Or perhaps even before that.

The platform is not as cold as the outside, though still chilly. The tiles are dry, imparting a satisfyingly hard, clean contact to your boots. Slowly the slush melts from your soles as you wait for the subway train. The walls are made of small orange dots that seem to accelerate away from you on either side, leading to distant points where they are no longer distinguishable.

A train arrives on another level of the station, and the entire structure around you first grumbles, then snarls, then roars in sympathy; so loudly that it is as if an invisible train were arriving directly in front of you. Invisible doors open; invisible passengers pour out, deftly swirl around and past you without making contact; invisible doors close just before another invisible passenger can board the train. Invisible curses are shouted as the train noisily departs. Around your boots is a neatly circular pool of dirty liquid, which the platform tiles do not condescend to absorb.

A metal box above your head clicks and you know that your train is almost here. The rails begin to whine, as if in terrified anticipation of having to support the massive bulk of the train on their backs. Beams of light steadily grow stronger from the end of the tunnel. You put one hand on your hat as the train arrives and eases into its resting position, less noisily than its invisible brother. There is a moment of anticipation.

The doors slide open and no-one exits. For a few moments, the platform becomes a maze of possibilities. With only a few seconds to decide, you choose the door nearest you. You cross the threshold into the subway train; your boot makes hard contact with the floor, but slightly less clean than the tiled platform because some small part of your perceptory senses can feel the dampening effect of the train's shock absorbers. The doors slide shut behind you and the train pulls away from the station, accelerating into the tunnel.

You find a seat just as the world of the platform outside is replaced by the mirror image of the train world inside. You briefly amuse yourself by

making strange faces and watching your reflection respond in perfect time to you. Looking around at the other passengers, you see a woman reading a newspaper, and a man with a briefcase and a paperback novel. Further along is someone who looks vaguely like someone who was watching you in last night's dream. Seated opposite is a senior citizen. Further along still are a group of office types. Beyond them are some utterly non-descript humans. Past that group is the door leading to the next car.

The train goes fast into a turn and screeches. Loud, louder, so loud that you have to put your hands over your ears. The paperback man does not notice a thin trickle of blood coming from his nose.

The train arrives at the next station and one new passenger boards, obviously a vagrant of some variety who is holding out his hat. He remains quiet until the train is moving again and has entered the tunnel. Once the train is triplicated again, by the reflections on either side, all three men begin to repeat "This is all there is!" in a normal speaking voice while going through the trains proffering their hats. "This is all there is!" they say to nine office types, and they collect seventy-five cents. "This is all there is!" they say to three newspaper women, and they collect three dollar coins.

He has approached you now. You wish you had a friend along with you so that you could be engrossed in a conversation, or so that your friend could pay off this man for you. But there is no such person here. You give the man some money and he walks away from you without even repeating "This is all there is!" At the next station he departs. The train pulls away from the station with its doors still open; they do not close until you are well into the tunnel.

You notice that through some trick of the light, or because of your angle to the windows, that the two reflections appear somehow odd. You eventually realize that, due to the repetitiveness of the train's design, an illusion has been created that all the passengers in the reflections have been moved over by one set of seats. You check your own reflection and note with satisfaction that it is where it should be. Somewhere between the newspaper woman and the dream-person is where the illusion begins. You realize that if the illusion were in fact reality, then the reflections of the end passengers would have to be in the next car. You strain your neck but cannot make out the images in the end windows.

The train has been travelling very fast but seems to be no closer to the next station. You fidget and finally decide to walk down to the other end

of the car, out of a perverse sense of unease which you know to be preposterous and unfounded. As you rise from your seat, you glance at your reflection and for a micro-instant it is not looking back at you. Then you blink, focus and see your reflection behaving exactly as it should be. The two of you straighten your posture and begin to walk down to the far end of the car.

The blood of the paperback man has dried on his face and he still does not seem to have noticed it. Presumably too much of his mind is absorbed inside the book.

The newspaper woman is reading through the Arts section for the fifth time.

As you approach the dream-person it becomes increasingly difficult to remember exactly what the person in the dream looked like, until by the time you can look carefully at the passenger you no longer have a basis for comparison. You move on hurriedly so that you do not appear to be staring.

The office types are intently watching each other's briefcases.

Just as you approach the non-descript passengers, the train bursts into the next station and the reflective worlds are banished. You realize that this is your stop, although you do not remember having passed through all the stops in-between this one, and where you boarded. This happens sometimes.

As the doors are opening you find yourself precisely halfway between two exits. For a moment you are frozen in place, unable to decide; then the conductor's whistle blows and you blindly dash out. As you do so you catch a quick glimpse of the paperback man, the blood still dry and hard and clean on his pale, unmoving face.

Briskly you ascend the three flights of stairs to the surface. You do up your coat in anticipation of the cold outside. You take a deep breath, and push the doors open.

You cross the threshold and step onto the dry concrete sidewalk. The cold hits you hard, and as you stand briefly frozen, the doors slide shut behind you and the street pulls away from the station, accelerating towards the setting sun.

*Alex Wiebe*



**Illusion**

*Kyle Milne*

## Swingin' from the Family Tree

something of blue light,  
something of this age-old pulse  
fading now something of the  
saxophonic complaint

steam rises from the sewer grates  
through a night of wet streets  
formless ghosts  
faces tugged to trailing shreds  
drift through the patchwork night  
red orange green white  
gone faces flashing  
borrowed colour

history is not the past  
(says the borrowed voice)  
it is the stories we tell ourselves about the past

& little chessmen move apace

trees of auntology cry Where have I  
/been  
/gone  
to when in dark robes, their  
faces speak  
a firelight flicker  
I try to follow a map of shadows

twig-fingers reach for me  
in halls of windy stone  
in our ancestral castle  
our ancestral

grabbed by winds, voices  
stone and wind

crow  
skeletal black  
nailed to a hole in the sky  
has deserted  
/has abandoned trees forever

light cold-pale in the air yellow  
we hang from trees

we add along the ruled lines  
debit credit we  
subtract to perfection

the equation degenerates into zeroes  
a silvery thread from out my back

held in circular waves

hard wood against sea-grey  
thumps promising music  
prow splits the setting sun  
approaching always they gather in the slender coil  
approaching always they gather me  
inmeshed branches

through an airplane's  
double window sealed and freezer-safe

I see the sun rise  
over a mimic landscape of  
cloud frail hills of vapour  
tugged by the jetstream wind  
swirling continents in flux

the plane circling westward

arriving always to the same lies  
the moving mouth, the man with the pixillated face  
he inherited from Seurat

the crushed, yellowed poster  
seen on rocks of distant isle  
heavy sailcloth  
ropes against creaking wood



another broken

/crumpled voice speaking of...

what was left behind?

rectangles of leaning stone

a circle that points to the

rising sun

(the rocks

pull the wind to them

whisper its name)

the collapsed ancestral castle

move the stones in my hands, roll

earth thick and clinging with blood heavy roots

thick as arms I clung to

swung through the sunlit childhoods

buried in the sand

stones that kept their promises

words wrestled from another tongue

Sir Thomas

dreamspeaking impossibility

the arc of the stricken

falling bird

the numbers that trace it, the numbers

that hold the motion fragmentary

glint of ice in rippled time

stone halls echoing fatal laughter

even that raw sound incomprehensible

And did you ever meet Mr. Rabelais

anyway

hmm?

/words next to a glass

broken on the stone floor

splintered questions point impossible directions

cry of thieving seagulls

cookie stolen from a girl's weeping hand

fear clutches

my chest like a narrow bird

Will the waves be high?

my father's head distant among the waves,

small as the sun

liquid yellow, oozing

down the metallic sky,

among hidden rocks, a journey

under slapping waves

the whale pulled to shipside

thrashes green water red

in pictures in

the ocean's half-remembered past

salt-flecked, weather-hungry

another face I know

shimmers on pale sand beneath water's motion

a face rippled against the curling wind

Do you really float better in salt water?

the grind of the motor behind me

freshwater spray without sting

the waves rattle my child's teeth

little chessmen move apace

from one coloured box to the next

ranks dwindling

64 squares is nowhere to hide

measured steps among coloured boxes

(stories we tell ourselves)

episodes from the peregrinations of Sir Thomas:

kings & queens

lords & ladies

a swish of skirt the barking hounds

(17th C., after all, something of the  
period piece  
about the whole charade)  
    knaves all in a row  
frozen moments held in the bent words of crumpled  
letters back to Cromartie  
    “things semblable in nature  
    should be signified by words of a like  
    pronunciation”  
shaken heads quest for the impossible language  
    “Foreign Tongues are said to be hard to learn;  
    and when obtained  
    easily forgot”  
grunts and nods  
accented discordancies clash among  
the clinking glasses

an ending tombed in laughter  
feet pulled back westward, face  
to the rising sun...

I have been a sea-viper  
cutting paths beneath the waves  
I have been a spotted adder  
high and lost on the  
broken mountain my knife dreams in blood  
vanquished thighs smoking altars  
    on my waverolling silvery horse  
    I guard the gateway to the sea  
do I not rule in this arena of blood?  
(the whisper of voices in broken stone)

my face split to a hundred mouths  
    (crying mouths of a hundred chiefs)  
my speaking mouths my shards of face  
voices reflected in broken  
    polished stone

my father drowned a thousand times  
in my swimming eyes

a hundred voices speak from the ground

phone calls to relatives  
on distant coasts  
    a ragged line of birds on the  
    telephone wire  
they grip our flashing voices  
their feet strangle our rushing voices  
    choked off, broken  
    lost in the sudden crackle of  
    electric wingbeats  
    (have you been to electricbirdyland?)  
a storm of feathers  
words fall to the frozen ground...

“to make a perfect language”  
logopandecteiion

chessmen move... boxes...  
decayed palaces of Europe  
kings & queens pale unto death  
faded ghosts bound up in golden thread  
    “Then it was that the name of a Scot  
    was honourable over all the world”  
jingle of silver buckles, the feet’s  
peregrinations  
gay laughter, the clink of metal against bone  
    (china)

the note of touched glass rises  
the ring of glass held suspended  
in the domed ceiling dripping an endless  
crystal rainstorm  
    cut droplets full of the  
    thick flickering suns...  
banquet halls drained, lace hung  
rotting in tatters

the spider treads his lunatic map  
the scuttling rats converse among themselves  
visions fading behind his pale eyes, it all  
ends in a laugh

“Aryf angkynnull,  
Angkyman dull,  
Twyrf en agwed”

Let those who wish support  
no weapon we will grant their blood  
pounding freedom  
when the tumult climbs the splitting air

bones, antlers drowned in the earth  
twisted, pointing  
marking degrees

“the awful bounds of this hallowed circle”

the sacred ground heaves towards the  
rising sun  
raging tides of blood  
overwhelm the studied circle  
songs of praise shattered  
the chiefs turn their backs  
a broken circle of leaning stones, the  
stories we tell ourselves

(the sky pure blue wind knife-cold

sunlight warm on my back, like...  
I hate these blue smiles  
/blue similes  
hate these blue pills that bring the dreams)

under bowing trees  
skeletal fingers  
arrange  
/compose the fleeing shadows

compass of stone  
the sun its only  
magnet memories of  
fireglimmer lambent faces  
smell of blood on stone  
collapsed ancestral castle  
absence the doomed ceiling  
worn spines of granite, glittering vertebra  
hunched up through the  
tall grass  
the farthest expanse  
a blue glitter  
seen through the ripples of  
gone windows  
a break in the surface  
headlights flare to life  
the flash of a thousand cameras  
the stillness of birds  
caged in the high twigs

the silence of birds  
the farthest expanse

a friend whose father  
chronicled the family history  
a map of England on the wall  
punctuated with coloured pins

my own bare walls  
collapse dead-end  
dust of civilizations  
blown... ice-glint in rippled...  
a laugh cast off  
by stone walls on a farther shore

history is not.

Brooke Clark

Her father could see her anchored fifteen feet out on the open water, her dark head down. From his place beside the duck blind, he could call and reassure her, see the scratches on the rowboat's hull, hear the geese above and the hushed lapping of the water coming to ground before his feet. He could smell the trees. He could call to reassure her.

When his mother woke Mike up and asked him where his sister was, Mike had said, "She's not home?". His father had been there, watching his son say, "She'll find her way home by breakfast". His wife had pulled the covers off and he had grabbed his son by the arms and asked if Rebecca had gone with them, but his son would say only "She didn't want to come home". He and his friends had taken her to the lake for duck-hunting, Mike had said when his father raised his hand, and the guns had scared her so she left. She's scared of guns, his father said. Why did you take her hunting when you knew she was scared of guns?

Maybe once they go off right by her she wouldn't be scared, I thought. I did it so she wouldn't be scared. But she got scared and left.

He could hear the buzz of the other boat coming across the lake. His wife had to drive to the launch ramp on the far side and then to ride across so as to get to Rebecca in the rowboat; he had stayed with her in the meantime. She was seven and had been the night in a rowboat alone on a lake, but he couldn't bring himself to call to her. She wouldn't understand. He could see she wouldn't understand.

His daughter Rebecca was very thin, and the wet blue dress she was wearing stuck to her, so she looked thinner. Her hair, which clung to her skull with the damp, and her eyes were brown. You could see she was retarded by looking at her face. Before -when he had last seen her- you couldn't tell: she was too aware to seem like other retarded children. Rebecca had seemed odd but not impaired. Now you could see opacity and dullness in her features, lying on her like a film. She was looking at the bottom of the boat and she hadn't moved since he got there, except for a small and constant rocking back and forth. Her hands were tied with twine to an oarlock.

He had hit his son across the face in anger. Although his mother usually protected her children, she wouldn't protect Michael this time. He had gone to shoot ducks and had taken her, and didn't know where she was. She could have drowned or wandered onto the road.

She isn't drowned. She was in the rowboat on the lake. She took the boat.

When he got there and saw all the bottles and cartridges, where she was anchored and his daughter Rebecca's face he knew what had happened. Watching her rock back and forth was like seeing a censor swinging, dispersing her shock and dumb fear like incense into the atmosphere. Fifteen feet away he could feel it.

They had tied her to the boat and anchored her where they put the decoys. Then they drank for a good while and got into the blinds and fired their shotguns almost directly over her head for, judging by the cartridges, about a half an hour. Almost three hundred spent shells were in the blind.

Her mother a dot on the horizon and her father silent on the shore, Rebecca rocked just slightly harder and fell into the bottom of the boat, her frail legs sticking up, her small shoes undone.

Colby Linthwaite

## Ivory Lace

I am not here with you  
As well you know  
Though we sit close together  
Sipping tea  
Some sudden thoughts have stirred  
Yes, sudden thoughts absurd  
And I am gone again

*You show me a bit of your  
Wedding dress fabric;  
You show me your soul in your eyes—  
Eggshell satin, ivory lace,  
Blushing face. . .*

And I wake—more tea?  
Of course! I know  
You like milk and lots of sugar  
And you're not getting married  
Silly me

*You grin,  
"I'm not drinking,"  
And pull your dress tight  
Showing you're, as they say,  
In a family way. . .*

I'd better stop this  
You don't even want children  
Let's go to a movie  
Just us  
No silly boys.

Camille Gooderham



Tom Weinacht

You, you Poetess  
Carefully weaving unrelated images  
Into verse, thick,  
Like frozen molasses, with  
Exciting Allusions.

All your lovers:  
Old, new,  
Borrowed.  
All blue—

Blue ink now  
Recorded neatly (with feverish dullness) on  
Deliciously insignificant-looking pieces  
Of processed, bleached white trees;  
Trees which many Esteemed poets  
(Who obviously lacked Lovers)  
Were moved to write of.

You, you Lover  
Lips quivering, eyes wondering  
Tail wagging, mouth flapping

Ingenué

Everything a love affair  
Everyone a lover

So bat your lashes,  
Imagine—  
Make vows  
(Which are broken)  
Then cry, wail  
And redden the blade

You, you Christian  
Sing Praises, drink coffee,  
Pray to Mary

Learn much from those  
You admittedly disrespect

Be fervent, pray loudly  
Sing louder, feel deeper  
Praise God, for She is great

Then celebrate—let's!  
But who is coming?  
Not he? Not she?

I'm tired.

Go then, and  
Contemplate what we are missing.

*Amy Nurse*

## **Man, in Chair**

I just looked at him and pulled the trigger and then the hole in the muzzle of the gun flew through the air and landed inside his head so that he then had a hole in his head. The gun was useless after that of course because it had no more hole in it. I used it as a doorjamb for seven years until the tenement burned down because Larry had brought only ten thousand dollars to pay Raymond with and Raymond had asked for eleven thousand dollars. The gun might have survived but even if it had the firefighters would have taken it and polished it up and given it to the policemen who would have used it as false evidence to convict somebody who was wanting it. That was what had happened to Mitch down the street when he saw a policeman and a policeperson buying drugs from Raymond and he told another policeperson about it. Raymond has never been arrested for anything, not for all the men he tied up in chairs and not even for the one he asked me to shoot, which I did, just like I said before. Raymond was proud of me for that and started to give me routes through the neighbourhood which involved taking packages to people and taking different packages back from them in exchange which I never looked inside of because it wouldn't have been professional. Raymond once asked me if I ever wondered what was inside the packages and I told him that I knew damned well it was drugs and drug money inside the packages but damned if I'd look in them and Raymond said that he understood my argument. Raymond treated me well because he knew I was a professional unlike my father, who had not even finished high school because once he had interacted wrong with the local judge who had then steeped up his fine so much that my father could no longer afford to go to school. My father wanted me to be better than him and to never get into any trouble with the judge even if the judge did owe Raymond a few favours. My father wanted me to not make any of the mistakes he did and watched at me constantly in that kind of way that keeps you under more of an eyeball than half the police force could do. My father wanted a lot of things but at the end I think he just wanted to get himself out of that chair.

*Alex Wiebe*

