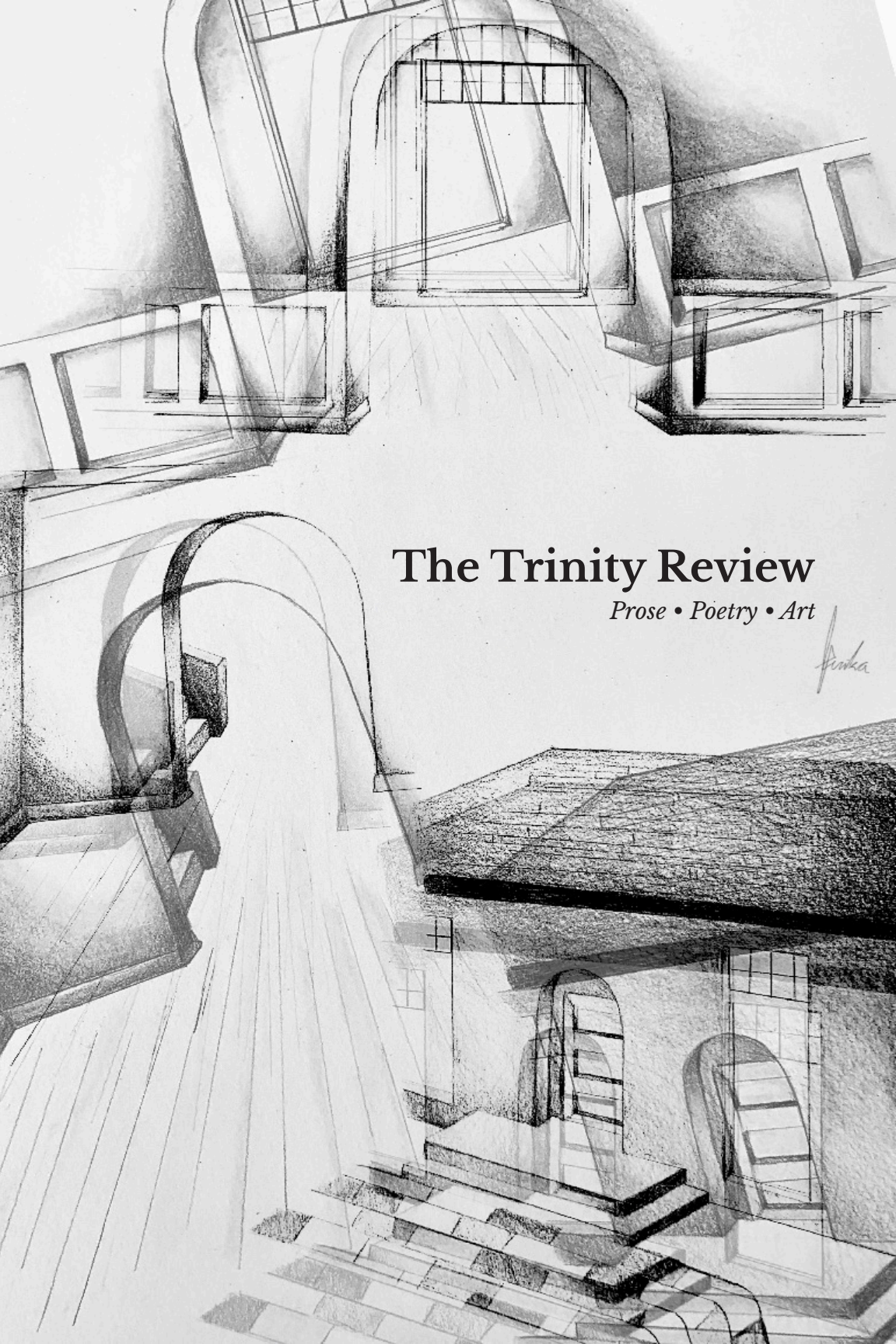


TR 134.2



The Trinity Review

Prose • Poetry • Art

Finke

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The Trinity Review

Spring Journal 2022

THE TRINITY UNIVERSITY REVIEW CXXIV
SPRING JOURNAL

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

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It is difficult to find repose in this city. People chatter with other people. Engines screech at other engines. Phones are on constant alert. One exists in a constant state of excitation, driftwood trapped in a capricious current, pushed and shoved here and there. It is even more difficult to be literary in this city. Concentration has become a precious commodity.

We could always use a little more ambience, a little more aura, and a little more immersion in our current world. The physical book you hold in your hands contains a different world—different worlds to be exact. The book you hold in your hands does not demand an instant reply. It does not demand you to be at multiple places at once. It only demands your attention for brief moments in time. It asks that you exist at a slower pace, your eyes following a single thread of thought until the end. It asks that you place yourself within the story and soak up the feelings of joy and melancholy and wonder and most of all, peace.

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to our contributors for their wonderful submissions. It takes courage to put pen to paper and offer up a part of yourself to the world. But I am so thankful that you did. Next, I would like to thank my editorial team for all their hard work behind the scenes. Their dedication makes it possible to review, revise, and produce Trinity Review every single year.

I will leave you to the delightful, strange, and sometimes hilarious worlds of TR 134.2. May it be a place of rest, of escape, and of tranquillity amidst the hustle and bustle of an ever-moving city.

Amory S. Zhao
Editor-in-Chief



“Tangled” by Indira de Cartier

“JACK - JANUARY 10TH, 1941”

Nikolai Levandovsky

Epigraph of a vintage book.

rough gold-foil ribbon of a different
age bent moss-paint foil gold lettering
some signature inside of a world war
II vet who read old poems for morale
then died.

Stoic of Three

Jeanne Polochansky

what is he thinking,

that man in the monochrome mask?
impassive anti-mime
playing angel pretend, keeping justice
his wings on the crests of striking bands
he will call out sins (numbers, names)
until real life resumes by the lockers

what is he thinking,

that manly shepherd in green?
apron stiff, face taciturn
he knows more than just the shoots
a spy in the modern-age,
divulging intel in the form of pickling jars

what is it he is thinking of?

that man by the non-river
huddled away,
a recluse
knowledgeable to a fault – fumbling
with the line
some pitiful ideal, some idol ancestor

a tarot brethren
a trinity of
fallen gods, no, not creators
not premature angels – not all-righteous

simply those,
secretive and quiet,
who are watched from afar
and fulfill immortal decrees

ILLINGWORTH TRAPP

Phoebe Jenner

An Introduction

It would be impossible to describe Illingworth Trapp without first providing a character sketch of that most illustrious Georgian gunslinger, Doc Holliday; for in the last five months of his life, Illingworth Trapp had become so convinced he was Holliday and imitated his famed persona with such ease that many at the Mount Usonian Sanitorium wondered if Trapp had ever been intimately acquainted with the lethal dentist. However, Holliday had died five years before Trapp's birth, which is one of the reasons why Illingworth's tuberculosis-addled mind had ever thought it possible that he, a lowly Philadelphia physician, could be the very spirit of Doc Holliday come again.

Before any judgement can be passed, it must be acknowledged that Trapp and Holliday's similarities were plenty. Both were men of science, and both had found themselves, in their thirty-seventh year, dying in a Colorado sanitorium. Colorado Springs had been Doc Holliday's final resting place, and it was only a little more than ten miles from Usonian. Perhaps if the laws of our world were more permissive, Trapp could very well have been the reincarnation that he supposed himself to be; but as it is, he was simply a not-so-young man whom the world had treated badly, and whose strength of mind, which excelled so much at poker and blackjack, could not sustain the reality of his mortality.

Doc Holliday was a sickly man whose only defense was his sharp tongue and nimble flick of the index finger. He might have been more in life had he not been less of a gentleman, but there are many who would argue with such a bold assessment. They would say that

Doc Holliday was the greatest sharpshooter who ever lived in the West, and that his unholy alliance with Wyatt Earp represented the epitome of American manhood. Despite his dreaded reputation, six years after his day at the O.K. Corral, Doc Holliday was so afflicted with consumption that he retired to a hotel in Colorado Springs with Big Nose Kate, the Hungarian dance hall girl he had taken as his common-law wife.

Illingworth Trapp was born to a middle-class Philadelphian family in 1892. After graduating from medical school, he married his sweetheart and set up practice in New Jersey. But, as fate would have it, he was struck down in 1928 with the very disease he had been attempting to cure, and travelled to Doctor Emanuel Ross's famed sanitorium in Colorado, the lavish facilities of which had attracted that specific breed of the very rich: the ill who do not want to get better.

The international smart set that congregated at Usonian had the capital needed to afford spacious rooms at a sanitorium that was more like an exclusive hotel. Consumption was a glamorous disease, and the patients at Mount Usonian who were not seriously afflicted took a bit of delight in its romance. Even the small orchestra who performed on the main floor often included a piece from *Traviata* or *La bohème* in their repertoire, as if they and their audience were sharing a private joke. However, Illingworth took no pleasure in the elevated society he was surrounded by, nor did he make use of the entertainment rooms, billiards tables, concerts and theatricals, casual affairs, or guided mountain hikes. He was living in a beautiful fantasy where he was no longer Illingworth Trapp but a world-weary outlaw, where pretty nurses streamed in and out of rooms like flecks of white dust in streams of sun, and where he could always find a group for cards.

THE COLORADO INQUIRER

Sunday, September 9, 1928

Colorado Springs Death House Claims Life of Architect

On the seventh of September, architect Cedric Chambers checked into the half million-dollar tuberculosis sanatorium he designed in 1901.

Under the instruction of German physician Emmanuel Ross and with the funding of local businessman and current mayor Charles Darling, Chambers had constructed the vast facilities at the foot of Mount Cheyenne in a range of styles, varying from the Jacobean entry hall to the Spanish Moorish courtyards. Many residents of Colorado Springs have deemed the building an "eyesore."

Now, Chambers has become a patient of his former associate. He follows a strict health regimen of ten hours of fresh Colorado air and a diet of mineral water, meat, and white bread. Ross, famously homeopathic in his methods, published a piece in the Inquirer last year condemning the hydrotherapy and electric shock treatments used by many neighbouring facilities.

Colorado Springs, CO

September 20, 1928

Miss Tamara Ross

Bryn Mawr College

Bryn Mawr, PA

Tam –

Have got back all in one piece, only shaken and bruised. Both the keepers are anxious to hear about you – have left out details of

Baseball Player and new haircut just to save you shame. I know you don't want to come back until Christmas, but please, for my sake, consider Thanksgiving. I am all alone, with the girls from school gone off to college or on honeymoons, and me with nothing to do now that I've finished the nursing course. Daddy won't let me properly start work, so all I do is go in a few times a week to talk to Old People like Frederick Grout, oilman, or Miss Digworth Hogg, spinster daughter of disgraced earl. Daddy likes it when I stay out of their rooms – no doubt he worries I'll get snatched!

But there is someone new – a rather confused man named Illingworth Trapp. Thinks he's Doc Holliday (I know!). No one has an inkling what to do. We only have one head doctor and he's just here to calm down patients with stir fever, not someone in a complete delusion. Daddy wants to send him away, but I know he worries that a proper loony bin will fry him to pieces. And it is our fault, isn't it – he only became this way after he arrived here.

Here's a secret – I went to see him. The day after I came back. He's frightfully handsome, but his hair has gone completely white from mental distress. They say Doc Holliday's did as well. He has very delicate features and a soft voice. I worried he would get blown away in the wind. But he's sharp as a whip – caught a fly in mid-air, between his pointer finger and his thumb. Daddy's worried I'll get stuck on him – har har.

Please, please come back soon. Go up to Princeton and bring our brother with you, if you can tear him away from his notebooks and libraries.

Love from
Amelia

An Overheard Conversation, Second Floor Linen Closet

“Did you see Delilah Day’s dress last night at dinner?”

“Mm. Ruby red silk charmeuse, from one of her poppa’s silk mills, no doubt. You know that movie –*Children of Divorce*?”

“With Esther Ralston! I always say she looks just like her.”

“Especially that scene when she’s wearing a tiara. I always thought she looked like the spitting image of Delilah Day.”

“She’d never split up a marriage, either, just like Esther Ralston’s character. I swear, she’s the most genuine lady I ever met. You know, a week ago she gave me one of her old cigarette cases? Some boyfriend of hers sent her a real engraved one, with that pearly inside.”

“She never talks to me. I always thought she looked so sad – like a girl in a painting. She’s too young to die, I always thought.”

“You know who would?”

“Die young?”

“Split up a marriage.”

“You don’t mean Amelia Ross.”

“He’s *married*, you know. His wife should be coming here next month. And here she is, sneaking in and out of rooms at all hours of the night, thinking we won’t see. Well I *do see*, and so does everyone else.”

“You don’t think it’s – I don’t know, you don’t think it’s romantic?”

“You can’t be serious. I mean, who is he? He comes here to get better, he loses his mind, and then he picks up with the youngest daughter of the man who’s curing him.”

“Trying to cure him.”

“And what about her? What kind of a girl falls for a man in his

state? He's barely even aware of what's going on. It would be like falling in love with a baby. I don't know what she sees in him, other than what she wants to see."

"Don't say that."

Lyrics Written on Dick Fields's Paper Cocktail Napkin

If on a dark and rainy night
You were Jack the Ripper
And happened upon me with a fright
I'd come out feeling chipper

If your guest room was snug and warm
And you were Lizzie Borden
I'd risk the axe and prop the door
I'd be your prison warden

If I was nursing at your side
And you were Illingworth Trapp
I would be happy to have died
If I was sat on your lap

Dr. D. M. Roach

Mount Usonian Sanitorium, Colorado Springs

October 10, 1928

Ross –

Advise immediate transportation of Mr. Illingworth Trapp to Colorado State Hospital. Your personal doctrines do not represent the views of the board as a whole. To keep such an unpredictable and potentially dangerous patient here is placing the residents of Mount

Usonian at risk. Disregarding this warning will put you in danger of lawsuit.

Colorado Springs, CO

October 13, 1928

Miss Tamara Ross

Bryn Mawr College

Bryn Mawr, PA

Tam –

No, Peter isn't staying here anymore. They discharged him while I was out visiting you – he would have written to you, I'm sure, if his leaving wasn't so sudden. I do wish we could lower the rates for some people who run on bad luck, but Daddy says that's what happens when you play the market.

You asked about Sylvia Digworth Hogg. Don't think you would like her much – far too stodgy. No longer goes by any kind of title because she's technically incognito, thanks to her father's strange German connections.

Richard Fields, however, you would adore. The liveliest man, who took ill while writing an operetta (musical revue?) on Broadway. Spends half the year in California with all those Hollywood types.

And then there's Delilah Day. All the nurses are in love with her, but I can't see the appeal. She keeps to herself too much – I wouldn't trust her farther than I could throw her, which could be a good yard because she's as slight as a daisy petal. Always swanning around in her pearls and her "China silk."

Frederick Grout is a fuddy-duddy, too old to be of any interest. Cedric Chambers is here as well – surely you remember him from all those dinner parties. He used to let you tweak his moustache. Lena Malarkey is an Irish woman who came here from Reno (I think

we all know what she was doing there). She's off her rocker but doesn't deserve half the ill-treatment people give her.

All in all, you haven't missed much. Remember when you, me, and Art used to sneak in through the service entrance on nights when they were having a big shindig? It had to have been at least seven years ago. We would hide behind the red curtains in the lobby and watch whatever show was being put on, thinking that nobody could see us. Of course, they must have spotted us and simply never said anything, I know that now, but it's still nice to think about. I had forgotten about it.

Love from
Amelia

A Telephone Conversation, Colorado Springs to Los Angeles

"Hullo, darling. It's Dickie Fields."

"Dick!" The shrill voice shot through the line like a zap of electricity. "We all thought you were dead."

"Oh I *am*. This is the body of Richard Fields, I should say. How's Tom and the gang?"

"We're fine, darling, just fine. But what about you? Have you forgotten us all and formed a league of your own?"

Dick tapped his cigarette against the ashtray next to the phone, one meant for nurses, as cigarettes were strictly prohibited to patients. He had Amelia Ross smuggle him a deck of Marlboros every few days. "Oh, not really. Mostly senior citizens and divorcees. Whoever is old-fashioned enough to get T.B. But there's one egg you would get a kick out of. This man came here a month ago, and – get ready for this – has gotten it into his head that he's Doc Holliday."

"Darling, I don't know who that is."

“You know, the old gunslinger. Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp.”

She let out a tinkling laugh. “But of course! You’ll never believe it, but Tom’s working on a picture *at this moment* about the two of them. I thought you said *Dog* Holliday, you see.”

“But isn’t it fascinating? And he really thinks he’s him, too. Not an ounce of doubt.”

“You’ll think me an idiot – even more than you already do – but forgive me for asking; what exactly did he *do*? I mean, why’s Tom making a picture about him?”

Dick took a drag of his cigarette, then let out a sputtering cough. There was no clot, but he furiously put out the cigarette in the tray. “He shot people. Sometimes men he got in fights with at saloons, you know, and sometimes outlaws. Of course, the outlaws were outlaws because *they* shot people, so it really just folded in on itself.”

“Sounds ghastly. I don’t know why Tom goes to the trouble he does – you know, he’s dug up old newspapers and letters from people who knew about him? Why anybody would want to keep musty old papers about someone like that is past me. I mean, don’t they just take up space? Who wants to read about a silly murderer?”

A Tableau, Main Lounge

Delilah Day is by the window as she always is, dressed in ivory satin like a girl bride. Dick Fields is by her side, plunking out a rag on the baby grand. Occasionally, he’ll lean over for a sign of her approval or even amusement, but she never relents. Delilah Day and her sadness are the eighth seal of God.

Early that morning, some guests went out hunting, and now a clump of them stand by the window, their guns and bags propped up

against the wall. Frederick Grout has stationed himself at the empty card and frowns when the hunters become boisterous.

Amelia Ross is listening to Lena Malarkey, whom the nurses call exclusively by her last name on account of her thick Irish accent and tumbles of soft words that never seem to stop. In her distracted state, Lena Malarkey hears voices and speaks to them as if they were before her. Sometimes, the crueler nurses jokingly talk to her through the vents, pretending to be the father she left behind in County Clare, the child she has been quarantined from, the husband she came West to divorce before she became afflicted. There is a copy of *Songs of Innocence* and *Experience* at her side.

Illingworth Trapp, in all his sincere intensity, seats himself across from Frederick Grout. Amelia Ross catches his eye from across the room, and he gravely bows his head in recognition.

She watches him as he plays. Usually, he is the very image of a card shark, but today, something is not right. Grout, despite his old age, has noticed it. Throughout the game, Trapp becomes distracted and searches Amelia out. A group of the hunters and all their gear forms around the table, creating a makeshift wall between Trapp, Grout, and the world around them.

Fifteen minutes pass. Dick Fields is still at the piano – he’s made up a ditty about Usonian, but no one can hear his words over the sea of coughs. Trapp roars, “One hundred dollars?”, Grout’s hand drops below the table, and before anyone knows what they are witnessing, the singular pop of gunfire sounds once, twice, and Grout falls backwards like a felled tree.

At first, the crowd thinks that Trapp used one of the hunting rifles that were lying by the card table, in which case, at such a close range, Frederick Grout’s arm would be no better than a scattering of bones. But no – Trapp had smuggled in his own handgun, and that

is what he uses to fire two bullets into the old man's right arm. Grout survives, but even if fate hadn't been in his favour, Illingworth Trapp would still have been doomed. To the Colorado State Hospital, it is.

From the Diary of Mrs. Lena Malarkey

Wednesday, October 17, 1928

The whole group is binary. Everyone's leaving, dashing off as fast as they can, but I still hold the shape of them in my mind. On the left: Dick Fields, Delilah Day, the nurses. They writhe and twist, they smirk and laugh. On the right: Amelia Ross, Sylvia Digworth Hogg, Illingworth Trapp, perhaps even myself. We look at something awful and see something beautiful instead. We think that decay is poetry. We idolize things meant to be shut up and forgotten about. I can't go back to Ireland.

THE COLORADO INQUIRER

Thursday, October 17, 1928

Mount Usonian Faces Ruination After Gruesome Shooting

Following the maiming of Texas oil baron Frederick Grout by deranged patient Illingworth Trapp, Mount Usonian Sanatorium faces permanent closure as its patients and backers withdraw their support and funds in the face of mass scandal.

The harshest blow has been the resignation of Mayor Charles Darling from the board of directors. A major champion of the sanatorium, Mayor Darling's absence will force the board to consider shutting the doors of Mount Usonian forever. The number of patients has dwindled as most of its wealthy patrons have moved to other local institutions for fear of mutilation. Grout is currently preparing a

major medical malpractice suit

Colorado Springs, CO

October 17, 1928

Miss Tamara Ross

Bryn Mawr College

Bryn Mawr, PA

Tam –

Oh, stay where you are. I know Daddy has officially summoned you and Art, but it's no use. I don't want you to see things as they are now – but there is such beauty to it all, like a palace abandoned by its court. When I told Daddy this, he had such a fit that I thought he was going to throw me out the house.

I know you would make light of it all if you were here, and I just won't stand for it. What would you say about me? That I needed something to do? And you would have nothing new to say about him. Dangerous, violent, mad as a hatter.

But don't they see? He shot him because he thought he was Doc Holliday. If it had been Doc Holliday at that card table instead of him, he would have shot Grout because that is who he was. Doc Holliday would have shot a man to avoid paying a debt, and for a moment, I almost thought that it was him in the flesh. I've never seen a man's hand move so quickly in all my life. No doubt you'll say, "Why would God bring a man back from the dead just to kill him with consumption at the age of thirty-seven?" I hate that cynicism of yours.

If only I had really known his character – but I shan't keep on this way. Every being is a secret to all others. Isn't that beautiful?

Love from
Amelia



The Poet's Lament by Helena Robbins

Boxing Day

Sophia Bannon

Pink carpet

Dug my toes

So far in

Cigarette smoke

Lingers heavily

Smelt like sharp

Discipline

And Cable TV

Can't stop choking

On this

Creeping fog

Olives in a clear dish

Sucking that

Red bit

Right out

Dad's head in the couch

Nanny brought out

Pumpkin pie

With cold vanilla ice cream

I never ate

Uncle Jim

Is chopping wood outside

Mama is
Far away now

Vines wrap
Round and round
Gone is the
Sunlight

They made me eat
Pumpkin pie
With cold vanilla ice cream

Picking Apples on a September Afternoon

DS Maolalai

in day's heat
trees sweat fruit

on burned hill-
side foreheads,

on deep orchard
valleys and cool.
press temples
against rough-brick
walls. swell
under sunlight,
eat dirt.

SHOEBOX QUEER

Cooper Barron

Cain buried me in a shoebox with a poppy flower crown, 'like a princess,' he said. The funeral was premature. I can still move my knuckles, he knapped off my cock and the tips of my fingers, now rotten obsidian claws and stump, ugly like raw impotency—like the trailer park's open fields—awful self-castrated forest clearings that made way for flat, bland, meaningless open fields. My painted nails exist in my head only, alongside dreams of bark, fleshy wood that could grow tall and strong and hard—erecting to let me climb out of this dysfunction. He said 'a faggot could never be a brother of mine,' and put me in my place on the top shelf, back corner in that dark room, by the women's high heels and stockings where I kiss my drying bones, holding crown against eunuch wounds as if to fuck away the numbness. I am forced into social castration—unallowed to speak of pride or gender abolitionism like a queer freak should, the trailer park suburbs of white-trash homophobes found me out, 'some crossdressing pussy,' they say. It was only nail polish, an exciting taboo, some artifact meant for another species—but every part of it was poetry—the caustic smell, the acrylic on canvas, their whispers like affirmations, visions of utopia. I promised the ghosts of my pretty little faggot fingers that I will plant saplings inside their open bones and sprout new digits, wood that might not be castrated by a jealous society. I'm not defined by this mutilation—man does not need manhood—true man is

having integrity in cockless living, false masculine forces
nail from nailbed—as if afraid of well-kempt pretty male
nails—rage like fertilizer—hands like redwoods now—
burying trailer park alcoholics in transcendence—
this crown no longer heroin, but a sunkissed canopy of
cocksucking branches longing for leaves, and scars on
bark may disfigure forever—but the beauty is that trees
grow anyway—and when autumn comes, my leaves will be
painted the most beautiful colours.

La Casa Dell'Arte

Dave Gregory

I lost my faith when I was eight. Four decades passed before I wanted it back. That longing and desire for reckoning led me to Rome in early winter. I booked a modest room at La Casa Dell'Arte, one block from Roma Termini, on the sixth floor of a faded yellow building. Grime coated the plaster. Brown paint flaked from tall shutters.

Laden with a heavy suitcase, I was grateful for the old elevator whose gears rattled as it rose. The clunky steel contraption resembled an antique birdcage with a dark flight of stairs wrapped around it.

Savage, frantic breathing pulsed above the grind and scrape of machinery. Flesh slapped and echoed off bare walls. Through iron bars, I glimpsed a mixed-race, middle-aged couple pressed together, standing back to front, against a wall on the unlit landing between floors four and five. They could have been amorous guests but the hotel only occupied the top three floors of the residential building, leaving the stairs and elevator open to anyone off the street.

On my way to dinner, unhindered by luggage, I took the stairs but halted at the fifth-floor landing. A couple grunted and gasped in the same spot where the other pair had commingled earlier. Sweat and cheap perfume scented the air. On the wall opposite me, next to the Annunciation, a print of Raphael's cherubs looked up and away, oblivious to the sound.

I peered across the elevator shaft. It may have been the same black woman but this fellow had long grey hair and his grunting was more effeminate. His discarded coat lay at his feet on cold terrazzo tile. A transaction was underway, not a romantic affair. Excited and appalled in equal measure, I waited for the clanking elevator rather than disturb them. I kept my back turned throughout the descent but

watched from the corner of my eye.

I visited nearby basilicas the next day. Each sanctuary was crammed with ornate artifacts and glittering gold. The odour of melting candle wax intertwined with body funk and lost prayers. I felt nothing. I'd been a delicate child, bullied at school, raised in the faith by my mother, but my belief in a benevolent higher power evaporated following her sudden and tragic death.

On my return to the hotel, a smooth-skinned, full-figured black woman, wearing a long fur coat and thigh-high boots as red and shiny as cheese wax, smiled and nodded as I approached La Casa Dell'Arte.

"Beautiful night," I said, even though December in Italy wasn't beautiful.

"Mmmm-mmmm," she sang as though tempted by a hot, savoury meal.

Three similar, heavysset ladies lingered near my hotel and often climbed the stairs with clients. The women, the only locals to acknowledge me in any way, smiled and said "*Buonasera*" whenever I passed.

They were lovely, with voices like music. On a treeless, narrow street of faded, plastered-brick buildings, they provided colour; their painted faces radiated with personality. They weren't selling me their wares, they were friendly and genuine. Even while escorting satisfied men out the front door, they were eager to greet me as a neighbour.

I spent my final day in Rome at the Vatican. It was my first time inside the Sistine Chapel but I'd seen everything before, in fragments, spread over decades, across the globe, everywhere from grade school history books to the framed scenes hanging in my hotel room. A puzzle had been completed but I felt no satisfying snap of the final piece. It was a gaudy room with hundreds of people ignoring the

church's edict and discretely angling cell phones toward the ceiling, taking the illicit photos I was too timid to capture.

I lingered until closing time but came no nearer to faith or serenity. After a humble meal near the Pantheon, I walked the rest of the way to the hotel. Via Filippo Turati was deserted. Though exhausted, I felt an ascetic's need to climb the stairs but before I reached the first step, strained breathing and encouraging gasps drifted from above.

I considered taking the elevator but felt voyeuristic—or maybe, as a paying guest, entitled. On the landing between floors four and five, an eager man's raw groans increased in pitch above a rapid, rhythmic slapping. A woman's dark, heavy arms reached upward, palms against the wall. Her coat and skirt were bunched over her waist, her thighs bare above red boots. A tall, burly man in a long coat slouched behind her, clutching her chest and thrusting forward. His chin nuzzled her shoulder.

Exposed to this lack of dignity and shame, my curiosity turned to disgust. The couple hadn't heard my approach.

"Excuse me," I said.

The stairs were narrow. My elbow grazed his. He leapt back and grew taller. A wet gurgle bubbled from his mouth. He exhaled with a deep groan, held his breath, then exhaled again. With both hands, he reached for his crotch and growled.

The woman spun around as I continued upward. Her coat and skirt rustled and fell modestly into place.

"*Tranquillo bambino*," she said to him.

"*Porco Dio*," he muttered and tossed a dripping condom into the corner, where it landed with a splat. He cursed a second time, louder, then shouted at the prostitute while he fastened his pants.

"*Tranquillo bambino*." Her voice failed to soothe him.

From the next landing, I peered across the elevator shaft. The woman stood firm. Her eyes, wide with rebuke, shone in the dark. I didn't speak Italian but a negotiation was underway. The terms weren't in her client's favour. His arms waved with force and menace. His voice rose.

She remained resolute. My muscles tightened.

I rushed down the steps to her defence but the john lunged toward me, screaming. I pieced everything together: upset that I'd interrupted his climax, he felt entitled to a refund, which she refused to offer, so he sought revenge—from me, the weakest person present.

I spun on my heels and climbed two steps at a time, terrified, as if a raging grizzly were on my tail, fangs bared, eyes agleam. I felt for my room key, amazed at how quickly I passed from pilgrim to prey. My jaws clamped. I couldn't scream. Wetness oozed from my armpits and between my toes. I reached the last step and rounded the corner. My door came into view but the hallway was longer than I remembered.

Time stopped as I slipped the key card into the slot and held my breath, waiting for the tiny green light to shine. Once the mechanism clicked open, I slipped inside. Afraid to look back, I put my weight against the door and braced for the onslaught. The lock caught when the thud came. The door mercifully held as a raging bear flattened itself against the finite barrier. I looked for cracked wood, flying paint chips, or other signs the entrance had been compromised.

The monster's shouting was infernal as he retreated and flung himself again at my door. His energy transferred through the grain. It felt like getting walloped by a six-foot boxing glove. The impact burst capillaries in my back and shoulders. A second later, pounding began. One fist thumped, the other palm slapped, and he kicked at the lower panel—with both feet. His anger defied gravity. It was impossible but I

heard and felt all four extremities slam in unison.

I switched on the light and scanned for a weapon. Without a kitchenette, there were no knives or a cast-iron skillet. The ashtray on the ledge and vase below the windowsill would only shatter, leaving me defenceless while further enraging my tormentor.

My cell phone hadn't worked since my arrival in Italy. A yellow house phone sat on a table by the bed but I didn't know the local emergency number or how to get an outside line. This late in the evening, the small hotel desk, two floors below me, sat empty.

I rushed to the window, brushed aside the sheers and, with trembling hands, raised the heavy sash. There was a tiny white and yellow awning above the entrance to the tabaccheria on the ground floor. I doubted it would slow my fall enough to prevent my bones from shattering against cold pavement.

There was movement on the street. Two prostitutes walked together. A passing man eyed the heavier one. I recognized her shimmering boots.

"Someone's trying to kill me," I shouted, hoping the women spoke English.

One woman turned left, then right, seeking the source. A solid row of buildings walled the street on both sides. My voice echoed, impossible to follow.

"Up here. Please help!"

The attacker stopped kicking and was charging again, using his body as a battering ram. The chain, hanging limp, rattled against the doorframe with each wallop. I rushed to slip it into place but suspected nothing would restrain the beast much longer.

My insides weakened and became as vulnerable as the door. Blood pumped, adrenaline coursed, and nausea simmered. Arms spread, with my back against the wood, I pictured the inevitable

conclusion: the door bursting, my room being trashed, and my body pulverised. I imagined the inside of a foreign ambulance and wondered where I'd stashed the card with my insurance company's hotline number. I pictured doctors yammering in Italian and me, unable to comprehend a word before losing consciousness.

Somewhere down the hall, a door opened but no one intervened. I couldn't blame them. The man was dangerous and hysterical. On drugs, maybe.

The doorframe buckled with each impact. So did my bones. The floor shook. My whole body was wet. I prayed for the first time since I was eight. But then a woman bellowed, furious and accusing. She spoke Italian with the force of an angry mother defending her child from bullies on the playground.

The man went silent. A single slap reverberated. He mumbled an apology. Then footsteps faded down the stairs.

I slumped to the floor, exhaled, and pressed my head into both hands. I was safe and alive in the eternal city but couldn't help crying.

After enough time had passed for her to escort her client outside, a soft voice called at my door. "Easy child." Translated into English, the phrase grew richer, more natural, and graceful. Her voice transported me.

She couldn't have known all the reasons I'd been teased and bullied in school: for wearing purple corduroy pants, stuttering, owning a Pocahontas lunchbox, and singing to myself in the playground's farthest corner. She also couldn't have known my reprieve from torment and abuse came at the price of my mother's death from an accidental overdose, three days before my eighth birthday, but the beautiful stranger's voice and tone assured me she understood.

"Easy child," she repeated until my crying stopped. "Easy

child.”

I removed my socks, pants, shirt, and slipped into bed. She kept repeating those two words. Each time, I was certain she’d said enough and would depart but she lingered as though time didn’t matter.

After ten minutes, I opened the door to hear better.

She followed me inside. Still shaking, I crawled under the sheets and she tucked me in. There was a chair by the window. She moved it beside the bed and rested her hand on my shoulder until warmth flowed through her fingertips and melted down my spine. Her voice echoed with love, and I ascended into the grandeur, lifted from despair to rapture.

“Easy child.”

Warm, consoled, I listened to her prayer and was a boy again. Innocent. Fearless. Ready to believe.

“Easy child.”

Lulled by the music in her tranquil voice, I rolled onto my back. The ceiling transformed into a blank canvas. Preliminary charcoal sketches of the famous chapel looped and scrolled across the beige, water-stained surface.

Couple Couplet

Jack Rousseau

1

When she convinced him to quit chewing tobacco she said it was for his health. They both used to smoke so they'd both seen the warnings on cartons and packs of cigarettes – cautionary tales told in a single frame. She evoked the image of a mouth with black rotting gums.

“If smoking will do that,” she said, “imagine what chewing will do.”

“Hm,” he said.

She had a point there. He wasn't ready to admit it but she definitely had a point. Instead he waited for her to drop the subject for a couple weeks before quitting. Then he could act like he'd reached the conclusion and made the decision independently.

She didn't notice when he switched to licorice because he was still spitting it out.

“Haven't you given that up yet?” she said.

“Give what up?”

“Chewing tobacco!”

“I gave that up weeks ago,” he lied. “This is licorice.”

She could smell that it was licorice, not tobacco, but there was one thing she couldn't figure out.

“Why are you spitting it out?” she said.

“Licorice gives me a stomach ache,” he lied.

“Why don't you chew gum or something?”

“I am chewing something,” he said. “Would you prefer I go back to tobacco?”

In truth, he spat it out because he suspected that she hadn't

convinced him for his health, at least not exclusively, but for her own benefit – breaking a habit that disgusted her.

Chewing and spitting licorice, he reasoned, was equally disgusting. But she couldn't complain about it without admitting that her motive had been selfish from the beginning.

2

When he asked for her gifts he said it was so they wouldn't go to waste. Every gift he gave her was, for one reason or another, unacceptable and summarily rejected. To his credit, he had tried asking her.

“What do you want?” he said. “There must be something you want.”

“Um,” she said.

But she never could think of anything. And anyway, what's the point of telling someone what you want? She might as well give a gift to herself, otherwise the whole exchange would be a counterfeit, and she wouldn't go through the motions of receiving a counterfeit gift – pretending she didn't already know what it was, unwrapping it, and then acting surprised. Such a farce would humiliate both of them.

If she accepted his gifts, with humility, perhaps they could avoid that farce.

Unfortunately, she couldn't hide her disappointed expression when she opened his gifts.

“If you don't like it I'll take it back,” he said. “Or maybe, I don't know, maybe I could get some use out of it.”

“No,” she lied. “I like it.”

“Are you sure?”

“I really like it.”

“You don't look like you like it.”

“Would you prefer I didn’t like it?”

In truth, she kept it because she suspected that he hadn’t failed as a gift-giver, though he had in the traditional sense, but had succeeded as a gift-receiver – buying gifts for her that were actually intended for him.

By keeping his gifts and enjoying them in his presence, she reasoned, she could innocently torment him. But he couldn’t ask to share the gifts without admitting that his motive had been selfish from the beginning.

Opal

Genevieve Sugrue

Precious opal girl

An empress, she is not, not usually at least

The gall she gathered to slip away from between brash fingers was no
act of riot

Rise slowly, dear one

With bitten tongue and downy grey solemnity

Softer than wool

Fiercer than men



“Presence” by Eva Macoretta



“Between Closed Doors” by Eva Macoretta

Fishbowl

Allison Zhao

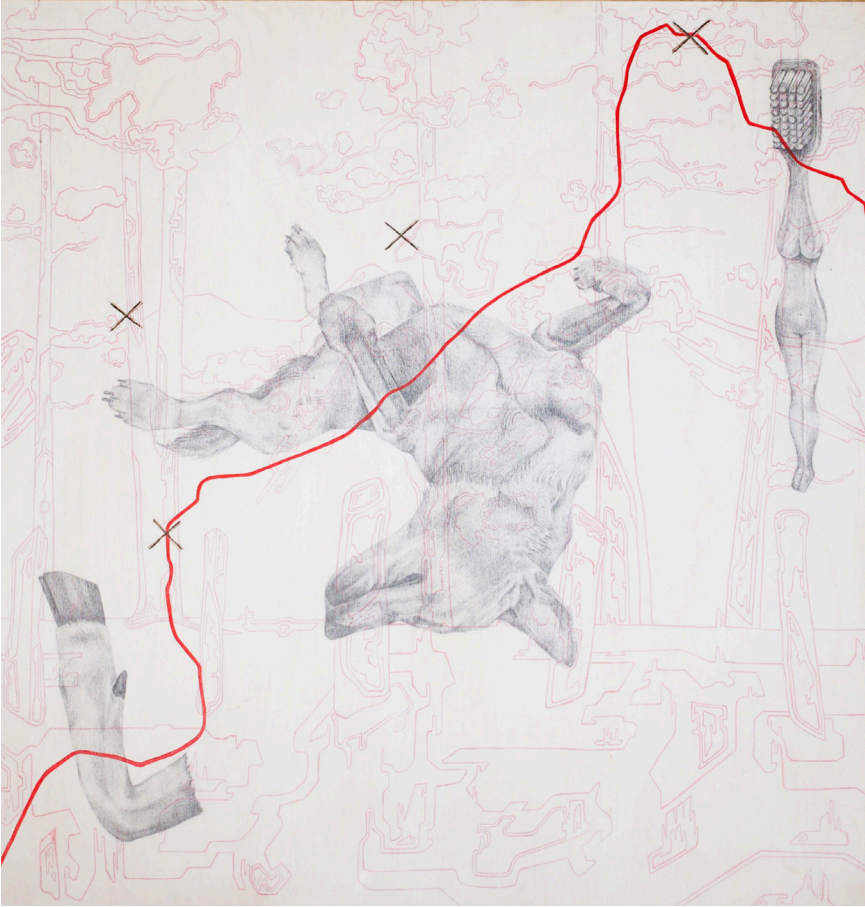
I go sit in my fish bowl on the mornings when
I need to grieve. It sits on the corner of Bloor and Avenue, as big
as the church, with a glass museum to keep it company. The water drowns
out the sounds of the street as I swim to the bottom. No treasure lies down there, only
pavement that I can't touch. There is no better place to wonder why I'm not dying. Other
people's whole worlds flow past, and I'm told that someday I'll join them on my way to
the rest of my life. Passersby do not stop. They avoid my eyes. It's not polite to look too
closely at someone else's sorrow. Everyone around here knows not to throw stones
at house-sized fish bowls, especially not ones with people inside. Loss is solitary.
But if they saw me float upside-down to the surface, I'm comforted knowing
someone would fish me out. Strangers watch over me, like
I once kept vigil for you.



“Kensington Houses” by Jane Forrest



“What Might have Been Lost” by Jane Forrest



“Fernie” by Jayden Couper

A Daring Escape: Local Dog Attempts to Hang Himself

Julliana (Yanni) Santos

Hoy – your dog is dying. Shake yourself awake, my neighbour yells. There’s Copper, named after the conductor, choking on his collar, hanging from our back-yard wall. His paws brush against the tall lemon grass of the empty lot beside ours. He’s calm, eyes wild, a live-wire fire in his struggle. My father never feared these things. He took it in stride, went outside and hoisted Copper’s body up and over. Gave him a chicken leg and thigh as a treat. He’s a good dog, my dad would say. Even when he growls and bites at you, he doesn’t really mean it. He’s made of the din of the streets, was born from a brawl. Eats frogs for breakfast. My dad says they taste like fried chicken. He’s the best dog when you think about it. Even when we had to tie him up, so he’d stop trying to escape, he never once broke his leash, though he could’ve easily ripped it to shreds. I saw my father let him loose once, just to see him run free. He closed the gate, but the next day Copper had found his way back in. My dad chose the softest collar for him. No wonder he didn’t make a fuss when he was hanging by the throat. Now, Copper’s balancing act: my father’s favourite. He would jump on the narrowest bench, onto the narrowest beam, onto the narrowest wall, and walk his tight-rope walk down its shrinking frame, into the neighbour’s lawn. Dad loved that act so much he almost didn’t move the bench. He had to move it when he had to dig his grave. He ate a snail and died that summer. Careless Copper. Dad took salt to every lingering cluster of shells. Watched the snails sizzle as they fried.

“SILVER”

Nikolai Levandovsky

To an old friend.

If I look back on that time, I find myself at the park. It is always sunset, and we are the only ones there. We stand in that corner where the sidewalk splits into my way home and yours. We hold our bikes as if we are about to leave. We face each other and I think we both know. You turn away, and I hurry off so I won't have to watch you go. Sometimes, I wish I had stayed and looked and gotten that little bit of closure. The moment when you disappear behind the trees and are cleanly gone. It is still sunset.

I think of you too often. You haunt my dreams. Your old, small ghost of immeasurable stature with daunting brown eyes. I think of meeting you on a rooftop at the birth of some perfect evening, both warm and cool and fresh and stifling and everything and everything and everything.

laughing moon

Adam Zivo

above the shore was the moon's eye —
larger than me, lazy and judgemental,
the eye of god whose reflection slithered down
from the horizon as a glowing ribbon on the waters,
tethering us in the great darkness
of the natural world churning in between.
i was drunker than i had ever been,
intoxicated by solitude and
kept company by sand dunes.
the resort glowed behind me.
its lamps were calm and for other people
and i had wandered from them
seeking to extract from my chest
the exile that had frothed since arrival,
and had frothed even beyond that,
all the way to the edges of memory.
i couldn't bear to be with everyone else.
some crust had formed,
growing thicker and more carceral
with each pause or counterfeit word.
i ached to shed this and empty myself.
naked, into the water i went,
blind in the roiling darkness,
submerged
and then deaf,
waves crashing
on my eardrums,

and, in fetal position,
sank and held my breath.

lungs searing, up i exploded
and then was cocooned again in noise,
wrapped in the roar of god.
a woman found me later in the sand,
near comatose after i'd dragged myself there
with buckling legs and fear of death
to shut down beneath the moon.
i awoke to white curtains of cotton
in the hospital and,
forgetting that i had chosen to live,
vaguely regretted not dying

Night Swimming

Mathea Treslan

I stare at a billboard advertising grapefruit-coloured eyeliner and think about Cary. At fifteen we leapt between Rosedale swimming pools in the middle of the night, drunk on privilege and my older brother's collection of cognac miniatures. Eight harmless gulps made us invincible. I was grounded for a week, but the rich man laughing on his porch in his bathrobe taught me more than the seven history documentaries I watched afterwards. Something in the way he held his chin to keep from smirking told me I was just like him. Like our illicit dip made him young again.

I am going to see Cary. When we were twelve, I gave Cary my gloves to press up against his bleeding cuticles before a math test. It made a stain like a shadow. They always bled in winter when the air got stale and sharp. Sometimes they bled in summer, too. I am going to see Cary, and we will drive to where the light pollution map becomes green, and wait for our city eyes to adjust to the blackness. We will laugh about the mountain hermit who camped on the crag above us at Algonquin Park. How he sat on the edge of the rock in a bizarre yoga position. Like he knew something no one else did. There are no mountains in Algonquin Park, but there are stones in the earth where two boys left their own folklore.

I am going to see Cary because without Cary there is no Taz. If I don't understand Cary then I may as well be Taz holding up a "Go Cary!" sign, standing on the wrong side of a deep river. If I can't find her then I am powerless, and I am alone, goddamnit. Just pockets stuffed with memories she wants to give back.

Cary. My head is pounding and my limbs feel brand new. My nails make half moon shapes on the steering wheel as I inch over the viaduct, the gravity of where I need to be getting lost in somebody else's tire skid. I need to tell Cary that I love her and that I can't let any of it go. Every stone in that ground is stuck to me like marrow. I know as much as anybody does that Cary is a girl. Was always a girl. So who am I to dig my nails into sticky memories that disguise the truth? Why does it feel like a part of who I am has changed, too?

"Taz?"

"Hey, Cary."

"But none of that is gone. You know that, right? Like, I still think that hermit guy was a mirage. He was way too flexible."

I stare at Cary in the purple light from the viaduct across the water, and commit her lines to memory. Her freckles are the same ones Betty Kirkwood counted in grade six math class. Her right eye still squints a little more than the left one, giving her that curious look that forces others to speak first. Cary is dozens of insecurities oozing over into confidence, now as much as then as much as ever. But something is different now. Softer. There is a lightness in her elbows and a hollowness under her jaw. Like she isn't clenching it in case she needs to bite a twig clean in two. Cary's nails are painted pale blue, nested under light cuticles like robins' eggs. It makes me feel older somehow.

"Taz, it doesn't work like that. I'm the same person I was then. Just... more of her."

I look at Cary and I know now that it's true. I know that this is the middle of a story with a beginning that is as real now as it ever was. I know that the man standing on his porch saw two kids with laughter like magnets, no matter what else. Cary emerges from that water with me in a dream. I will move each stone until they all make sense. I will arrange them until they spell our stories the way they are now.

Reasons for Staying

Jun Ying Wen

After Ocean Vuong

A corsage of breath in the cold.
The lake, now a colourless field.
Snow broken in like brûlée.

Because there's always a stranger
stationed on the other end.
Because somewhere, a train runs
into the open arms of a destination.

A song, full as a petal, unfurling.
The duct into which I spilled it and
heard an answer from the outland.

Because in time, I'll make it to
the concert—and with a bit of luck,
to Halley's perihelion. Because
I catalogued the in-betweens.

A smear of dusk, swearing an oath.
My voice through the keyhole,
repeating it over like a litany.

Because this poem doesn't have to end.
Because it snowed again last night
while I slept. Because it's a miracle
how the air gives way, and
I can take its place.



“Lemons” by Helena Robbins

Upon Returning

Julliana (Yanni) Santos

It's all just canned laughter
cooked on dry toast,
olive oil and the remnants
of colour-pencil shavings
and meditation-guide minutes
holding the world together,
as a sparkle-pen's forest green
sings, says it's sweet,
like canned peaches.
Don't let it be a bitter thing.

Even frozen dumplings
let themselves melt on counters-tops,
release pre-packaged air to mix
with humidifier hums, the distant
drumming of be-dusted curtain tassels
from the spurts of fleeting wind.
It's not so lost you know, say all
the defrosting things. We're
only learning to breathe again.

At the Horizon

Mary Anna Scenga Kruch

After "My House is the Red Earth" by Joy Harjo

My dwelling rests at the horizon; it could be a finely penned road like
an infinite balcony that

frames the sea. Words cannot create it, for there are some places left to
wordless form, but one

might try. For instance, tomorrow I may dwell atop a Ferris wheel, seat
swaying gracefully under

certain stars or stuck in a seat dangling and shaken, but I know nothing
of carnival rides — am

drawn instead to stars that follow a horizon haloed in rose gold,
destined to be at home exactly

where I am.

Juliana Perika is a visual arts student at Etobicoke School of the Arts. She creates digitally altered graphite drawings which illustrate the different aspects of everyday life within the realms of fashion and architecture through her lense.

Indira de Cartier is a sixteen year old painter based in Toronto. They are in grade 11 at Etobicoke School of the Arts, majoring in Wcontemporary art. Their work largely surrounds themes of mental health, and creating safer spaces.

Nikolai Levandovsky is studying English and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. He thinks cats are the best animal and has a reminder on his phone every Monday to outlive Donald Trump. He also, sometimes, has weird dreams.

Jeanne Polochansky is a psychology student, cat-lover, and writer from Victoria College, whose poetry is published in Arbor Room Magazine, Young Voices, VOICES/VOIX, Navigating the Maze, ROPES, and other local, national, and international anthologies and exhibits. Outside the printed pages, she's at The Spectatorial, Acta Victoriana, TPL, and @thejovialpoet by day, and researching or choreographing by night.

Phoebe Jenner is a fourth-year English specialist student at Victoria College. On campus, she can be found behind the counter at Caffiends (when it's open!) and works as an associate editor for Goose. In the fall, she will be returning to UofT for the MA in Creative Writing program. Her work can be found in Acta Victoriana.

Helena Ludmila Robbins is a Toronto-based artist. She is in Grade 11 at the Etobicoke School of the Arts in the contemporary art program. She creates multimedia work and continuously experiments with new materials. She also makes animated films. She has been passionate about art and creation all of her life. She has participated in many exhibitions. In 2018, Helena entered a nationwide Remembrance Day

poster competition organized by the Royal Canadian Legion and won third place locally. In 2022, her photo series Red received an honourable mention from the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards and one of her paintings, Nightrain, was selected to appear in the Ultraviolet Magazine. Outside of art, Helena is an accomplished pianist, studying Grade 8 piano at the Royal Conservatory of Music. She is also a competitive figure skater.

Sophia Bannon is a student at Trinity College, going into second year. She hopes to major in Ethics, Society and Law, and minor in Creative Expression and Women and Gender Studies. She has loved to read and write stories since she was seven years old.

DS Maolalai has been nominated nine times for Best of the Net and seven times for the Pushcart Prize. He has released two collections, “Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden” (Encircle Press, 2016) and “Sad Havoc Among the Birds” (Turas Press, 2019). His third collection, “Noble Rot” is scheduled for release in April 2022.

Cooper Barron is an up-and-coming writer and poet from Georgetown, Ontario. He has been published in Slate magazine, the University of Toronto’s ‘With Caffeine and Careful Thought,’ as well as UC Gargoyle. He has been writing in some manner most of his life, but, Cooper found his love for poetry in his late teens. Cooper’s writing revolves around his struggles with bipolar II, ADHD, and queerness, with his writing focusing on the intersection of both of those parts of his identity.

Dave Gregory is a Canadian writer, a retired sailor, and Editor-in-Chief of Five South, a Los Angeles-based literary journal. His fiction has appeared in Existere, FreeFall, White Wall Review, Pulp Literature, & The Temz Review. Please follow him on Twitter @CourtlandAvenue.

Jack Rousseau’s work has appeared in Blueprint, Fuss Magazine, The

Mustache Factor, Pink-Eye Lemonade, Smashed Cat, and Weirdyear. He lives and writes in Berlin, Ontario (traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples).

Genevieve Sugrue is a first year cinema studies specialist at UTSG. She is a reserved individual with a creative mind and a love for life's oddities. She enjoys chess, film photography, and has an extensive collection of pressed flowers. Sugrue began writing poetry at an early age and has refined her craft every day since. Poetry is an integral part of who she is and has taught herself to command even the messiest of raw emotions.

Eva Macoretta crafts critiques of historical elements forging them together to bind the past and present perceptions in a language that's universal to the eye. The systems in which she works flow seamlessly together as they explore the matters of perception, inevitability, and repression that are stricken throughout interpersonal connections in everyday life.

Allison Zhao's poetry has appeared in the UC Review and is forthcoming in Mnerva. She lives in Toronto and can often be found browsing in Indigo or looking for iced coffee.

Jane Forrest is a contemporary artist based in Toronto. She is currently majoring in contemporary art and studying contemporary photography at the Etobicoke School of the Arts. She is a painter and photographer and primarily works with oil paint on canvas. Her work primarily explores the themes of the global pandemic, distance, and community. She has shown work at Alberta University of the Arts, Orillia Museum of Art & History, and the Royal Ontario Museum.

Jayden Couper is a twelfth grade high school student in Toronto currently attending Etobicoke School of the Arts who is still finding herself in the art world. Through painting, drawing, using textiles and whenever else feels right, Jayden explores connections between all

aspects of her life and is trying to find a path that feels right for her along the way.

Julliana (Yanni) Santos is currently the managing editor for *The Mike* and an editor-in-chief of *Acta Victoriana*. She writes poetry and short fiction with a present focus on family, guilt, consumption, and human relationships. Her work is featured or forthcoming in *Mnerva*, *The Spectatorial*, *Goose: An Annual Review of Short Fiction*, and the *UC Review*.

Adam Zivo is a writer and social activist. He is best known for founding the *LoveisLoveisLove* campaign and for his weekly column in the *National Post*.

Mathea Treslan is a third year undergraduate student at Victoria College, studying English Literature and International Relations. She is thrilled to share her work with you.

Jun Ying Wen is a writer born in Guangzhou and currently attending the University of Toronto.

Mary Anna Scenga Kruch, an educator and writer, leads a monthly writing workshop and supervises student teachers for Northern Michigan University. She has published a chapbook, *WE DRAW BREATH FROM THE SAME SKY* and a full-length book, *GRACE NOTES*. Poetry is forthcoming in *Blue Heron Review* and *Wayne State Review*.

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