

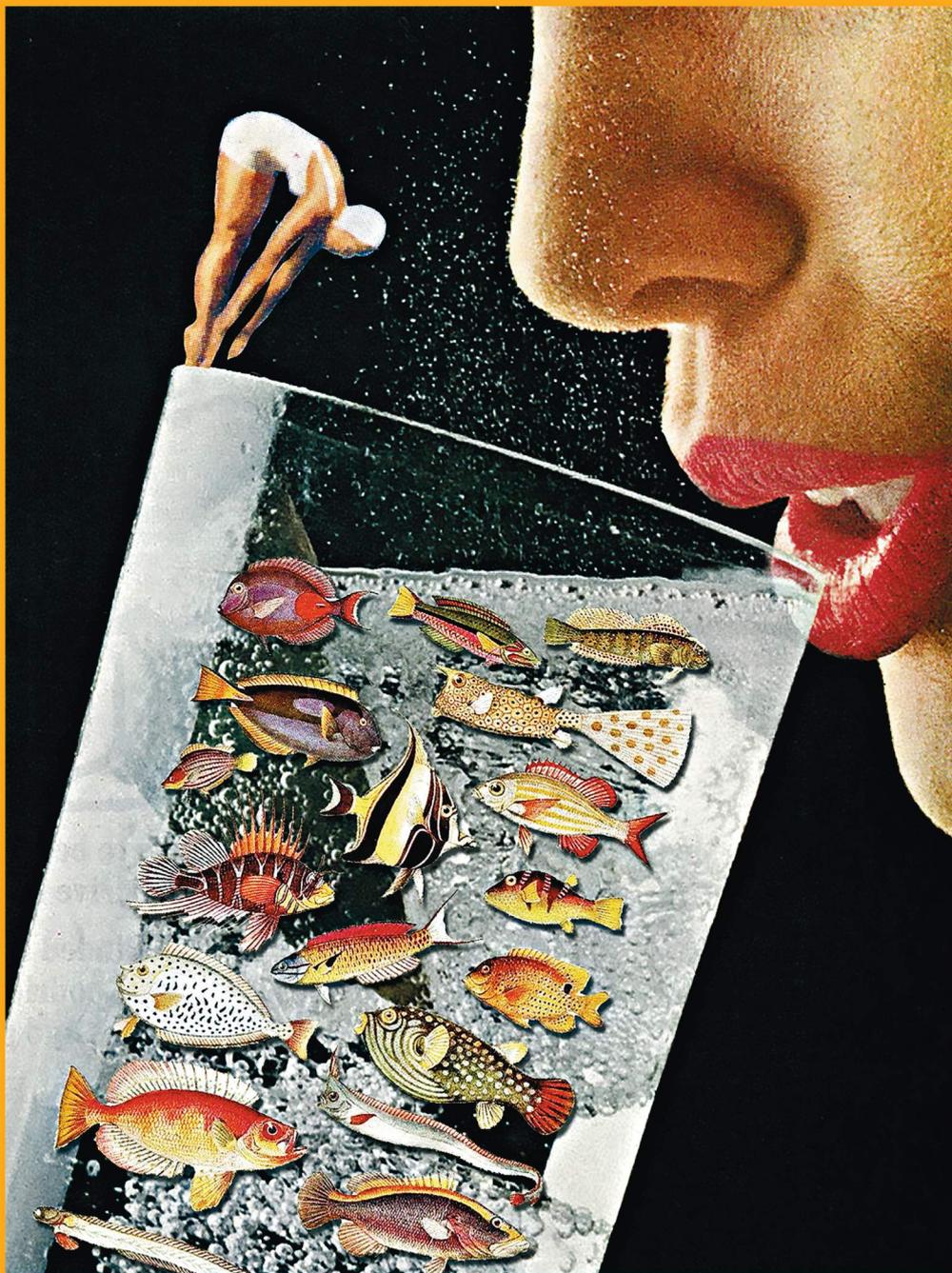
NUMBER 102

FALL 2016

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GEIST

FACT + FICTION • NORTH of AMERICA



ON THE GRID

Failed Seances for Rita MacNeil

The Road to Lenin's Tomb

Lesser-Known Emoji

Balcony Days

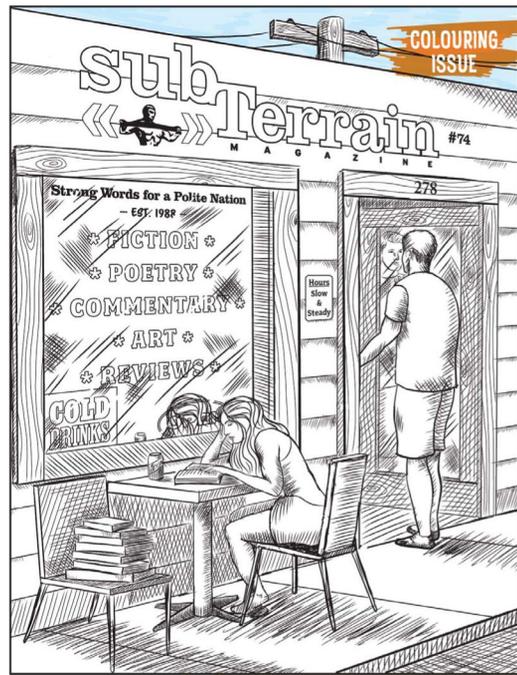


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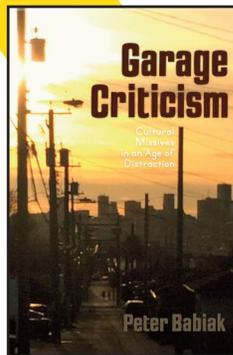
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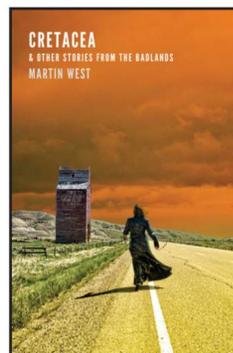
Garage Criticism

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by Peter Babiak

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GEIST

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“Canadian” “Literature”



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COVER: *The image on the cover is a collage by Eugenia Loli, a California artist. See more of her work at eugenialoli.tumblr.com and on pg. 27 of this issue.*

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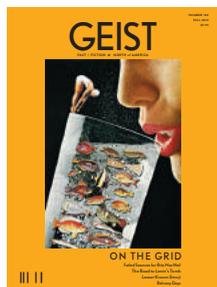
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You in Lipstick

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RED LINE

This image is part of the photographic archives of the *Globe and Mail* newspaper—a collection of 20,000 images recently donated to the Canadian Photography Institute at the National Gallery of Canada.

The red lines on the photograph were made with grease pencil and denote how the image was to be cropped for publication. It was also common practice to dodge or burn (reduce or increase exposure to produce lighter or darker sections), and mask (selectively block portions of an image during processing) or otherwise alter the photographs, just as we do digitally today. But the digital history of a photo is much harder to display. Our ability to see the physical markings, the highlighted and altered portions of traditional photographs, gives us clues as to the editor's vision and motivations. Crops and alterations were not made simply to improve image quality for printing; they were also used to contextualize or emphasize the editorial position of the accompanying story or of the paper itself. Now they show us how an editor can manipulate images to serve a narrative—to convey a sense of drama, to emphasize a political position, to express the social and moral conventions of the time. Or, as is likely in the case of the photo here, to evoke emotion. Taken as a collection, the archives offer us a visual representation of how journalism evolves over time.

The man and the boy in the photograph displayed here are identified as “Dave John Bryant and son in Toronto for peace demonstration 1961” on the back of the photo.

See this image and others at *Cutline: The Photography Archives of The Globe and Mail*, which runs from October 14, 2016, to February 12, 2017, at the National Gallery of Canada
—AnnMarie MacKinnon



Unidentified Photographer: Gelatin silver print with grease pencil and retouching, 23.0 × 17.5 cm.

LETTERS

READERS WRITE

SHUSHING POLICY

Stephen Henighan's "Treason of the Librarians," *Geist* 100, is an elegy. Our town library is a historic building with nineteenth-century woodwork; it housed a genuine sixteenth-century conquistador's helmet and chain mail shirt, which my children learned was a *hauberk*. The armour used to be front and centre but now has been stored away, considered too old-fashioned for the new look of the library. I frequent the book sales at our local library because they are getting rid of wonderful books. The epiphany Mr. Henighan describes in finding a book next to the one you were searching for can also come with a mis-thumbing of the card catalogue. The cards no longer exist in any of our libraries in eastern Maine. At home we have a wall of books stacked two deep, and my now-grown children used to come from the library with boxes of books. We can only do our best to keep the love of the book alive.

—Richard, Maine

It seems to me quite unusual that Henighan would hide the name of the university library whose acquisitions policies he criticizes (No. 100). To do so papers over the practices and lets other libraries know that they can get away with it with a mere slap on the wrist from cultural critics.

—Rowland Lorimer, Vancouver

Stephen Henighan responds: Like any journalist, I reserve the right to protect my sources. If I revealed the university's name, I would risk exposing the people who provided me with some of the details included in the column. Policies at Dystopia U., while more extreme than at some other institutions, are not appreciably different in their essence, making it easy to imagine a near future in which all university libraries will be like the one I describe.



Read Stephen Henighan's "Treason of the Librarians" in *Geist* 100 or at geist.com.

HUDSON'S BAY COINCIDENCE

I love it when books, articles or magazines I'm reading serendipitously intersect with a common subject matter. I began reading *Into the Heart of the Country* by Pauline Holdstock (a 2011 novel about explorer/scientist Samuel Hearne and his Native wife) on the same day my summer issue of *Geist* (No. 101) arrived. I decided to read them side by side and, lo and behold, I got to "Tall Tales at Bloody Falls" by Daniel Francis, his review of Emilie Cameron's *Far Off Metal River*, another book about Hearne. I'm delighted with the coincidence and have learned so much about 1700s Canadian history as a result.

Thanks for your eclectic, educational and entirely readable magazine.

—Roz Burnell, Kamloops BC

Read more of Daniel Francis's work at geist.com.

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IT'S ONLY YOUR WIFE

David Look's take on VIA Rail's Canadian ("Sleeping Class," No. 101) is good fun—rather faux Paul Theroux-ish. But travelling on this train is much more than just beer bottles rolling back and forth beneath the seat or dogs peeing in the snow at Melville, SK. The lower and upper berths in the sleeping car might remind you of Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis in Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*—even if it's only your wife in the upper berth and not Marilyn Monroe.

—Peter Dawes, Edmonton AB

CAUGHT READING



Mayne Island, BC, resident, Ida, digs into back issues of *Geist*.

BUT WHO CORRECTS THE CORRECTOR?

I wonder if you correct your corrections. If a picture is worth a thousand words, this is quite the hilarious essay! Unless your URL was meant as a joke. I loved it, personally.

—Alan Gasser, Toronto

Evidence of the error:

In "First World Problems A-Z" by Suzanne Buffam (No. 100), we did not mind our Ps and Qs. The lines beginning with those letters were missing. Visit geist.com/first-word-problems to read the poem as it should have appeared.

WRITE TO GEIST

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

The Editor, *Geist*
letters@geist.com

Snailmail:
#210 – 111 West Hastings St.
Vancouver BC V6B 1H4

Letters may be edited for clarity, brevity and decorum. Authors of published letters will receive a *Geist* map suitable for framing.

ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE

Eve Corbel is a writer, illustrator, cartoonist, mom and grandma. Her writing and artwork have been published in numerous anthologies and periodicals, including *Geist*.

Kym Greeley is a visual artist whose work is included in the Canada Council Art Bank, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and the Newfoundland Provincial Art Bank Collection. She lives in St. John's, Newfoundland.

leannej is a writer and text-based artist. Her work has been published in *FRONT Magazine*, *Geist* and other publications. She lives in Vancouver.

Folke Köbberling and **Martin Kaltwasser** make begged, borrowed, donated and salvaged materials into publicly used objects and spaces. Their work has been exhibited extensively in Germany and internationally. They live in Berlin.

Stephen Ives is an Australian visual artist known for his detailed bricolage sculptures made from toys, metal, wood and plastics. See more of his work at stephen-ives-artist.com and on Instagram @stefano_ives.

Dear Geist...



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

—Teetering, Gimli MB



Which is correct, 4:00, four o'clock or 1600 h?
—Floria, Windsor ON

Dear Geist,

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



—Dave, Red Deer AB



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

geist.com/lit-lorn



In the Flesh

MICHAŁ KOZŁOWSKI

From Jean Talon to Lenin's Tomb

On our first day in Montreal this summer, my girlfriend suggested that we visit a vegan restaurant in the Plateau that she had read about but whose name she could not remember. We were staying with my sister and her boyfriend, and the boyfriend said that he knew the place and at one time had rented a studio from the owner. Then he told us the story of a

horrific accident that had happened a few years before when one of the staff at the vegan restaurant got his hand caught in the feeder of a pita-making machine. When the paramedics arrived they found the man conscious, seated in a chair with his arm stuck all the way up to the elbow inside the feeder. Unable to dislodge the man's arm, the paramedics considered

calling in a surgical team to amputate the man's arm right there in the kitchen of the vegan restaurant, but then they set to work dismantling the pita machine and were able to detach the feeder. Then they drove the man, with his arm still stuck in the feeder, in the ambulance to the Notre Dame hospital, where eventually the man's hand was amputated.

That evening we decided to make our own dinner and so we walked down to the Jean Talon market and bought radishes, tomatoes, smoked herring, sheep cheese, goat cheese, fava beans, pork pâté, baguette, morel

mushrooms and Polish donuts filled with rose hip jam.

The pita machine story, my girlfriend said, made her think of the time she rode the Trans-Siberian train from Beijing to Moscow, crammed in a tiny compartment with a Mongolian family of five, who, upon boarding the train, unpacked from their luggage a link of sausages, which they strung from the top bunk, and a skinned sheep head, which they placed on the lone table in the compartment. My girlfriend said she thought the sheep head had been boiled, on account of the slightly grey tinge of the meat, and though she was repelled by the sight of the head, she said the smell didn't bother her at all. At dinner hour, the mother would slice morsels off the sheep head and pass them around to her children and husband. This, along with the sausages, was the only thing my girlfriend saw the family eat over the course of the five-day journey. The family slept two to a bunk, and the smallest child slept in the luggage rack above the door. At each stop on the Trans-Siberian route the family hung blankets out the window for sale to the Siberians who came to meet the train. As my girlfriend remembers it, the sheep head had reduced in size by about a third when the train finally reached Moscow.

The reason she had taken the Trans-Siberian train, my girlfriend explained, was to see the embalmed remains of Mao Zedong in Beijing and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin in Moscow and when she arrived in Moscow, having eaten only noodles on the nearly week-long train ride, she went

straight over to the McDonald's in Pushkin Square not far from the train station and ordered a Filet-O-Fish.

In front of Lenin's mausoleum in Red Square, a Lenin impersonator posed for photographs for five bucks a shot. He was a friendly, stout middle-aged man who bore a striking resemblance to Lenin, with a goatee, dressed in a black cap and a suit jacket with a red ribbon pinned to the breast. The really shocking thing about him, my girlfriend said, was just how short he was.

Inside the mausoleum, the lights were turned down; a single spotlight shone on Lenin's face. Photography



was forbidden. In fact, no one was even permitted to stop to look at the body, but rather had to shuffle past a few metres away from the tomb, making it difficult to see the details of Lenin's face. Postcards with an image of Lenin's tomb were available in the gift shop. When my girlfriend saw Lenin's corpse, it had been lying on display in the Mausoleum for more than seventy-five years—save for two years during World War II when it was taken to Siberia—and Lenin had been born more than 130 years before.

When Lenin died in 1924 his brain was removed and stored in formaldehyde for two years, and then it was shipped off to Berlin to be studied

by a German neuroscientist, charged with proving by scientific examination that Lenin was a genius. The brain, sliced into 31,000 cross sections, is now housed at the Brain Institute in Moscow, along with the brains of other famous Soviet thinkers.

On our second day in Montreal, my sister and I walked down to the Polish deli on Bernard Street, where they serve the best Polish food in Canada. My sister ordered the cabbage rolls and I ordered a bowl of tripe soup, with carrots and marjoram and narrow strips of stomach lining floating in a clear broth, the way they

serve it back in the old country, and the idea struck me that Montreal is one of those rare Canadian places where one can eat tripe soup in public without feeling self-conscious.

That first night in Montreal my sister's boyfriend had said that the man whose hand was caught in the pita machine was having a hard time gaining compensa-

tion from the vegan restaurant because there had been plenty of signage warning staff to use extreme caution around the machine. When I got back home I looked up the story and found nothing about compensation, but I did see several articles reporting that the spokesperson for Urgences-Santé in Montreal had erroneously said that the man's "arm got caught in a, what we would describe I guess as a meat grinder—a *bachoir*."

Michał Kozłowski is the publisher and editor-in-chief of Geist. Read more of his work at geist.com.

Leningrad Redact

EVEL ECONOMAKIS

"If we paid protection money to the KGB, there'd be nothing left for salaries. And we call it the FSB now"

I'd been in Russia three months and my money was running out. It was time to stop letting grass grow under my feet. An ad caught my attention in *Neva News*, an English-language weekly. They needed an editor, so I applied. It was a long way out, on the very northern outskirts of St. Petersburg near the forests, and I had to take the metro and two different buses to get there. The last bus I hopped was rickety and packed. Squeezing into it, I must have stepped on at least two people's feet, and they muttered insults. A stumpy, foul-breathed man had his right shoulder in my chest, and my face was edged in a taller guy's smelly armpit. The pressure on my chest made breathing difficult. I tried to push my way off but only managed to get out four stops later, when a pack of people behind me surged toward the door shouting profanities at everyone in their way.

The editor-in-chief of *Neva News*, Alexander Ivanovich, who was also the newspaper's owner, was a tall man with a beard but no moustache. He looked like Abraham Lincoln. His English was nonexistent, which was queer for an Anglophone newspaper. But I impressed him with my Russian. He asked me if I could touch-type and I said yes, 110 words a minute. That created a moment of confusion, and he regarded me with a gluey, deliberative eye. He said that in Russia they counted the number of letters rather than words. So he had me go into a narrow room with no windows and sit at a computer. I spoke with a man named Andrei Kamilevich. Bespectacled, limp-shouldered and pushing sixty, he spoke English quite well, and he was also fluent in French, Italian and German. He talked rapid-fire

about Russia and the West, about history, politics and the arts, the smell of liquor on his breath.

"Well, then," said Andrei Kamilevich. He handed me a paragraph-long text about St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Ballet, the former Kirov. "Please translate this."

When I'd finished, he checked his watch and asked me to type the text.

"Yes, very fast." He leaned forward to look at the screen when I was done. "Hm, and no mistakes."

He walked me back to the boss's office and praised my performance.

"Okay," said Alexander Ivanovich, "You begin tomorrow."

Back in the street, I congratulated myself with a gin and tonic at a kiosk. I'd finally landed a full-time job, one I imagined would lead to bigger and better things. The salary was about ninety dollars a month but I didn't mind. With English lessons on the side, I was certain I'd manage all right. So I let my imagination run riot. The paper would open doors. I'd use it as a platform and turn *Neva News* into a high-quality publication.

The next day I knocked on the office door up on the eighth floor. Andrei Kamilevich opened up, exhaling fumes of alcohol. He led me to the computer room where he handed me an article to translate about St. Petersburg's bid to host the Olympic Games. It was an incredibly dry text, running over with statistics of the number of hotel rooms in the city. Exasperated by the article's obtuse bureaucratic language, I took it to the boss.

In his office, Alexander Ivanovich was busy leafing through documents. Standing by his side was the cute secretary, a beautiful, spry and talkative

brunette from Minsk named Alla.

"Alexander Ivanovich," I said, "this piece would be much better if you let me throw in some colour."

He peered at me over his reading glasses, bushy eyebrows jutting out like open drawers, and shook his head. "No changes, no stylistic editing of the Russian text," he said.

"But this article's so dry it could put an insomniac to sleep."

He shook his head again.

"Trust me," I said.

"Since when do Americans who've never worked as journalists—you told me so yourself—know how to write newspaper articles for a Russian newspaper?" he said.

"This is an English-language paper," I said. "Our target readership isn't Russian."

"I said no," he said.

In a sulk, I returned to the computer room and conveyed my disappointment to Andrei Kamilevich.

"Let me tell you a secret," Andrei Kamilevich said. "Alexander Ivanovich is an imbecile who's not only terrible at selecting the newspaper's material, but quite incompetent at the business side of the enterprise as well."

His breath was foul. I moved a few inches back, but the old man just came closer again. "The boss doesn't care where the money comes from," he said.

"Great."

"But there's good news." He winked knowingly. "Since he doesn't read a stitch of English, he can't be aware of the stylistic and other changes we make."

"Andrei Kamilevich, I like your way of thinking."

So I went ahead and redid the article, adding flavour and cutting out absurdly inane sentences. When it was ready, I showed it to Andrei Kamilevich. "Excellent," he said. "What do you say we go for a cigarette break?"

We left the office and followed a winding passageway until we reached a balcony. It was next to the building's

fire escape. Dark forests rolled out beyond the white smoke of industrial stacks in the distance.

Andrei Kamilevich now snapped open his briefcase and got out a bottle of vodka. He twisted off the metal cap and poured two plastic cups to the brim.

“Bottoms up.”

“Up.”

Back in the computer room, rich story possibilities began to open up like flowers in my mind. I wrote an article about the phenomenon of begging in Russia and how different it was from begging in the West—less aggressive, even spiritual. People weren’t accosted for change; beggars rarely said anything to passersby and the signs they carried usually had a reference to Jesus and an appeal to the soul. I wrote that in the West beggars felt compelled to perform and entertain so people had the impression they were getting something for their money. I speculated that this was connected to the fact that the belief that one was ultimately responsible for one’s own fate was alien to the Orthodox faith and absent from the Russian tradition. In Russia, the beggar who won the most money was the one who evoked the greatest sympathy.

Dutch courage in my gut, I took the piece to the boss. He said he liked the idea. So the man wasn’t a total fool, I thought optimistically.

Though married with kids, the boss had a crush on Alla. Alla had abandoned her abusive alcoholic husband in Minsk and was raising her six-year-old son on her own. Vasili Vasilevich, the long-haired IT guy we called Vas Vas, was also in love with Alla.

The boss was a big-time tippler. He usually drank when his office door was closed. Periodically, he’d find excuses to go bug Alla, who told us that he chased her around his office trying to feel her breasts. Once, after hearing her complain about this, Vas Vas marched into Alexander Ivanovich’s office, and



East 10th Ave., Vancouver, BC. August 20, 2016.

told him in no uncertain terms to stop harassing Alla. This didn’t happen, which wasn’t surprising, but neither did the boss fire Vas Vas, which surprised us even more.

The paper was a rag. We served up articles that were poorly concealed paid advertisements. The classifieds even carried ads by scam artists. Alexander Ivanovich of course was shameless about where the money came from.

I quickly lost interest in the paper. Determined to get by with the bare minimum of work, I stopped making the extra effort. And like everyone else I got with the program and snuck shots of vodka with my co-workers on the eighth-floor balcony.

I had been working at the paper for two months when one afternoon the doorbell rang. I happened to be closest to the door. When I opened it, I saw two angry looking men with shaved heads.

“Where’s the boss?” snarled one of them with a look that stopped me where I stood.

Mechanically, I pointed down the hall. “Last door on the right,” I told them.

As they brushed purposefully past me, I realized I shouldn’t have said that. Any idiot could see these two gentlemen were gangsters who’d come to sign Alexander Ivanovich up to a protection racket or something. And I was suddenly overcome by a feeling for the boss I never thought I’d feel—sympathy.

To the amazement of all of us staffers, the two racketeers came back down the hallway ten minutes later, much less edge to their swagger. I saw them out. Shortly after, Alexander Ivanovich emerged with a Lincolnian smile on his face.

“What did you tell them to make them go away?” Alla said

“Aaa-haha!” the boss chortled.

“Yes, how did you get rid of them?” asked Andrei Kamilevich.

Alexander Ivanovich cracked a sly condescending smile at the old man and held up a business card that had the FSB’s sword and shield on it.

“They said I needed their protection and I told them to call the protection I already have.”

Andrei Kamievich straightened. “Do you mean our paper pays protection money to the KGB?”

“No,” he crowed. “If I did there wouldn’t be anything left for your salaries.” A beat later, he added, “And we call it the FSB nowadays.”

The boss’s stock went up with all of us after that incident. He was a petty dictator—illiterate in the language of his own paper, a poor manager, an alcoholic and a skirt-chaser. But he’d stood up to the mob.

We also appreciated the New Year’s party he organized at the paper. There was a small buffet and plenty of alcohol. Alexander Ivanovich began with a toast, a pompous self-congratulatory

speech, affectionate contempt directed towards the rest of us.

To his credit, Alexander Ivanovich was the first to leave. Even in my college days, I’d never seen anything like this shindig. Everyone got totally wasted. All the men flirted with Alla, at least while they were sober enough to do so. Poor old Andrei Kamilevich passed out on the couch and shat himself. In the morning, Alla rinsed the crap off his boxers in the bathroom sink.

The boss’s total ignorance of English allowed me to let my standards drop and get away with it. I worked to first-effort level, that is, whenever I had difficulty translating a word, I wouldn’t crack open a dictionary. Instead, I’d put down the first thing that came into my head.

Sailing close to the wind, I should have known my sloth and irresponsibility would soon be discovered. One morning I arrived at work in my usual disposition—the mood of a man who doesn’t enjoy his job. The gin and tonic I’d sucked down waiting for the bus hadn’t improved it much.

When I entered the computer room, I found a tall, fair-haired young man who didn’t look Russian seated in my chair. He was touch-typing away at my machine, and doing this at about my clip.

“Hello?” I cleared my throat.

He stopped typing, turned his head and looked at me with a smile.

“Hi, Evel,” he said. “I’m Brian and I’m going to be helping out with the editing.”

He told me he was an Oxford grad, Balliol College, and was on a gap year before continuing with graduate studies in political science at Cambridge.

Alla stuck her face in the doorway. “Evel,” she said, “Alexander Ivanovich wants to see you in his office.” She had on the semi-startled, half-amused smile she wore whenever the boss made a pass at her.

I entered his office. “You wanted to see me?”

Poker-faced, he passed me the last issue of the paper. “Look at this,” he said.

I took it in my hands, wondering why it had been marked in red ink. “What’s this?” I asked.

“You tell me.” His tone wasn’t the usual condescending one. It was unfriendlier still. I returned my eyes to the marked front page. Two typos of mine had slipped into print to become misprints: “Petesburg” and “Neva river”—and these were circled in red. Harmless enough, I thought. But the next error I saw was quite glaring and inexcusable, even for a second-rate paper like ours. “The river has its start at Lake Ladoga—the deepest, coldest, and largest lake on the European continent.” And in the margin, in the same red hand:

Goodafternoon, Spruceland Chrysler

SYLVIA SYMONS

Sylvia Symons’s poems have appeared in EVENT and Best Canadian Poetry in English, 2016 (Tightrope Books). She grew up in Prince George, BC.

My mother’s voice tinkles
high-pitched
on the phone
until she knows it is me

then it drops
an octave
as she sits upstairs
at a secretary desk
above the gleaming vehicles

Volarés, LeBarons, Cordobas

and the salesmen who walk the long
boxy length of them all day
Stan, Ralph and that bastard Manville
who takes the last of the Coffee-mate
doesn’t replace it.

Goodafternoon, Spruceland Chrysler

The showroom men don’t know
how guttural
a mother can be
under nylons and White Shoulders.
Hot hands
in a concrete laundry tub
yelling for me to clean
my sonofabitching pigsty
before she drives me
into the middle of next week.

A half dream:
I see her at the wheel—
her office clothes
her birthday brooch
me in the velvet passenger seat
blue Volaré
smooth ride into
next Wednesday
automatic windows rolled down.

Rivers don't have a "start": they have a "source."

His eyebrows remained furrowed. "Well?" he asked over the gurgling sound the radiator made under the frosty triple-glazed windows. "What do you have to say?"

The boss had me over a barrel. Badly unnerved, I wasn't going to roll over—not to *him*. I said, "All these red scribbles are stylistic, a matter of taste. Apart from a few unfortunate misprints, I see nothing wrong with the texts I translated."

He observed me in my discomfort. I tried not to squirm. Then he spoke: "Brian says that since this is a Russia-based paper—and Russia is in Europe—it would be better for us to use British spelling rather than American."

Bloody Brit, I thought, trying to come up with a response. Then, surprising myself, I found it: "More Americans visit this city than British people," I told him. "Besides, Russia

does much more business with the United States than it does with the United Kingdom. I think American English is more appropriate for the paper."

"Go on."

"America and Russia may have been enemies during the Cold War. Yet the two countries have never really been in a shooting war. You might say they agreed to disagree. On the other hand, though, Russia fought the bloody Crimean War, among other wars, against Britain. So it's simply untrue that Russians love Britain."

"Correct," he nodded. "But they love the United States even less." Another few seconds ticked by, during which he wiped his brow with a handkerchief. "However, as you suggest, Russia does more business with America and American businessmen prefer to read American rather than British English."

I could almost hear the wheels

turning in his Lincolnesque head. I hadn't the faintest idea what would come out of his mouth next.

"I'll tell you what," he pronounced with inimical hubris. "Let's use American English for our business articles or those that concern finance and economics. For the rest, we'll use British English."

That was the most ridiculous editorial decision I'd ever witnessed the boss make. But I didn't object. When this man took a decision, it was final. And a paper that was in both American and British English was a sign, however crude, that Alexander Ivanovich wasn't quite ready to fire me yet. He was giving me a second chance.

But I wasn't going to take it; I still had a card up my sleeve. From his office I went directly to the computer room.

"Do you mind?" I told Brian.

"Oh, sure." He let me sit at my computer and scooted over to another

GREAT NEW BOOKS FROM THE ARSENAL

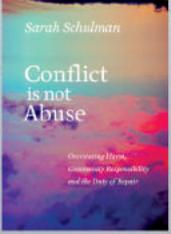
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BY MARCELINO TRUONG; DAVID HOMEL, TRANS
"A first-rate work of graphic memoir dealing with a pivotal period in modern American history."
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BECOMING UNBECOMING
BY UNA
"A graphic manifesto for female empowerment and a punch to the gut of predatory males."
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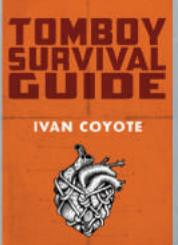
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"With awesome brilliance and insight, Sarah Schulman offers readers new strategies to intervene on all relations of domination both personal and political."
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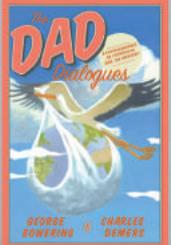
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BY ASHLEY LITTLE
"Part Huck Finn, part Natural Born Killers, Niagara Motel re-animates fin de siècle North America in all its surreal, gaudy wonder."
—Matt Rader



TOMBOY SURVIVAL GUIDE
BY IVAN COYOTE
Ivan Coyote maps their tomboy journey through treacherous gender landscapes and a maze of labels that don't quite stick.



THE DAD DIALOGUES
BY GEORGE BOWERING AND CHARLES DEMERS
Two fathers from different generations write about raising daughters in this passionate, funny, and moving portrait of fatherhood in all its imperfect, beautiful glory.



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one.

I made like I was busy with a text that needed translating, some nonsense about Russian aviation. Ten minutes later, I looked at him and asked point blank: “How would you like to be the only English editor here at *Neva News*?”

“Pardon?”

“Come on, Brian,” I smiled engagingly. “Say yes.”

When he continued blinking confusedly at me, I gave him a little song and dance about the job. “This paper has great growth potential,” I said. “You’ll love working for someone as bright, far-sighted, and open-minded as Alexander Ivanovich. And it’ll look great on your resumé, a nice feather in your cap.”

I could discern in his blue eyes what he didn’t dare come out and admit. He’d expected to muscle me out of my position, but not nearly as speedily as this.

“You’re leaving?”

“Yes,” I levelled with him. “Good luck.”

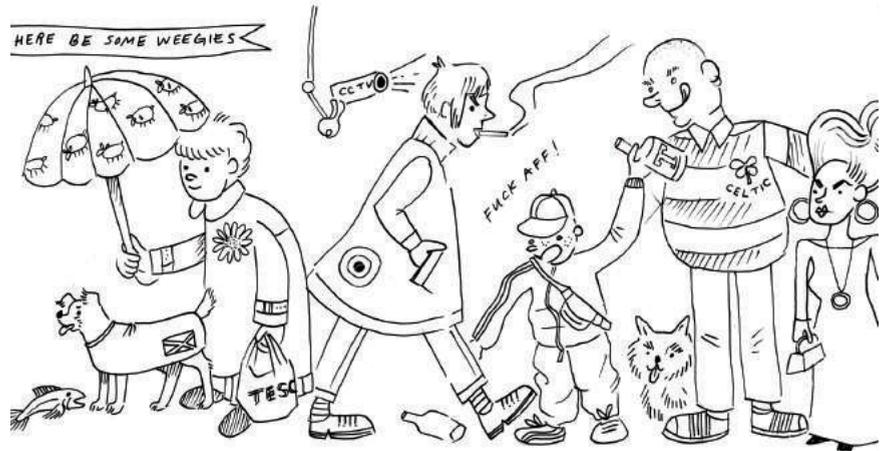
A few weeks later I found a part-time job teaching English at an evening language school near Haymarket Square, Dostoevsky’s part of town. Much easier work, in which I simply spoke English to my students, corrected their mistakes and explained the grammar. And the money was better. To celebrate, I bought myself a slice of pizza from an outdoor stand. It had ketchup on it instead of tomato sauce and wrinkled olives with the pits inside.

Evel Economakis is the author of several books in English, Greek and Russian, including From Peasant to Petersburger, published by Macmillan. Economakis contributes political commentary to the New Statesman (UK). He lived in Russia for ten years. He now lives with his wife and two children in Greece, where he teaches history in high school and works construction.

Stuck on the Grid

CHRISTINE NOVOSEL

Life in Scotland... lots of restrictions on how you live your life.



I have to get a landline in order to get home internet. I have to pay council tax (water, waste, etc.). I have to register myself with the district police. There is no chance to “disappear” or live off the grid here. Everybody is up your ass. CCTV everywhere. Public open WiFi is probably recording activity for the government.

I had a good conversation with an old man in the library by my house. He asked me why I moved here, and I said because I’m going to school. He asked why I picked the art school here if I could have gone anywhere else, and I said because Glasgow is interesting. He said, “What Glasgow lacks in beauty and brains, it makes up for with wit and resilience.”

A program was launched in the eighties to “clean up” the city. It was called *Glasgow’s Miles Better*. The official logo was Mr. Happy. It sounds stupid, but it must have been hugely successful because people here love their city. The official motto of the

city now is *People Make Glasgow*.

It’s a different sort of civic pride than in Vancouver, where people love the idea of the city—the lifestyle and the landscape—but don’t necessarily feel connected to each other or feel that they share values.

Of course, this is comparing apples to oranges. The residential areas of Glasgow consist of multi-generational families and people with a common heritage. Sectarianism still divides neighbourhoods by class and religion. And it’s so white. Like, taxi drivers are white. Like, my sister and I went to eat at peak lunchtime inside the John Lewis department store cafeteria and we were the only people with non-white or blonde hair. We might have been the only people under fifty too, haha.

Christine Novosel is a graphic artist from British Columbia. She lives in Glasgow.



2005



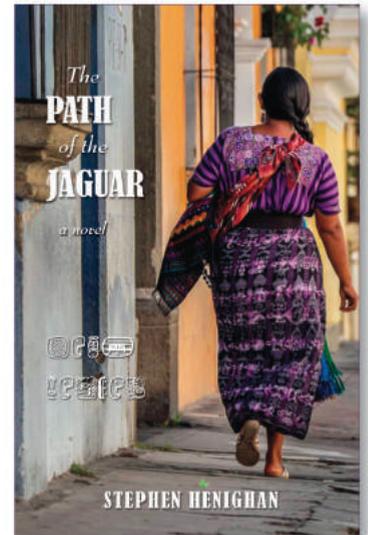
2011



2016

Over a period of eleven years, Stephen Smith visited British Harbour, an abandoned community on the Bonavista Peninsula in Newfoundland, and photographed a tree as it fell over and died. Smith's work has appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Life*, *Canadian Geographic*, *Outside*, *Quill & Quire*, *New York Times Magazine* and *Geist*. He lives in Toronto and at puckstruck.com.

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— *The Globe & Mail*

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Ad Infinitum

MAŁGORZATA NOWACZYK

Does throwing up prove I wasn't meant to be a doctor?

Once, as an intern, I pronounced four people dead in twenty-four hours; by four o'clock in the morning, I was ready to go home to my husband of six months, but I had to stay until the morning report. The sparrows were rioting outside my call room window that June morning.

Three years later, as a senior pediatric resident, I had to finger extract stone-hard feces from the rectum of a screaming five-year-old boy. The stool clanged as it hit the metal bedpan.

Before that, as a junior, on an afternoon after being up all night, barely in control of my senses, I bent a spinal-tap needle inside a four-year-old boy

who squirmed the wrong way during the lumbar puncture. Afterward, I shook the warped needle in front of his nose and said: "See what you have done?!" The nurses reported me and I was almost expelled from my coveted pediatric residency.

Back in the mid-eighties, as a hospital volunteer, I lost my lunch while watching a percutaneous needle biopsy of a coin lesion of the lung through a window in the fluoroscopy suite. I did not know what a biopsy was. I did not know about the lethal prognosis of a coin lesion, and if I did, I wouldn't have cared. I only worried whether throwing up in the hallway proved I wasn't meant to be a doctor.

About the same time, I stood on the curb of a busy downtown street outside a teaching hospital and watched as doctors—I was sure they were doctors, they must have been doctors, who else could have done this—talked a white-haired woman in a hospital gown down from the ledge of an eighth-floor window of what I later learned was the hospital library. I was soon to spend nights and days studying there.

One day in the operating room, finally a medical student, I stared in awe at the pink-petalled flowers of human tissue blossoming in the mass of a collapsed grey-brown lung as it was reinflated during a thoracotomy.



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It was magical. Later, at home, I wanted to write a poem about it, but I did not know how.

Another time, while on duty in the emergency department, I saw a seventeen-year-old girl's left pupil dilate and her left eye deviate down and outward, and I knew then and there that an artery inside her brain had just hemorrhaged and was killing her. I wanted to crack open her skull to relieve the pressure, to let the blood out, to allow the brainstem to spring back to its normal shape and consistency, but I called the cardiac arrest code instead and the cardiac arrest team pushed me aside as they set to work.

And then there was the time when, as a young consultant geneticist, I was

too tired to go to the hospital in the middle of the night because my colicky newborn son had been keeping me awake for ten months, and the patient, an eleven-year-old girl with a metabolic liver disease, died before I saw her. At the funeral, her parents thanked me for the wonderful care that they thought I had provided.

Małgorzata Nowaczyk was born in Poland and emigrated to Canada in 1981. She has published two books on genealogy in Poland and is currently working on a collection of short stories in English. A version of "Ad Infinitum" appeared in the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

Check-Out

THAD MCILROY

Friday, August 21, 2016, No Frills, Vancouver BC

A lanky unshaven guy in an old torn sweatshirt, eyes bulging, whose body seemed to twist into a pretzel every time he moved, was balancing two jumbo boxes of Honeycomb cereal, two frozen pizzas and a large aerosol can of Reddi-wip. He pulled a three-litre jug of milk out of the cooler and proceeded to drop it onto the floor, the jug exploding, milk everywhere. His female companion shrieked.

He was there again at the next checkout line, still balancing all of the items, including another jug of milk. He put the stuff down on the belt and then pushed back through the lineup and grabbed a three-litre bottle of Diet Coke, which split open when he tried to land it on the belt. The cashier grabbed the bottle before it could empty, tossed it in the trash can behind him and mopped up the mess. The man with the bulging eyes

pushed his way through the line one more time, arms flailing, and grabbed another bottle. He pulled a twenty out of his back pocket and brandished it high.

At the back of the line a woman with no teeth wearing a hoodie, neither young nor old, was trying to hold an eighteen-pack of budget toilet paper with one hand. After a few moments she uttered an *ugh* of disgust, put the toilet paper back on the pallet and bought a gift card instead.

As I was walking out the man with the bulging eyes was trying to squeeze the big cereal boxes into regular-sized yellow No Frills bags. Progress was slow.

Thad McIlroy is an electronic publishing analyst and consultant, and author of more than two hundred articles and several books on the subject. He lives in Vancouver and at thefutureofpublishing.com.

Some Lesser-Known Emoji

by Eve Corbel



Mercury in retrograde



Dive-bombed by crow



Eureka!



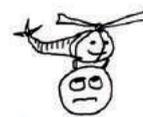
Can I borrow your weed eater



Too much hot sauce



Caught in flagrante delicto



Will no one rid me of this helicopter parent



Sidewalk bike rider and proud of it



Wardrobe fail



Should have peed before we left

© 2016 Eve Corbel

Selected Days

M.A.C. FARRANT

Vincent Van Gogh, Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Parker and an old wife

FRENCH CONNECTION

When you reach the 208th day of the year it will be July 27. On this day in 1890, the painter Vincent Van Gogh shot himself in the chest. He did this in one of the French wheat fields he frequently painted. He was thirty-seven years old and died two days later. His last words were, “The sadness will last forever.”

Also on this day, in 1946, the writer Gertrude Stein died in France while being operated on for stomach cancer. She was seventy-two. A year later, the American novelist Katherine Anne Porter, writing in *Harper's* magazine, will call Stein's work “the long

drone and mutter and stammer of her lifetime monologue” and refer to her “tepid, sluggish nature, really sluggish like something eating its way through a leaf.”

For the rest of us still living, even the sluggish ones, July 27 will be like all the other days, which is to say, a combination of breath and panic and glory. There is not much we can do about any of this.

OLD WIVES DAY

This is the day you realize you've become an old wife. It's because your husband, Owen, has given you an electric can opener as a thirty-third

anniversary gift. And because the celebration dinner is the two of you at the Dairy Queen—Flame Throwers, Diet Cokes, a shared Oreo Blizzard—after which you ride home in silence sucking an orange Lifesaver. Okay. So be it.

But consider this: Being an old wife can be a cause for joy because you can now put your stamp on each day. From here on you'll be able to add to the world's store of tales, sayings and remedies. And there's a good chance you'll become valued, even prized because of this. You will soon learn that being an old wife changes all the pieces on the table.

The only problem is that being valued can mean you're in danger. This is because old wives are becoming a scarce item. Maybe divorce or disinclination are the reasons, but there are fewer of you participating in the long-haul marriage. As a result, old wives have become a rarity. People have taken to running off with them. They've become a cultural product, valued like argon crystal or a horse coloured amber champagne. There is now this amazing phenomenon of old wives just quietly disappearing.

If Owen is worried about theft, tell him it's unlikely you will be taken. As an old wife you're a pretty standard model, small and blonde, and you're not shy and have a big mouth. You also wiggle your finger a lot, like an old cat woman, and you know what that means. Cats can suck the breath from a baby.

DOROTHY PARKER DAY

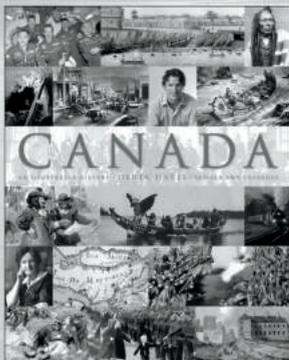
On August 22 we honour Dorothy Parker for her corrosive wit. Born in Long Beach, New Jersey, on this day in 1893, she came to prominence as

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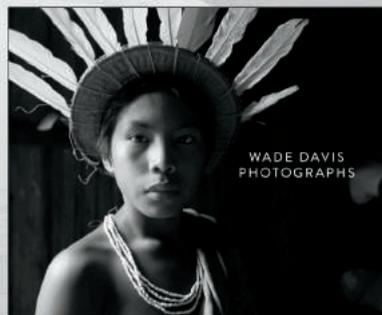
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a writer, reviewer and satirist while working for the *New Yorker* magazine during the twenties and thirties of the last century. “Those were the terrible days of the wisecrack,” she wrote. “There didn’t have to be any truth.”

There still doesn’t have to be any truth, which is why August 22 has been designated as the one day of the year we can say corrosive things and be free from public censure. Dorothy Parker was reputed to have said corrosive things every day of her life, including the fact that she loved dachshunds better than men.

“The first thing I do in the morning is brush my teeth and sharpen my tongue.”

“I require three things in a man: he must be handsome, ruthless, and stupid.”

“Beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes clean to the bone.”

“Tell him I was too fucking busy—or vice versa.”

On Dorothy Parker Day we wear wool suits and little hats, smoke with cigarette holders and have a liver-coloured dachshund on a lead. We wander about being bored and sullen and sad and nasty.

“If you can get through the twilight you can live through the night,” she said.

Come evening we toast her with Whiskey Sours, her favourite drink—bourbon, lemon juice, and sugar over ice. She was drunk most nights. When a reporter asked her if she was going to join Alcoholics Anonymous, she said, “Certainly not. They want me to stop *now*.”

She died of a heart attack on June 4, 1967, her preferred words for an epitaph being, *Excuse My Dust*. Her ashes remained unclaimed in a lawyer’s office for seventeen years.

M.A.C. Farrant is the author of over a dozen works of fiction, non-fiction and memoir, as well as the play My Turquoise Years. She lives in Victoria.



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Natural Questions

ROB KOVITZ

A question for the panel, I believe



Can Camouflage Keep up With Climate Change?

“White Hares on Brown Snowless Backgrounds as a Model to Study Adaptation to Climate Stress” examines the important scientific questions for wildlife management in the face of climate change of whether animals will be able to locally adapt, allowing them to persist in place without need for corridors or planned translocations. This webinar was a part of the NCCWSC Climate Change Science and Management Webinar Series.

United States Geological Survey videos, 24 July 2014 (youtube.com)

The matter is not where we go
 But how long it will last
 The question is how fast
 The question is how fast
 The question is how fast
 This is not a test, it's just an ask
 And the question is how fast

Superchunk, The Question is How Fast (On the Mouth)

The human beings were different primarily because they were the only species intensely curious about their surroundings. In time, mutations occurred, and an odd subset of humans began roaming the land. They were arrogant. They were not content to enjoy the magnificence of the universe. They asked “How?” How was the universe created? How can the “stuff” of the universe be responsible for the incredible variety in our world: stars, planets, sea otters, oceans, coral, sunlight,

the human brain? The mutants had posed a question that could be answered—but only with the labor of millennia and with a dedication handed down from master to student for a hundred generations. The question also inspired a great number of wrong and embarrassing answers. Fortunately, these mutants were born without a sense of embarrassment. They were called physicists.

Leon M. Lederman, The God Particle: If the Universe Is the Answer, What Is the Question?

Q. Are there important aspects of the Universe that can only be understood using the Anthropic Principle? Or is this principle unnecessary, or perhaps inherently unscientific?

A. Very roughly speaking, the Anthropic Principle says that our universe must be approximately the way it is for intelligent life to exist, so that the mere fact we are asking certain questions constrains their answers. This might “explain” the values of fundamental constants of nature, and perhaps other aspects of the laws of physics as well. Or, it might not.

Scott Chase, Michael Weiss, Philip Gibbs, Chris Hillman and Nathan Urban, The Original Usenet Physics FAQ

“Have you ever noticed this—that people never answer what you say? They answer what you mean—or what they think you mean. Suppose one lady says to another in a country house, ‘Is anybody staying with you?’ the lady doesn’t answer ‘Yes; the butler, the three footmen, the parlourmaid, and so on,’ though the parlourmaid may be in the room, or the butler behind her chair. She says ‘There is nobody staying with us,’ meaning nobody of the sort you mean. But suppose a doctor inquiring into an epidemic asks, ‘Who is staying in the house?’ then the lady will remember the butler, the parlourmaid, and the rest. All language is used like that; you never get a question answered literally, even when you get it answered truly. When those four quite honest men said that no man had gone into the Mansions, they did not really mean that no man had gone into them. They meant no man whom they could suspect of being your man. A man did go into the house, and did come out of it, but they never noticed him.”

“An invisible man?” inquired Angus, raising his red eyebrows.

G. K. Chesterton, The Invisible Man

WE cannot expect that the wisest men of our remotest posterity, who can base their conclusions upon thousands of years of accurate observation, will reach a decision on this subject without some measure of reserve. Such being the case, it might appear the dictate of wisdom to leave its consideration to some future age, when it may be taken up with better means of information than we now possess. But the question is one which will refuse to be postponed so long as the propensity to think of the possibilities of creation is characteristic of our race. The issue is not whether we shall ignore the question altogether, like Eve in the presence of Raphael; but whether in studying it we shall confine our speculations within the limits set by sound scientific reasoning. Essay-ing to do this, I invite the reader’s attention to what science may suggest, admitting in advance that the sphere of exact knowledge is small compared with the possibilities of creation, and that outside this sphere we can state only more or less probable conclusions.

The reader who desires to approach this subject in the most receptive spirit should begin his study by betaking himself on a clear, moonless evening, when he has no earthly concern to disturb the serenity of his thoughts, to some point where he can lie on his back on bench or roof, and scan the whole vault of heaven at one view. He can do this with the greatest pleasure and profit in late summer or autumn—winter would do equally well were it possible for the mind to rise so far above bodily conditions that the question of temperature should not enter.

Simon Newcomb, The Extent of the Universe

Should I be worried about climate change? Will it affect me personally?

Worldwatch Institute, Questions and Answers about Global Warming and Abrupt Climate Change

“To all these natural questions the voice of public History is as yet silent. Certain only that he has been, and is, a Pilgrim, and Traveler from a far Country; more or less footsore and travel-soiled; has parted with road-companions; fallen among thieves, been poisoned by bad cookery, blistered with bug-bites; nevertheless, at every stage (for they have let him pass), has had the Bill to discharge. But the whole particulars of his Route, his Weather-observations, the picturesque Sketches he took,

though all regularly jotted down (in indelible sympathetic-ink by an invisible interior Penman), are these nowhere forthcoming? Perhaps quite lost: one other leaf of that mighty Volume (of human Memory) left to fly abroad, unprinted, unpublished, unbound up, as waste paper; and to rot, the sport of rainy winds?

Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh

Do mobile homes attract tornadoes?

Of course not. It may seem that way, considering most tornado deaths occur in them, and that some of the most graphic reports of tornado damage come from mobile home communities. The reason for this is that mobile homes are, in general, much easier for a tornado to damage and destroy than well-built houses and office buildings. A brief, relatively weak tornado which may have gone undetected in the wilderness, or misclassified as severe straight-line thunderstorm winds while doing minor damage to sturdy houses, can blow a mobile home apart. Historically, mobile home parks have been reliable indicators, not attractors, of tornadoes.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Frequently Asked Questions About Tornadoes

“It was him they were really out to get. And they did it. They got him. The bomb might as well have gone off in their living room. The violence done to his life was awful. Horrible. Never in his life had occasion to ask himself, ‘Why are things the way they are?’ Why should he bother, when the way they were was always perfect? Why are things the way they are? The question to which there is no answer, and up till then he was so blessed he didn’t even know the question existed.”

Philip Roth, American Pastoral

Foreman: Another question from the audience, I think. Mrs. Sally Whitaker from Bournemouthe has a question for the panel, I believe. Mrs. Whitaker?

Mrs. Whitaker: Thank you, Brian. Well, I’m a new gardener and this is my first frost and in two short months my garden’s gone from being a real color explosion to a very bare thing indeed ... Friends have advised flowers with a compact habit but that leaves me with lots of tiny auricula and double daisies, which look

silly because the garden’s really quite large. Now, I’d really like to plant something a little more striking, around the height of a delphinium, but then the wind gets it and people look over their fences thinking: *Dear oh dear (sympathetic laughter from the studio audience)*. So, my question to the panel is, how do you keep up appearances in the bleak midwinter?

Foreman: Thank you, Mrs. Whitaker. Well, it’s a common problem ... and it doesn’t necessarily get any easier for the seasoned gardener. Personally, I never get it quite right. Well, let’s hand the question over to the panel, shall we? Joyce Chalfen, any answers or suggestions for the bleak midwinter?

Joyce Chalfen: Well, first I must say your neighbors sound *very* nosy, I’d tell them to mind their own beeswax if I were you (*laughter from audience*).

Zadie Smith, White Teeth

The door-bell rang.

Cairo’s eyes jerked into focus on the passageway that led to the corridor-door. His eyes had become unangry and wary. The girl had gasped and turned to face the passageway. Her face was frightened. Spade stared gloomily for a moment at the blood trickling from Cairo’s lip, and then stepped back, taking his hand from the Levantine’s throat.

“Who is it?” the girl whispered, coming close to Spade; and Cairo’s eyes jerked back to ask the same question.

Dasheell Hammett, The Maltese Falcon

Is it physically possible, or even logically feasible, to have more than one universe? The screenwriter doesn’t know. The girl expels a mouthful of smoke and asks: Does this cigarette exist? The smoke? “2.063 The sum-total of reality is the No World.” A slight alteration of W’s pronouncement. She goes back to her initial inquiry. She thinks the answer must be simple, because a thoughtlet is like a fundamental particle, and these constitute everything else in existence, everything a mind learns, and everything it imagines, are composed of these. And if it bodies forth a whole world, it must do so because it doesn’t want to be alone. It’s the only possible answer to the question. It’s the only answer the girl can think of.

A. G. Porta, No World Concerto

Question: Do you literally mean that when you talked with the audience you came to believe that they had not seen anything else but the chicken?

Wilson: We simply asked them: What did you see in this film?

Question: Not what did you *think*?

Wilson: No, what did you *see*?

Question: How many people were in the viewing audience of whom you asked this question?

Wilson: 30-odd.

Question: No one gave you a response other than “We saw the chicken”?

Wilson: No, this was the first quick response—“We saw a chicken.”

John Wilson, Film Literacy in Africa (Canadian Communications)

Thinking in Fahrenheit—sixteen degrees—I felt very sad for the penguins. But then, as so often happens in climate-change discussions when the talk turns from diagnosis to remedies, the darkness became the blackness of black comedy. Sitting in the lounge of a ship burning three and a half gallons of fuel per minute, we listened to Adam extoll the benefits of shopping at farmers’ markets and changing our incandescent bulbs to L.E.D. bulbs. He also suggested that universal education for women would lower the global birth rate, and that ridding the world of war would free up enough money to convert the global economy to renewable energy. Then he called for questions or comments. The climate-change skeptics weren’t interested in arguing, but a believer stood up to say that he managed a lot of residential properties, and that he’d noticed that his federally subsidized tenants always kept their homes too hot in the winter and too cold in the summer, because they didn’t pay for their utilities, and that one way to combat climate change would be to make them pay. To this, a woman quietly responded, “I think the ultra-wealthy waste far more than people in subsidized housing.” The discussion broke up quickly after that—we all had bags to pack.

Jonathan Franzen, The End of the End of the World (the New Yorker)

Meanwhile, upon questioning him in his broken fashion, Queequeg gave me to understand that, in his land, owing to the absence of

settees and sofas of all sorts, the king, chiefs, and great people generally, were in the custom of fattening some of the lower orders for ottomans; and to furnish a house comfortably in that respect, you had only to buy up eight or ten lazy fellows, and lay them round in the piers and alcoves. Besides, it was very convenient on an excursion; much better than those garden-chairs which are convertible into walking-sticks; upon occasion, a chief calling his attendant, and desiring him to make a settee of himself under a spreading tree, perhaps in some damp marshy place.

Herman Melville, Moby Dick; Or, the Whale

*Sources: Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh (1836), Project Gutenberg, 1997, <http://www.gutenberg.org> Scott Chase, Michael Weiss, Philip Gibbs, Chris Hillman and Nathan Urban, The Original Usenet Physics FAQ, 2014, <http://physicsfaq.co.uk>. Jonathan Franzen, “The End of the End of the World,” *The New Yorker*, May 23, 2016. Dasbiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon (1930)*, Knopf Doubleday, 2010. T. C. Hansard. G.K. Chesterton, “The Invisible Man.” *The Innocence of Father Brown*, Cassell, 1911, <http://www.worlds-best-detective-crime-and-murder-mystery-books.com>. Leon M. Lederman, *The God Particle: If the Universe Is the Answer, What Is the Question?* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1993. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick: Or, the White Whale (1851)*, Airmont Publishing Company, 1964. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “Frequently Asked Questions about Tornadoes,” NOAA’s National Weather Service, 2014, <http://www.spc.noaa.gov>. Simon Newcomb, “The Extent of the Universe,” *Scientific Papers*, Vol. XXX, *The Harvard Classics*, edited by Charles W. Eliot, P. F. Collier & Son, 1909-14, <http://www.bartleby.com>. A. G. Porta, *No World Concerto*, translated by Darren Koolman and Rbett McNeil, Dalkey Archive Press, 2013. Philip Roth, *American Pastoral*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1997. Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2003. *Superchunk*, “The Question is How Fast,” *On the Mouth, Matador*, 1993. John Wilson, “Film Literacy in Africa,” *Canadian Communications*, vol. I, no. 4, Summer 1961, pp. 7-14, quoted in Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (1962)*, Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2002. Worldwatch Institute, “Questions and Answers about Global Warming and Abrupt Climate Change,” [worldwatch.org](http://www.worldwatch.org), 2013, <http://www.worldwatch.org>.*

FINDINGS



From *Classic Rock*, a series of eighteen large-format paintings by Riel Benn in which classic rock album art of the 1960s and '70s is reimagined to address Aboriginal issues in the context of the legacy of colonization. *Classic Rock* exhibited at the Ashukan Cultural

Occupy Indian Affairs

ARTHUR MANUEL

From *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call*. Published by *Between the Lines* in 2015. *Unsettling Canada* won the 2016 Canadian Historical Association Aboriginal History Book Prize. Manuel is a member of the Neskonlith Indian Band of the Secwepemc Nation and the spokesperson for the Indigenous Network on Economics and Trade. He lives in Kamloops, BC. IAA stands for Indian Association of Alberta.

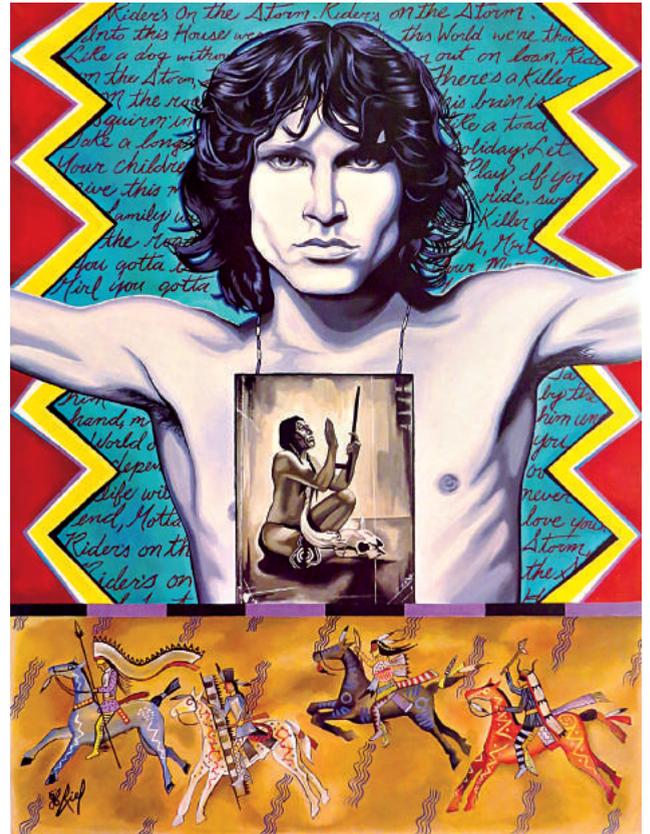
During the meeting, I was not shy in speaking out and, somehow, when the election for a new Youth Association president was called, I ended up elected to the post. I think the group wanted to shed its university student image and engage more at the street level, like we had done

in Alberta. In the board meeting afterward, we discussed the planned Indian Affairs takeover. After having experienced the rapid funding cut-off of the IAA in Alberta when the association had stood up to the government, I warned the board that if we took over the Department of Indian

Affairs, this organization was probably finished because the government project funding we were receiving would disappear.

The board was undeterred by this, and so was I. When you find yourself clinging to an organization just to continue it in an ineffective way, you have to seriously ask yourself why. Our role was to confront unjust government policies toward our peoples, and it is impossible to do that in a way that will please government funders. This is a reality that too many of the current generation of leaders have yet to face.

The twenty-four-hour takeover was planned for mid-August 1973. A few days before the target date, we



Space in Montreal from August to September 2016, presented by Sacred Fire Productions. Benn is an award-winning artist from the Birdtail Sioux First Nation in Manitoba. See more of his work at artofthebutterfly.com.

amassed 350 activists on St. Regis Island on the Akwesasne reserve, which straddles the Canada-US border near Cornwall, Ontario. At the time, we were still discussing whether we should actually go through with it, and we made it clear to all that it could be the end of our organization if we did. Some were still arguing that we should try to work with the government from the inside, but when the great majority of members rejected that idea, everyone agreed to carry out the action as planned. Late that night before heading to Ottawa, I found a pay phone and, as a courtesy, called my father, then head of the National Indian Brotherhood, to let him know

what was happening. He said little, just thanked me for letting him know.

He was, of course, already well aware of what was going on. The day before, my Uncle Joe, then Neskonlith band chief, had arrived on the island after driving with some Neskonlith youth right across the country. Others have since told me that my father had asked Uncle Joe to join us and to keep an eye on things.

We crossed the river in barges before dawn and made the hour-and-a-half drive to Ottawa in a cavalcade of cars, vans, and motorcycles. We arrived at the deserted street in front of the Indian Affairs building

on Laurier Avenue at sunrise, feeling the power of our numbers and our cause as we began to stream into the building. The security guard met us in the lobby, but seeing hundreds of young Indians, many carrying sleeping bags and blankets, filling the building, he took a tactful approach. He asked us politely what we were up to. We explained that we would be there for twenty-four hours and we would remain peaceful. He seemed satisfied, handed us the keys to the door, and left.

The occupation was a political act, but it also had a more practical objective. Indian Affairs was where the minutiae of our lives were controlled

and where the strategies like the White Paper were hatched. Among us were some activists who well understood the importance of those files to our people, and they went to work rifling through the filing cabinets looking for specific pieces of information.

They found much of what they were looking for in the office of the assistant deputy minister, John Ciaccia, a Quebec Liberal who many believed was sent to Chrétien's Department of Indian Affairs for schooling on how to deal with Indians before taking over the file in Quebec.

On a personal level, Ciaccia had made an impression. In contrast to their attitude toward most DIA bureaucrats, people actually liked Ciaccia as a person. Even the radical elements around my father liked him. He had set up a few progressive youth-oriented programs around the

country, and at the time, my brother Bobby was working on contract on one of them. It was based in Alberta, but Bobby was in Ottawa that week and he heard about the Indian Youth Association takeover on the radio while driving to work that morning. The radio announced that the Indian Affairs building was shut down and the downtown core was cordoned off, with the building surrounded by the RCMP. With a smile on his face, Bobby turned his car around and headed back home.

Inside, the burst of busyness continued. Our people found a number of locked filing cabinets inside Ciaccia's office. They hauled them up to the roof and began using fire axes to break off the locks.

The initial buoyant atmosphere began to recede as dozens, then hundreds, of RCMP riot squad officers

amassed in front of the building with their menacing-looking helmets, shields, and clubs. Since Indian Affairs was a federal department, Minister Chrétien had been made aware of our presence as soon as we arrived, and he had immediately called in the RCMP riot squad. Inside, Dutch Lerat, our security chief, and some of our more resourceful colleagues had liberated buckets of industrial soap from the janitorial supplies. If the RCMP charged in, they said we should retreat to the second floor, block the elevators, and dump the liquid soap on the stairs to slow the police assault.

When the RCMP began to beat their shields with their clubs in that universal riot squad intimidation tactic, some of our biggest guys stood in front of the lobby to signal that we were not going to give up without a fight. It was a serious group, and we were prepared for serious consequences.

A short time later, an Ottawa police officer came to the door and yelled, "Who's in charge? We want to talk."

At first I was reluctant to go outside, thinking that perhaps it was a trick and I would be arrested and prevented from coming back in. I was so suspicious and, in retrospect, naïve, that it took some coaxing for the police to get me to step out to meet with them.

I was surprised when the Ottawa police chief, in his brocaded jacket, came up to speak to me. He was forthright. "You are just here for twenty-four hours, right?"

"Yes," I said.

He nodded. "To tell you the truth, I have no problem with you being here for twenty-four hours, as long as you don't damage property or harm anyone."

I told him that we would be peaceful if we weren't attacked.

DEATH OF A FISHERMAN

From Half Rock, by Robin Durnford. Published by Gaspereau in 2016. Durnford's chapbook, Fog of the Outport, was the subject of a 2013 CBC Land & Sea documentary. She lives in Corner Brook, NL.

because the drug's unknown
he's rowing with bed rails on sheets
sail-taut where the sea should be.

he bails the mattress, tiles
toss him, he feels his gut
when they unhook his pride,

IV's where the fish should be.
he's almost ashore, he rolls
smokes with his tongue

as he fights another wave,
coughing up a lung, squall-
eyed into the light again,

scalped ears hear the tides
through the night monitor,
wants the anchor pulled

as the nurse handles the rigging,
dropping the sails, casting
her line into his blood,

he lets go as she pulls on
the motor, but he drifts
dangerous and strong

until he guns her
offshore to his banks
grand Elysium

OVERUSED WORD ALERT ►

"Think piece"

HOW TO WRITE A THINK PIECE: Step one: find something to be mad at. This is the easy part. A GENERIC THINK PIECE: In middle school, I had a crush on a boy who was half Asian. Or maybe he was Colombian.

“Okay,” he said. “If that’s your promise, you can stay. I’ll tell the Mounties to go home.”

Apparently there was some kind of jurisdictional issue. Chrétien had called in the RCMP to protect federal property. But it turned out that the DIA office was not a government building but private property under lease to the government. The Ottawa police chief, who was not at all happy about the RCMP’s planned rumble with hundreds of Indian kids in downtown Ottawa, told the RCMP they had no jurisdiction and forced them to move away from the building. We watched with some relief as the RCMP riot squad was moved further back and replaced by Ottawa police.

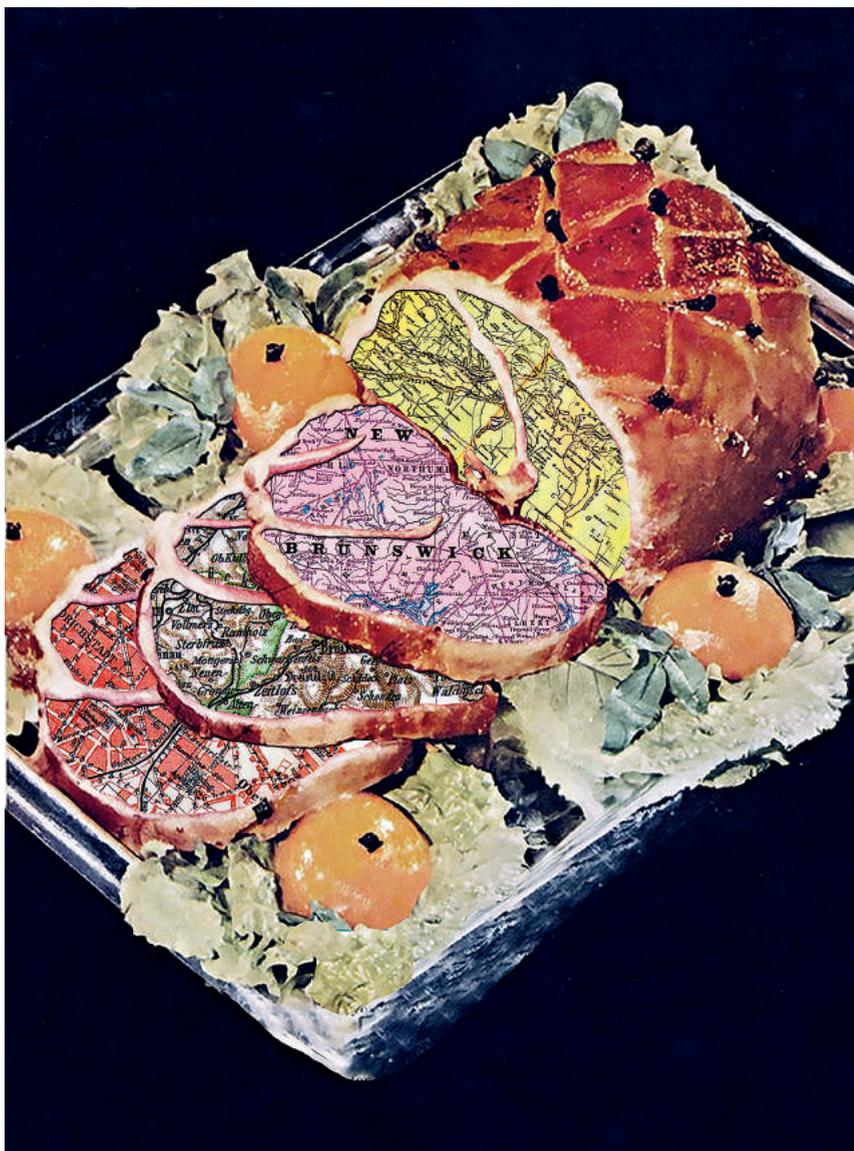
A few minutes later, we were interrupted by some kind of commotion on the upper floors of the building. An early bird Indian Affairs employee who had apparently been in the building when we arrived was waving and holding a sign that read: COME AND GET ME.

We sent someone up to tell the gentleman that he was free to leave. The police escorted the early bird away but remained on the sidewalk with their cruisers parked all along the street. Later we also saw that they had taken up positions on the surrounding rooftops, which caused another problem when the sharpshooters reported that some kids were up on the roof smashing government filing cabinets with fire axes.

The Ottawa police were at the front door again.

“You gave us your word,” they said to me, “that you would not do any damage to property. But there are kids on the roof damaging property.”

I apologized and promised we would put an end to that. Word went up to our team to get off the roof and



From Roast Collection, a tetraptych of two 6"x 8" and two 8"x 6" collages by Eugenia Loli. Loli is an artist whose work has been published in Harper's, GQ, Wired, Vogue and other publications. She lives in California. See more of her work at eugentialoli.tumblr.com.

finish whatever they had to do inside the building.

In early evening, I went back out to the police to tell them that some of our younger protesters wanted to go home and ask if they could be let through the police lines. The police agreed, and the young protesters walked through the lines with the files we had collected wrapped up in their sleeping bags.

These files eventually made it, through a circuitous route, to the National Indian Brotherhood, where they provided valuable insight into past and current Indian Affairs activities.

The rest of us marched out the next day, as planned, and returned in caravan back to Akwesasne on the American side. Then we had one

Either way, now I understand race relations in the United States. 51 THINGS TO DO INSTEAD OF WRITING THAT THINK PIECE ABOUT GENDER: Make some drinks. See if you forgot to pay any bills. Be quiet. Make another round of drinks. WHAT THINK PIECE WRITERS GET WRONG ABOUT LOBOTOMIES: I possess a decent

more protest to make, this one against the Canadian-American border that cut through our lands. When we left Akwesasne, we didn't bother stopping at the Canadian immigration and customs booth. A posse of Canadian border police pulled in behind us and brought us to a stop a few kilometres inside the country. But when we left our cars to meet them, the lead officer, seeing our number and our determination, barked that we were to get back into our vehicles and get out of there.

I drove to Ottawa to meet with my father, proud of the courage and discipline we had displayed. I still see many of these former Youth Association people today, as they have gone on to become leaders of their nations. Although some of them, sad to say, left their sense of defiance in their youth.

As expected, the action against Indian Affairs caused the Secretary of State funding for the Youth Association to immediately dry up. We had

run a youth drop-in centre in Ottawa, and we had to close it down and lay off our handful of staff. Soon our organization existed only in newspapers, where stories began to appear, no doubt placed by the Department of Indian Affairs, about visits by some of our members to places like Communist East Germany. The Department was engaged in its own little Cold War against us, one that continues today long after the wall has come down in Germany. 🍷

Failed Seances for Rita MacNeil

LUCAS CRAWFORD

From Sideshow Concessions. Published by Invisible in 2015. Crawford's poetry has been published in the Literary Review of Canada, Antigonish Review, PRISM International and Best Canadian Poetry (2015). Sideshow Concessions won the 2015 Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry. Crawford lives in Vancouver.

I.
Rita, you requested that your ashes
be held in a teapot—two if necessary, you said.
 Low days, I browse plus-size caskets
 (They are all pink or blue)
 But you took death with
 milk and sugar, long steep.

Rita, we are both members
of the fat neo-Scottish diaspora.
 Don't tell me it doesn't exist, sweet darlin',
 until you are the only fat transsexual
 at a Rankin Family concert in Montreal.
 Until you feel more at home
 than you have all year when
 Raylene (1960–2012)
 thumbs-ups your half-ton dance moves in the front
 row during that last last encore.

*Fare thee well, love.
Will we never meet again no more?*

II.
In Grade Two, I sang with your coalmining choir,
The Men of the Deep. There is something terrifying
about a hundred prepubescent squirts
squeaking out the high falsetto tones of "We Rise Again"
over the miners' sea of capsized bass tones. The highest note
of the song comes at the word "child" and we screamed it.
We didn't yet have the sadness that keeps you
from even trying those high notes that take you
from ours to other worlds and back again.

A miner comes forward
in concerts for a mustachioed solo.
He was on the CBC the day you died,
having an open cry.
They all wear helmets onstage.
They are all Henny Penny,
ever hardhat-ready for another falling sky.

Rita, did I ever tell you
my great uncle Miley died in the mines?

healthcare plan and the ethical imperative to check my cerebral privilege. INCREASINGLY CONVOLUTED THINK PIECE TITLES ABOUT APOLOGIZING: I'm Sorry. Why I'm Not Actually Sorry. How I Gave Up Saying "I'm Sorry" And Started Saying "OPA!!" MILLENNIAL THINK PIECE BINGO: Entitlement complex. Unpaid

My mother and I drove to Glace Bay last year.
The old company houses are split
down the middle. Each half is a
different hand-painted hue
and empty.

We bowled candlepin alone in the basement of a church,
but it did not strike us to genuflect upon entry.

III.

Rita, I heard you were trailed by the RCMP in the '70s.
They weren't arts reviewers, those Mounties:

*She's the one who composes and sings women's lib songs.
A hundred sweating, uncombed women
standing around
in the middle of the floor with their arms around each
other crying sisterhood and dancing.*

They don't know the gravitas required
of a fat woman who wants a microphone.
They didn't see you as a teenager with a baby
decades before Juno.

Or the surgeries you had for the cleft palate of your youth.
Not even the abuse you sang through.
They don't believe in ghosts like we do or
know those family spirits

that can refill a rum tumbler
when your back is turned.

IV.

Rita, do you remember the Heritage commercial
about the mine collapse?

An actor swears that they sang those hymns,
drank their own "you know"...

At seven, this frightened me,
but now I've seen a bit:

I've watched Ashley MacIsaac (1975-)
discuss urination during sex.
I still toe-tap to his first crossover hit,
and still watch the bit on Conan O'Brien
when he kicks up his kilt while going commando.
Yes, to queer kids watching at home,

a kilt can become a portal to another life not yet
witnessed or possible.

*Step we gaily, on we go,
heel for heel and toe for toe!*

I want to feel Ashley move his bow, dab at his
brow,

wash his feet or at least buy him a pedicure
so that I can tell him the queer rural Nova

Scotian diaspora

(don't tell me it doesn't exist, b'y)

needs him to survive because
my accent is buried in Banff now
and he's the last member of my
trinity still (last I checked) alive.

V.

One of my fat aunts resembles you, Rita.
Once, at the liquor store, someone cried:
I didn't know you were in town for a show!

This aunt grabbed her rye,
drove home angry foot to floor,
had her niece pour the spirit
until the ice floated.

She is on the wagon now. Sort of.
Her niece could be a nephew, sort of.
Things change, Rita.

Rita, say anything.
Tell me we can break biscuits
with blueberries and Devonshire cream.

Tell me that you'll let pitch-free me
hum along as you sing me to sleep.

Just don't tell me
we didn't exist. Don't
tell me that you don't

feel the same way too. 🍷

La Pluie Montréalaise

PETER DESBARATS

From Parallel #6. Desbarats was a news anchor, columnist, author of thirteen books, dean of journalism at the University of Western Ontario and editor of Parallel, a Montreal literary magazine published from 1966 to 1967. He lived in London, ON.

This city responds magnificently to rain. It is a quality not shared by any other Canadian city except Halifax which, of course, is a city designed in the rain by drenched architects poring over soggy blueprints. Whenever it stops raining in Halifax, the city assumes a strangely desiccated appearance. Five minutes without rain makes it seem as dry and bleached as a soda cracker. You almost expect the Victorian cornices on the buildings to start sifting away on a powdery wind.

Victoria has a suspicion of the same character. Vancouver, despite its maritime history, just sulks in the rain. Prairie cities turn their backs on rain like wet buffalo. When the rain comes down on Toronto, it is more like Lake Ontario going up. The streets empty before the gray deluge. But Montreal welcomes the rain as joyfully as a boy with new rubber boots.

Observation has taught me that Montrealers like to watch liquid in action, whether it's in a river,

fountain (why aren't there more fountains in the city?), gutter or glass. It comes from being an island people.

This watermania includes rain. On the lowest level, no taxi drivers in the world obtain more satisfaction from rain than ours in Montreal. They exult in speeding through the wet streets between sheets of spray that a British battleship might envy. Plodding pedestrians might curse but the taxi driver has only the song of the tires in his ears as he bowls along Sherbrooke Street suspended like a hovercraft on a pillow of wet turbulence.

Sherbrooke Street in the rain... I didn't mean to mention it already. I wanted to save it to the end. I always think of Sherbrooke Street in the rain as John Little has painted it, somewhere around the

Stanza Is the Italian Word for Room

JENNIFER ZILM

From Waiting Room. Published by BookThug in 2016. Zilm's writing has been published in PRISM International, Prairie Fire, Vallum and many others. She lives in Vancouver.

*On benedick's retirement, or how I learned to stop worrying
and love the catholic church*

It is so holy to be old.

(Virus meas ingravecente atate non iam apte esse.)

Grandma in her white carpet stanza
refuses to install track lighting (it's tacky)
to highlight the glitter in her dying eyes.
Opa shared his final stanza with two strangers,
crippled fingers scrawling fugues on scrap paper,
unable to unfold his fingers over the keys.
Oma in her condo marvels at the SkyTrain,
popeye pizza and hoards dietary supplements
in her kitchen drawer.

Uncle Morris in the Okanagan sun stanza
still smiled when his sister-in-law whispered *chess*
into his large-lobed ear while Aunt Barbara refuses to visit,

walking with one glass eye in the empty lots in Lumby
where she said his spirit lived.

Then Uncle George just dying
in his diapers, losing his dreams
of a *Whites-only* golf course

as a swift-fingered Filipina
sponged his slack limbs.

Finally you, benedick, your shoulders
bent forward in heavy red,

a supplicant posture, just another
broken holy father. 🍷

lot of the terminology used for coital relation between gents and the opposite sex sounds downright abusive. THE FEMINIST THINK PIECE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: In my commitment to anti-oppressive feminist work, it seems obligatory for me to stay in the know just to remain relevant to the struggle. GIVE MEANING TO YOUR

McGill campus, with the lights of automobiles streaking over the black asphalt, and the bare elms marching up the campus to the mountain where the old buildings snuggle into the rock-like mausoleums.

The clubs on Sherbrooke Street, the old stone buildings, sit comfortably in the rain because there is something old-fashioned about rain, traditional, slightly British. The clubs seem a bit doddering in brilliant sunlight but they dream in the rain of the days when an Anglo-Saxon could afford to be gracious and gentlemanly about French Canadians, and could afford just about anything else he fancied.

The rain drives most people from Mount Royal. There is a painting,

I forget by whom, not a new one, of the city seen between the trees of Mount Royal on a dark blue late afternoon in mid-winter which has a powerful feeling of being isolated above humanity, not from any negative rejection but from the happiness of being alone and the anticipation of returning to the warmth of the city. That is winter, of course, but rain on Mount Royal has the same ability to cut one off from the city while making the yellow windows down below look as cheerful as fireplaces.

Look at Dorchester Boulevard in the rain. On a rainy morning, the skyscrapers disappear in the clouds and you can imagine them continuing to impossible heights. At

night, when the rain clouds are ripping themselves across the tops of the buildings, the skyscrapers move through the heavens.

Finally, there is something sinister about rain. You never stroll down a rainy street at night. You lurk. Maybe it has something to do with a lot of mysterious rainy movie scenes, but not entirely. Dickens was hatching plots in the rain long before John Ford filmed *The Informer* under the shower. Even before that, when God wanted to do something extremely impressive, he made it rain for 40 days and 40 nights. That's better than I can do. Six hundred and thirty-one words on rain and I'm starting to dry up. ☀



Harry Callaban, Cairo, 1978. Dye transfer print. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of the Rossy Family Foundation. © The Estate of Harry Callaban, Courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York. From Harry Callahan: *The Street*. Published by Black Dog Publishing in 2016.

FEELINGS WITH THE PRINCE THINK PIECE GENERATOR: How can you choose what he meant to you? Find your own angle on everyone's loss with the Prince Think Piece Generator. WHY THE TRUMP PROBLEM WON'T GO AWAY: The rush of seeing my name on a published book prevented me from adding a grain of sand to the

Blood and Berries

DOUG DIACZUK

From Chalk, winner of the 38th Annual International 3-Day Novel Contest. Published by Anvil Press in 2016. Diaczuk is a writer and journalist. He lives in Thunder Bay.

You spend your nights driving around the city, parking in front of homeless shelters and soup kitchens, smoking cigarettes on the sidewalk and offering ones to the men and women who ask politely. You hang around men's rooms at bus stations and watch fifteen-minute segments of TV shows on the coin-fed sets attached to armrests. You leave messages for L in chalk on sidewalks and on buildings. You tell her to go home and that her mother misses her. You tell her that you're all right and that the best thing that ever could have happened to you has finally happened. You brush the dust from your hands on your pants and think that she's probably not even in the city anymore, and every time you think it your heart breaks a little. You never really knew what your intentions

were and why you wanted to leave. It might have been the same reason that L gave her foster parents, maybe you're just bored. Or maybe, just like L, you're searching for something, something that doesn't even exist.

You try to imagine what you would look like as a woman and how it would feel not knowing who you are. Do you even know now? In a bar, you follow a woman into the bathroom and she screams and tells you to get the hell out.

Can you do me a favour? you ask.

I said get out of here, you creep.

Please.

She storms past you, smacking your arm with her handbag, and you can hear her shouting on the other side of the door. You look at yourself in the mirror, at your eyes, trying not to blink, and they look like they have

been buried under ice for hundreds of years. Another woman enters and freezes by the door. She wears bright-red lipstick and her hair is tied back in a high ponytail. She sees that you are crying.

Is everything okay? she asks.

Can you help me?

She moves closer to you, like a wild animal approaching an outstretched hand.

With what? she asks. You point at the mirror and ask her to kiss the glass.

What?

Please.

Why?

I want to see what I would look like as a woman. The woman catches your arm as you fall over. She helps you back up and you brace yourself against the counter. She takes out a tube of red lipstick and applies a fresh coat to her lips. She leans over the sink and presses her lips to the glass and holds them there for a long time, then pulls away. You take her place in front of the mirror, the red kiss



From The Games Are Open by Folke Köbberling and Martin Kaltwasser. Photographs by Barbara Cole. Published by Other Sights in 2015. The Games Are Open is a public art sculpture made of discarded wheat board panelling removed from the Athletes Village that

Sahara Desert of Trump think pieces. WE WRITE EVERY BEYONCÉ THINK PIECE SO YOU NEVER HAVE TO AGAIN: The genius of Beyoncé think pieces is that she can be plugged into a limitless number of arguments and ideas. THINK PIECES WERE MADE FOR MILLENNIALS WHO MAJORED IN ENGLISH: A Philadelphia poet

she just left there now covering your lips. You look at yourself in the mirror, your giant red lips unsmiling, and your icy eyes above.

Well? she asks.

I can't see a difference.

You look very beautiful, she says, and then reaches for your face and starts to apply the lipstick to your actual lips. You can smell the vodka on her breath and she wears too much eye makeup. She finishes only the top lip when the first woman bursts through the door again, with a staff member following her. He pulls you away from the woman and she twists the tube of lipstick and places it back into her purse. She adjusts her hair in the mirror, the lips she left on the glass hovering just over her collarbone, and she turns her head to the side as though admiring the way her own lips look on her skin. She turns back to you and says, bye darling, and you thank her before being dragged out of the women's bathroom.

The rental car runs out of gas on the other side of the city. You get out,

leave the keys on the front seat, and get your suitcase out of the trunk. You wander through the city, pulling your suitcase with the red piece of yarn tied to the handle, and the pail of chalk bouncing against the side of your leg. During the day you sleep on park benches or in hotel lobbies until you are asked to leave. It's surprising how much you can get away with when you are pulling a suitcase around with you. No one knows that you are not supposed to be somewhere. You are the living embodiment of transition, either coming or going, and no one cares enough to ask or wonder which one it is as you wheel past them on the street. You look at your reflection in the window of a restaurant. Your eyes are sinking further into your skull and you wonder if you're already buried under the ice. You order strawberries and take a bite of one and run the open berry over your reflection in the window. You are asked to leave, so you take a handful of berries and run out of the restaurant, dropping most of them on your

way out, and stuff the rest into your mouth. You get on a bus and find a man wearing tattered clothes lying in the middle of the aisle on his side, his face hidden under his arm. Passengers step around and on him to find their seats and one kid puts his feet up on the man's hip and turns the page of his book.

What is wrong with you people? you scream. You see the eyes of the bus driver glance backward in the little mirror above the window, and the other passengers shift uncomfortably in their seats. Do you not see that man lying there? He's right there. There, right there, you gesture wildly with your pail of chalk. You place it on an empty seat and you roll the man over and try to pull him up. He opens his eyes, which are grey, almost lifeless, and he becomes startled. He starts to thrash around and his long fingernails scratch your cheek. You try to calm him, but he forms a fist and punches you in the face. Now you're lying in the aisle of the bus, too, blood mixing with dried strawberry juice on



was built for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. Between 2010 and 2013, the sculpture decayed, became compost and was repurposed as a community garden.

has begun using the titles of online think pieces as titles for her work. **THE TOP TEN THINK PIECEIEST THINK PIECES ON THINK PIECES:** We may not have invented the form, but our generation has turned think pieces into a whole new beast. **SO YOU WANNA WRITE A LANA DEL REY THINK PIECE:** Here's a handy flowchart to pair you

your lips. The bus comes to a stop and the driver marches to the back and throws you and the man in tattered clothes through the rear exit. You continue to fight and roll around on the sidewalk, the man screaming words you've never heard before, and you can't look away from those grey eyes. The rear engine of the bus roars to life and you yell for it to stop. The tattered man kicks you in the stomach and you whimper and keel over on the sidewalk. You nearly bump into a woman wearing running shoes who bounds over your collapsing body. The tattered man approaches again, but you fend him off by kicking your feet in the air. You catch him in the groin and he falls back against the wall and you scramble to your feet and take off after the bus. You run as fast as the growing pain in your stomach will allow until you have to stop and throw up on the sidewalk. The bus stops a block ahead, so you keep going, running in staggered strides after the bus, getting a little closer every time it stops. You finally catch up to it and jump in through the open rear doors. You search around frantically and find the pail of chalk on the seat where you left it. The driver gets up again and shouts that he told you to get the hell off the bus. You jump out through the open rear doors, cradling the pail of chalk in your arms, and take off running back down the street. You look at the clothes you are wearing: a green plaid shirt now stained with blood on the front and sidewalk dirt on the back, and an old pair of jeans with a tear in the left knee. They are the last clothes you own, aside from the oversized blue shirt hanging next to the lavender shirt in your closet. Everything else is in your suitcase, which is on the bus that has just turned a corner and disappeared. 🌧️

Festivities

PHIL HALL

From Conjugation. Published by BookThug in 2016. Phil Hall is a teacher and an award-winning author of over a dozen books. He lives near Perth, Ontario.

Oh I missed Fountain Pen Day!

~

For a while a couple years ago
I was working on a series of poems
about imaginary Special Days
somewhat in imitation of Calvino's
Invisible Cities

my favourite was *Day Day*
all of the festivities for this one
were transparencies
they fit right over the day &
were unseen

~

Also this line *no one remembered it was Balcony Day*
seems so sad that line to me
even now

~

Once a year there was a day
by which

anything you wanted to keep
had to be taken off your balcony
then on that day *Balcony Day*

whatever items were still left
out there *disappeared*

all of the balconies up all of the
high-rises in all of the target
areas
suddenly empty

what a feeling of lightness & a
readiness for fresh marketing

Cashier Co-operatives would send
up flares from their roof-decks
as if ice has broken in a river
enthused the laureates
sales soared

~

But if a person were standing
on a balcony
at midnight come *Balcony Day*

poof gone

so *balcony* as in *she committed balcony* or *he balconied*
became a common form of suicide
annual group suicide

~

It was good to clear away the dead-
profit junk every 12 months
but how could the State stop these
suicides by its consumers?

so all advertising for *Balcony Day*
was suppressed

& each year *Clearing Day*
as it was now called in internal
reports

was scheduled for a different
undisclosed day

~

That helped but still there were
many who sick of shopping
stood on balconies every night
at the tick of midnight

hoping today was the day 🌧️

up with the right angle for your inevitable Lana think piece. NEW STAR WARS DOCUMENTARY ATTEMPTS TO DEFEND THE PREQUELS: The film won't just use the personal stories of fans, but will also examine the number of theories and think pieces that surround the Prequel Trilogy. A THINK PIECE ABOUT THINK PIECES: Was

Trouble at the Henhouse

ERIC DUPONT

From Life in the Court of Matane. Translated by Peter McCambridge. Published by QC Fiction in 2016. Dupont is the author of four novels and winner of Radio-Canada's "Combat des Livres" and other awards. He lives in Montreal.

Despite my efforts to go undetected in the schoolyard, Jimmy Côté was always popping up nearby. First, he wanted to be sure that I was, indeed, the son of Henry VIII. Then, with the help of other birds of a feather, he made it clear that uniforms were a sore point with him. For me, 1982 was the year of stomach-clenching cramps. Not a day went by without an ambush, not a single recess was terror-free. I took refuge in the henhouse.

There, too, things were beginning to fall in around me. The rate of lay had plummeted with the cold nights. One morning, death visited my hens for a second time. It was the little brother who came running back in from the henhouse, panicked by what he had just seen there. The temperature had dropped below zero during the night. Clearly no one had ever explained rigor mortis to him. At a loss for words, he lay down on his back and showed us that one of the hens had taken up the very same position and was refusing to budge. The hen must be dead, we explained to him. "It can't be," he maintained. "Its eyes were open."

I investigated. A hen had indeed died during the night. One of the younger ones. There was no sign of injury. A perfunctory autopsy revealed that she had been bitten from behind. The king suspected a weasel. The other hens went about their business, blissfully unaware. I had a new enemy to deal with.

Things began to heat up at school. Jimmy and his gang of mercenaries had taken over the schoolyard. Mr.

Ferguson's ghost stories seemed to have little effect on them. One day in October, the tension reached boiling point. With my thoughts consumed by my hen's murder, I had forgotten my fear of Jimmy and didn't see him and his gang walk over. They began with a few slaps I didn't see coming, a classic technique. I don't know what came over me that day; I think the weasel affair had left a bitter taste in my mouth. Not that I was overly fond of my hens. Truth be told, they were a lot of work and were becoming harder and harder to look after. No, on that particular morning, I was mostly thinking about the nasty weasel and its treacherous attacks, and I felt an anger the size of a pea forming somewhere deep inside me. The pea grew, filled out, and took on a personality of its own that had as many qualities as flaws. Without really understanding why, and without really looking up, I grabbed Jimmy's first apostle by the throat and held him tight until he began to turn blue. The colour went perfectly with his eyes and shoes, I thought. A touch too pale, perhaps. A deathly shade of blue would suit the little blond runt to a T. I would have to tighten my grip a little. Julie Santerre and her chicks would usually cheer on battles and acts of violence against me, cackling: "Blood! We want blood!" This time, they were there all right, but they were so astounded, they'd been struck dumb. It was as though it was *their* necks I was gripping in my hand. They didn't come to the wretch's defence, nor did they encourage him

to kill me, as was their wont. Jimmy Côté, completely taken aback, made no move to step in and help out his vassal, which speaks volumes about honour among hoodlums. The boy was slowly turning blue right before my eyes, while I marvelled at just how strong my arms were. I silently thanked Henry VIII for getting me into body building.

This flash of manliness was proof positive that integration is possible, no matter the setting, provided you make a little effort. The pecking order wasn't set in stone, after all. A simple throttling was enough to rejig it. No need for anyone to lose any teeth. Julie Santerre and the chicks still didn't say a word. I could feel the heat rising from the kid's neck beneath my fingers. His carotid artery was throbbing right where my thumb and index finger met. His pulse was racing. I wondered if he, too, was going to fall on his back, eyes open, teeth clenched. He was so thin. Just a few more weeks' training, I thought to myself, and I'd be able to snap his neck with one hand. I imagined the cracking sound his vertebrae would make as they snapped. Whispers went up from the students crowded around me. Someone prayed to God. The aesthete in me still wasn't happy with the colour of the little hoodlum's face; his skin was so soft and pale. I'd never thought of him as good-looking, but now the blond kid almost moved me to pity. My breathing accelerated. A girl cried out.

I felt a powerful hand grab my wrist. It was Mr. Ferguson. A ghost must have tipped him off. The dead always rat on you. Ironically enough, my victim, the fair-haired boy, was the one who found the drowned sailor's body on the beach. Had he shouted so loudly that day because the sailor's blue face prophesied this

Proust a Urologist? Does Breathing Make You Smarter? What *Breaking Bad* Teaches Us About Building Brands. THINK PIECE: WHAT WE SHOULD LEARN FROM THE SHOOTING DEATH OF HARAMBE: We vastly underestimate the intelligence of apes, and vastly overestimate their predilection for violence. SKY FERREIRA TWEETED

October morning in 1982 when he was almost choked to death? Can you read the future in a wrinkle? Mr. Ferguson, who must have eaten his own fair share of eggs, separated me from my victim. Colour was slowly returning to the boy's face. I stood there,

breathing hard, arms by my sides, in front of Julie Santerre and her chicks, Jimmy Côté and his hoodlums, and Mr. Ferguson. There was a deathly silence. And yet I wasn't thinking of them at all. I was thinking back to the soft, throbbing neck of that

little fair-haired boy; to our breathing, together as one; to his beautiful blue eyes rolling back in his head; to his hair, as fine as the hair on the heads of Étienne's dolls; and to his pink-blue lips, the colour of wrinkles.

The incident had the effect of a nuclear bomb going off in the schoolyard. The kid got his breath back and walked off, helped by his companions. Julie Santerre and her chicks had, for once, ceased their morning cackling. Surprise and bemusement being the usual way for poultry to grasp reality, the birds remained stunned for a while before they returned to their pecking. The sweet smell of death, like the promise of as-yet-unexplored pleasures, seeped into this scene from life on the Gaspé Peninsula. Mr. Ferguson was furious. I didn't care. I was on an astral journey of my own. Since he was in communication with the spirits, I would have liked Mr. Ferguson to assure me that, one day, the memories of Saint-Ulric would be nothing more than sorrowful archives. Everyone has archives. The problem with my own is that every little tremor sends dust flying from the hundreds of volumes. It gets right up my nose, chokes me, and forces me into a cleaning spree.

Funnily enough, no one ever called me a faggot at school again.

The weasel, on the other hand, continued to prey on my mind. The henhouse massacre continued. Each morning brought with it a new corpse. The weasel attacked only the weakest, which is to say, the younger chickens. I didn't get it. Had it been wolves or other birds, the threat would have been wiped out with a few pecks. The hens were huge and there were twenty of them against a tiny weasel. They had already proved they were vicious enough to kill one of their own to defend their territory.

SELF-INDULGENT TURDS

Reviews of Canadian art institutions from Google and Yelp.

★★ Disappointing: A huge empty building. There was not one painting! What's going on here?

★ It seems that all this gallery has to offer is many drunk people and pathetic excuses for art.

★★ I love being a Canadian but I don't need 5 different paintings of the same waterfall in Quebec from 5 different artists. I really think they should be looking for new artists that aren't making art for a small group of people.

★★ Poor over-priced shithole of asshole museum! They don't even have murmaid

★★★ I lived nearby this gallery for 2 years and everytime I visited it I was confused and disappointed by the exhibits. It's free to visit and the space itself is nice so it doesn't hurt to pop in for a minute. Many of the exhibits I saw were things like scribbles on pieces of paper (and not just one, but a whole room full), projectors with slide shows of random photos, a room with a few small geometric shape sculptures. Stuff like that.

★ Wanna-be art museum. Group of Seven trash. Coat check and can't go in with a back pack. You suck!

★★★ You can actually rent original art for decent price (40-60 bucks a month). My employer does this on the occasion. Minimum 3 month rental. Cheaper than buying the painting and you can always change up to keep your office fresh.

★★★ Great art. Great space to here your fart echo

★★ Did not enjoy it. The masters collection was very sad and disappointing. They had one very crappy painting from each good artist. Not one good painting from one of the actually good artists. The one Monet they had sucked, Monet has painted thousands of paintings and the Winnipeg Art Gallery chooses the worst one.

★ Twenty thousand square feet, twenty self-indulgent turds. How can such a huge museum contain so little art? What a waste.

With a little intelligence, they could easily have made a midnight snack of the weasel. But there you have it: hens aren't very bright. Thousands of years in captivity has turned them into morons, to the extent they couldn't care less if they see one of their own die right in front of them, just so long as the pecking order is respected. They'll offer up the weakest—"Kill her! Kill her!"—without realizing they themselves will be the weasel's next victims. I now know that every omelette, every angel cake, every soufflé, and every bucket of Colonel Sanders' fried chicken brings us closer to a better, more intelligent world, where cruelty and pettiness do not exist. Reader! Have some chicken tonight without the slightest remorse! Vegetarians! Join our ranks and unite your digestive tracts against them! As with every great revelation in life, it took an animal as mundane as the hen to get me to see the light. One night, I came home from school to find my hens plucked and frozen. The king had butchered them. He had chopped all their heads off. One after the other. The heads were stacked in a pool of blood. I saw in Julie Santerre's lifeless eyes the imminent end of Anne Boleyn's reign and Jane Seymour's accession to the throne.

We weren't out of the woods yet.

At school, the pecking order had changed. I was no longer part of it. I wasn't at the bottom, and I wasn't at the top. I was in a class all my own. The blows I had once received were now destined for Étienne. I couldn't do anything to help him. Only watch. There's only so far an attempted murder can get you in a henhouse that size.

I never, ever, made fun of the smell of manure again. 🐔

Say Anything

CLAUDIO GAUDIO

From the forthcoming novel I'll Be. Gaudio's work has been published in Exile Literary Quarterly and Rampike. He was born in Calabria and lives in Toronto and at claudiogaudio.com.

I hardly shake, except after people, so why the itch for the two-legged beast, for Bob, in particular. Everything is so much more interesting when I talk to my television, or a sandwich. That's me in a robe, now we're a threesome, the sandwich, me, and the TV, in case you're not following.

I'm always ready to do the town, from my little oasis, my Costa Concordia, there are heroes in every catastrophe, but in Italy they go to bed early. I've pinned all that I have, all that I am, to my chest to keep it from falling, and I'm sunning myself by my ankles. I don't mind the horizontal, or the upside-down, for that matter, here it's the dancing that kills you.

Sunday mornings I watch nature shows, hunting and fishing, advertisements mostly, from the Deep South. Slim pickings I guess, accountants in battle fatigues have been lying in wait since the mid-fifties. There's nothing better than carrion to bolster the love men feel for each other. Hence the double barrel to shoot down a duck, excessive, in my view, but opinion is never opinion enough when discussing a massacre. There's the kill, of course, but the skill is in the tracking, or the carving, but perhaps I'm confusing the wetlands in Georgia with the Sudan. I don't deny the similarities but ducks have wings, for example, and the Sudanese are always in season.

Evening has come to where I am, but I don't speak for New Zealand. What's important is that I'm alone

with my television. CNN is reporting from both sides of its mouth, there are ways and ways to say nothing, but surely they can get a little what's what past the sponsors. I like faking it as much as the next gal, and so did Shostakovich, because he didn't want to die, but as far as I know Washington is not killing journalists, not here, anyway, and no one who works for Ted Turner has ever been waterboarded.

Say everything, is the first rule of broadcasting, I agree, obviously, to know a word is to use it, but not every word is a tool or a weapon. Nietzsche, for example, thought his pen was a hammer, but he may have been mistaken because German professors rarely did their own carpentry. Which is a good thing because if that man could build we'd all be in cages.

Anderson Cooper can't get a word in edgewise in the program I'm watching, there just isn't enough time to summarise all those assertions. Bombing children is necessary, or unforgiveable, it depends on who's talking. Talking, not doing it, is the thing they can't manage. Death will preserve their innocence, carbon struck, as in oil or a diamond, the children we kill are not ready for prime time.

Still, I prefer the meaningless bustle, the news will only prolong disaster, and it's corrupt. Talking is how everything slips through my fingers, how I empty a room. I need that which never was, and so I will never have done with conjecture, this swill

ELITISM: I'm going to cut straight to the point here in the think-pieciest way possible: I don't appreciate the way we've been talking about think pieces. BEYONCÉ'S 'LEMONADE' THINK PIECE FOR LAWYERS: What can lawyers and law students learn from Beyoncé's latest creation? MY TOP TEN FAVOURITE CHILDHOOD FILMS:

of hilarity and terror, because literature, says Brian, is something different entirely. Take Byron, for instance, is how I'll begin the next paragraph.

Take Byron, for instance, Bob, Blanche, and Brian too have been mentioned already, he's from British Columbia, now try to guess why Keats is not in this sentence. It's the K, of course, and he died early so his poems were too quick for my cranium. A story is a story because it's told later, late, rather, that's how I know the worst is still to come. It should have some bounce, and the people are just a detail on which to hang a hat, a cat, or an umbrella.

Ducks will always say what they're thinking but that's not why we eat them, and I don't know what they're saying because, thus far, the translations have not been reliable. I blame the academy, and that's why Kiki and I went to work on the problem. She mastered the phonology immediately, but I have yet to exhaust that syllable. As for its meaning, it will be allocated to inscription in general since neither exist, but they function. At least that's what I'll tell Bob when he gets here, philosophers do not have an ear for the garbled and so, until then, it is we who must carry them.

In the last war I was a hostage in Babylon, after which I went for coffee in the cafe next to where I buy my tomatoes. My captors were stubbornly silent, that is until they threatened to burn my genitals. That's when I started talking, giving breadth to the cavalry. They arrived just in time to show me the past that comes later, not to suggest history is provisional, what we did when lives in the body of others. So if it talks like a duck, walks like a duck, dig there so we can continue to evolve our vocabulary.

Visionaries are people who don't see things as they are, where there are airfields they see birds, sucked into the engines of even bigger birds weighed down by hellfire missiles. Some projectiles are fast enough to be motionless, Bush thought, though he must have said it out loud because Condoleezza thought the phrasing poetic.

Nations rise from behind a little smoke and a banner, fall too, but then they have more obligations. What happens before that doesn't matter, unless you're an Algonquian still stuck in Manhattan. In the Congo they're hunting women, the security council has agreed to be outraged provided all understand, said Angela Merkel, the Congo is not Berlin.

From my window I follow a cobble footpath to the road, the stones are from India because Italian granite is much too expensive. How it got here is nobody's business, but I'd assume the worst.

The gardener, I'm rich you see, planted two miniature pine trees where the path meets the sidewalk. I don't think they're indigenous to the region, the dominant species are more likely deciduous. Most were cut down when they built the city, not to be confused with the bloodbath that was happening concurrently. The grounds are variously adorned, and at the rear of the property he planted cedars. But those two little trees are a brilliant green and today, like most days, a child stopped to touch them, but this time I cried.

These are the same words I spoke yesterday, I place them in rows like potatoes, but it's the spaces in between that grow bigger. The same thing happened in Northern Ireland, to the words I mean, the potatoes just rotted. A full stomach is not conducive to allegory, or we can't

all be English, and I know it's true because I've yet to receive a pony for Christmas.

London rising, in Belfast this time, governments plan but it is we who must finish things, by force, by consensus. One walks the other and then we got to talking, it's a kind of leapfrogging, about the weather and the absence of money, your name too was right up my alley.

Swing a dead cat and you're bound to hit somebody, if they're not here aim for their absence, or their advent. It was Blanche who told me to bandy donuts for tubers, but, say it with me now, my reporting precedes her arrival and so I cannot abide by her counsel.

Everything breaks before it reaches my noggin, I'm lucky that way and, like the Irish, I can really draw out a minus. Only the air will prolong a syllable, bone and tissue to these orphaned sounds. Something, said Beckett, is the worst thing that can happen to literature, or I said it for him, the difference is negligible.

In Belfast there's no light between a saint and a killer, and they like you even less if you're neither. I waited, not to say I did nothing, it's not the same thing, I rolled the dice and spared my larynx, split the room and played it, until everyone was seeing double.

That was a long time ago, post Finnegan, but I didn't catch his meaning, and before we'd tried everything. Roundabout the first ceasefire, after which Murdoch's shutterbugs and a few independents set up in Paris to take down a princess. I was in a Volkswagen, approximately, but I can't tell you where I was the day they shot Kennedy because I knew from my accent I didn't speak the language. 🍷

Let's save all the psychoanalysis for my next think piece on Britney Spears' emotionally provocative VMA performance. ONE THINK PIECE TO RULE THEM ALL: The One Think Piece was forged by the Dark Lord Sauron during the Second Age to gain dominion over the free internet users of Middle-earth. 🍷

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Neon Hour

The Hong Kong neon photography of Brent Lewin



Over the course of a couple of weeks, Brent Lewin photographed Hong Kong's world-famous neon signage, an important part of the cultural and historical legacy of Hong Kong or, as Lewin puts it, "part of the fabric of the city's identity." Neon was first used in Hong Kong in the 1930s and reached its peak popularity in the 1970s and '80s, when industry was thriving and stores and restaurants competed over who had the biggest, brightest sign.

As part of his project, Lewin visited and photographed the workshop

of Lau Wan, a veteran neon sign craftsman who has been working in the Kwai Chung district of Hong Kong for more than fifty years. Neon signs are produced by heating a glass tube until it becomes malleable (at 800 degrees Celsius), then cooling the tube by blowing on it to limit distortion from the heat while it's bent according to blueprints. Oxygen is vacuumed from the tube and replaced with either neon or argon, and the tube is sealed. When the finished tube is plugged in and electricity is introduced, neon glows red and

argon glows blue; other colours can be created by adding different gases or painting the tubes. Once a tube is bent and cooled, there is no way to correct flaws in its shape. "The trick is to not make any mistakes," Lau Wan says.

Use of neon has decreased since the 1990s due to the emergence of LED signs, which are easier to manufacture and are less expensive to produce than neon. Wan estimates that neon now makes up only ten percent of the orders filled by his shop and the rest are LED. He says, "No



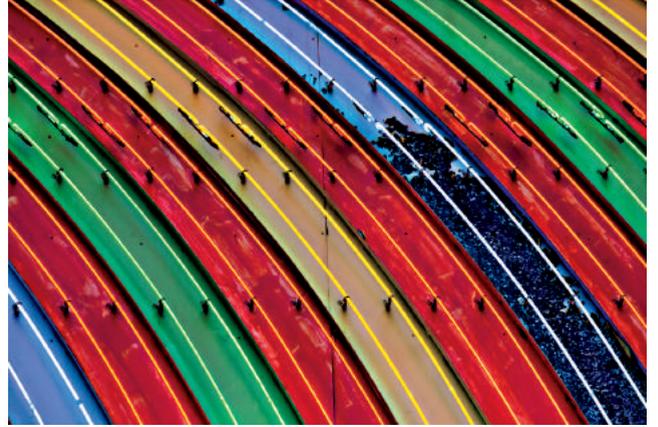
new apprentices are learning how to make neon, and I can't blame them. It's increasingly hard to make a living. Times change."

Lewin used online maps and catalogues compiled by neon enthusiasts to find sites of signs in the commercial districts of Wan Chai and Mongkok. Of the particular challenges of photographing neon signs, Lewin says, "The most important thing was making sure I was where I needed to be when the neon signs switched on around magic hour."

Brent Lewin is an award-winning Canadian editorial and commercial photographer. His work has been featured in *National Geographic*, the *New York Times*, *Time* and *Geist*, among others. More of his work can be seen at brentlewin.com. He lives in Bangkok, Thailand.

—Roni Simunovic





SHORT STORY

Gravity

RICHARD KELLY KEMICK

Janny says parenting is all about sacrifices, but I'm not sure it counts when the baby is still in her belly



Janny once told me that a black hole pulls apart time—so when you're being dragged through, in that quarter-second stretch of vertebrae, you're able to see your past and future selves.

Killing time before dark, Patrick and I were going to see the advanced screening of *The Nativity Story* since it's rumoured to have a breastfeeding scene. But Lee Henders, the theatre's assistant manager, said Patrick's been banned for life because he was caught masturbating to *March of the Penguins*. Patrick swore it had nothing to do with the tuxedo birds or the grandeur of their Antarctic habitat but that he was so inconceivably bored. Lee corrected himself and said "masturbating during *March of the Penguins*," but a ban is still a ban.

“Fuck this, Danny,” Patrick said and then spat at Lee’s feet, his saliva bubbly on the confetti patterned carpet. “Let’s go make some pastries.”

And so now we’re in the abandoned lot, the one beside the post office, in Patrick’s ’91 Dodge Ram, squealing donuts across the weedy asphalt. Patrick is driving and I’ve rolled down the window, letting the force swing my face in and out of the cab. Patrick starts doing his impression of Lee, hollering to be heard over the tires, “Hands in the popcorn, not in your pants!”

The impersonation is a party trick, something everyone wants to see and something Patrick loves to give. It’s hard to do it justice, but it’s Academy-level acting: the nasal drawl, impeccable; the subtle slur, flawless; the puffed out and crooked bottom lip, perfection. He even gets Lee’s bum arm right, dangling from the socket, really capturing his inner struggle. I start to laugh and soon I’m buckled at the waist.

He opens the glovebox and pulls out five different colour pills.
“Danny, which one you want?”

“That’s not what the napkins are for!”

My left hand is clamped onto the armrest to keep me from being sucked out the window, and the wind is cool and forgiving against my face. Patrick stomps on the e-brake and the back tires burn so bad that we twirl into their smoke and are fogged in. The thick smell hits in the back of the mouth.

When Patrick lets his foot off the gas, the truck slams into stillness and the air begins to clear.

“What’s the time?” Patrick asks, his voice now flat. The car radio is always flashing midnight. I check my watch. “Nine-fifteen.”

Patrick opens his door and the truck frantically dings because he’s left the engine idling. He jogs around the hood, then reaches through my open window and pulls up my door lock. “You’re driving,” he says, opening the door. “Time to get to work.”

I shuffle over to the driver’s seat while Patrick takes shotgun. I twist the key in the ignition but since it’s already running, the engine screams, shrill as pain.

Woodside has been our town’s mayor for the past twenty-six years—Ms. Haxton says that’s two years longer than Saddam led Iraq. For the past four elections, he’s run uncontested. But this time, not only does he have an opponent, Dr. Gregory “Call-Me-Greg” Gibbs, he’s losing. Bad. At least, he was until yesterday. Forty-eight hours before the polls opened, our town newsletter broke the story that Gibbs was cheating on his wife with Olivia who runs Olivia and Paul’s Outdoor Paintball. It was the biggest story the newsletter ran since Sandra Schmirler came here in ’95 to cut the ribbon for the rink.

Gibbs moved here seven years ago when the federal government was forgiving student loans if you worked in a shithole for half a decade. After her first ultrasound, Janny asked him why he stayed and he said it was because he loved the open spaces. All those endless haystacks, pocked with bullet wounds of paint.

Patrick rolls down his window and pulls out a mickey of whiskey from under the seat. He takes a swig, the liquid gurgling through the bottle’s neck and then sloshing back. He hands me the bottle and I down as much as I can stomach.

He opens the glovebox and pulls out five different colour pills. He calls it his “granola.” “Danny, which one you want?”

Janny asked me to stop popping pills when the baby’s around and I hastily agreed because I didn’t want her to think I’m not ready to be a father. “Parenting is all about sacrifice,” she’s always saying. But I’m not sure if it counts when the baby’s still in her belly. But Janny and her big belly aren’t here now. I think she’s still out of town for a couple days.

I take the pink pill from Patrick’s hand, its gel capsule dewy with sweat, and palm it into my mouth. The sun sinks so early these days. And there never seems to be a moon.

Patrick bites two cigarettes out of the pack and lights them. Handing me one, he says that when we’re finished I can spend the night at his house so I don’t have to walk the fifteen minutes home. I was hoping he’d just offer me a ride home.

His house always smells like cat piss even though he doesn’t own a cat, and Emily’s always there and we’ve never really gotten along because she’s always wanting me to

touch her. But I can't think of a polite reason to say no so I nod my head and find that it keeps bobbing.

Gibbs is running on the promise that he'll resist amalgamation with Calgary, refusing to become one of the big city's subdivisions. Woodside says it'll be good for us but everyone knows his hands are dirty. Gibbs says that if we amalgamate we won't be able to choose our futures. Rich people will come and bulldoze Schmirler's rink into a Toyota dealership. In its last poll, the newsletter had Gibbs thirty-six points ahead. But then "Paintgate" came out.

The good doctor's got a bunch of money and has put campaign signs all over. He's put up signs a good fifty kilometres beyond the town's western limits, posting on both sides of the road, right up to the border with Calgary.

We drive west on the open highway, waiting to pass the last sign. Each time we think we've reached the final one, we see the glossy shine of the headlights against another three kilometres down.

I feel the pill surging through my body, turning my pulse into a handful of firecrackers. The telephone poles whip past us like hiccups and I can see my heartbeat in my eyes. Patrick is starting to get jittery. Through the seat I can feel his knees vibrating. "If we're caught," he says, "you can't stop me from ratting out Woodside."

I smile. Like anyone would believe him. "Say whatever you want, Patty-Cakes. It's a free country."

Calgary's yellow dome of light pollution blooms from the horizon, blotting out the stars above it. Last year, for her fifteenth, I got Janny two tickets to see the Flames play the Stars. Three rows behind the penalty box. It took us two hours to hitchhike into the city and then a dollar-fifty each for the bus downtown. When we finally got to the Saddledome, there was a guy at the door wanting to buy tickets. Ours had cost \$120 each but he offered us \$350 for both. We didn't talk much on the long hitch home, but I bet she appreciates the extra money now.

"I think that was the last one," Patrick says, craning his neck to look behind him. I don't see anything ahead of us so I swing a U-turn

and we each take a permanent marker from the cup holder. I park the truck and jog across the road to get one of the signs. I pull Mayor Woodside's note from my pocket and shine my keychain flashlight on it. The handwritten list has of all Gibbs's campaign signs that we're supposed to graffiti.

"What does yours say?" I holler to Patrick.

"It's got a picture of Ron Trest—that guy from the grocery store—saying, 'I've trusted Greg with my life.' He's giving a thumbs-up."

Gibbs did this thing where he had his patients saying what a bang-up guy he is.

"OK," I say, dragging my thumb down the list until I see Ron's name. "Leave it here and change 'life' to 'wife.'"

I can feel his knees vibrating.
"If we're caught," he says, "you can't stop me from ratting out Woodside."

My sign has a picture of Susan Lane from the flower shop saying 'Greg cares.' I don't see Susan on the list so I uproot it and toss it into the flatbed. Whatever's not on the list we're supposed to burn.

I get back to the truck before Patrick does so I sit shotgun. The overhead light clicks off. Through the windshield, Patrick's cigarette pulses like a lighthouse. I down some whiskey and my head gathers mass like a dying star and falls backwards. I stare out the windshield, away from the city, up into the night sky at the stars.

The night runs slow and long, the flatbed gradually filling. Patrick and I keep switching between shotgun and driver. Patrick lets the engine idle but I'm respectful of the environment so I kill it. Besides, when the headlights fade the black is so thick I pretend I'm walking on the outer planets, where the sun can't reach, and I breathe like Darth Vader and my flashlight on a frosty rock is the glow of a creeping thing's eyes. The grey clouds of galaxies circle their bodies above me. And out here, in silty space, it's just me and this vacuum of silence, the suction of solar winds and a sign with Ruth Merwin from the gas station that says "Greg will fix things."

I consult the list, change "fix" to "fuck," and head back to the truck.



We take two hours to do the western outskirts.

The whiskey's gone so Patrick pulls into the 24-hour liquor store. Travis Stenton is standing behind the cash wearing his eyepatch and reading *Hustler*. He looks up at us as Patrick walks to the whiskey aisle.

"Danny, how's Janny doing?" Travis asks.

"Good," I say. "Thanks for asking."

"Do you know if it's a boy or girl?"

"We don't want to know. If it's a boy we're thinking of naming him Randy, after my grandfather—the one who raised me. If it's a girl, I'd like to name her Janet after her mommy."

"Danny, Janny, and Randy or Janny. You guys could start a folk band."

"How's the eye?" I ask.

"Still lazy. Gibbs says have to work it more." He holds up his magazine. "So this is prescribed."

Patrick comes to the till with another mickey and I peel off one of Woodside's

twenties. Travis takes the money and smiles, "You boys have a safe night."

Outside the liquor store, Patrick twists the cap and passes me the bottle. He takes out his granola and hands me a purple. I take a sip for the pill and pass the bottle back to him, but he's already swallowed his dry.

We ricochet down the roads, changing Wayne Thorton's "Greg loves this town" to "Greg loves to get blown" or adding the word "job" to the end of Linda Sherbrook's "Greg will give this city a hand."

When we think we've got them all, the flat-bed heaped, Patrick says he needs to jet home to pick up another pack of smokes and make sure Emily's okay. He pulls around back and since I don't hear her on the other side of the fence I assume she's inside.

I follow Patrick onto his porch and take a seat on one of his lawn chairs. He goes in and I can hear Emily panic with excitement. He doesn't know it but I can hear him through the door, speaking to her in this baby voice,



lisping all his Ls. “I wuv you, too. I wuv you, too.”

I get up and peer through the blinds. Emily is cuddled onto Patrick’s lap, his arms wrapped around her neck with his ear pressed against her chest.

Patrick and his mom moved here from Calgary eight years ago, fleeing his father. The only thing Patrick has ever told me about him was that he’s a “bad, bad man.” We’ve been best friends since grade five. A year ago, after his mother hung herself with a plugged-in strand of Christmas lights, Patrick became the youngest person in town to own a house. At first, some city clerk said he couldn’t take the deed because he was only sixteen, but then Patrick said he was actually eighteen, proving it with a creased-up birth certificate, and that he’d been lying ever since he got here because he’d been held back two years in Calgary Public but didn’t want people to think he was stupid.

“I wuv you, too. I wuv you, too.”

I sit back down. Above my lawn chair there’s a porch light that works on a motion detector. It switches off in stillness so I keep

having to wave it awake. But after the third or fourth time, I decide to let it stay dark. The stars shine bright.

God, I’m going to love that kid so much.

I think I’ve found Orion’s belt because it’s just three stars in a row. But Orion seems to have a lot of belts.



Janny is walking towards me. At first, it’s just her silhouette since she’s backlit by headlights, but I recognize the baby bump. She comes so close to me I feel her breath on my skin. Her eyes are raw and red, like she was crying and crying until she dried up. I want to ask her what’s wrong but I already know. She takes my hand and brings it against her stomach. I’m hoping she wants me to feel it kick, but her belly’s still as snow. She starts sliding my hand down until she’s pressed both our palms against her groin and I can feel the wetness through her dress. Her bright blue dress. I bring my hand to my nose and smell iron.

I jolt awake to Patrick sinking my hand into a bowl of ice-water.

He's swallowing his laughter as I kick him in the shin. "It needs to be hot water, you fucking orphan."

Wiping the drool from my cheek, I hear Emily somewhere behind the dead raspberry bushes. Patrick tosses the bowl onto the grass and I follow him to the truck.

"You're driving," he says and throws the keys blindly over his shoulder towards me. "And shut the gate behind you."

"How 'bout you shut your fucking mouth?"

There is a small forest a couple clicks east. The road doesn't boast a single sign for either candidate.

Patrick takes a deep gulp of whiskey. He holds onto the bottle. "Have you ever thought that if your mom and you were the same age, and she wasn't your mom, if you'd be friends?"

What if I hadn't finished the milk, or if that blue jay hadn't flown into the window, or those cockroaches were a half-second quicker and got under the fridge before she'd seen them?

Lately he's started asking me all these hypothetical questions about my mother—a woman I'd only met a handful of times—and it's starting to get dull.

"No," I say.

"No, you wouldn't be friends?"

"No, I have never thought about it."

I scroll through the radio, but it's only static.

"Yeah, I think my mom and I would," he answers. "I hear that before she had me, she was really into cars and that she was thinking of opening up an auto shop."

I can't picture Patrick's mother in any outfit other than her 7-Eleven uniform.

"Sometimes," he continues, "I think what if I hadn't finished the milk or hadn't put that blanket in the dryer. Or if that blue jay hadn't flown into the window, or those cockroaches were a half-second quicker and got under the fridge before she'd seen them."

I check the radio again but it just hisses ghost music.

He takes a tight-lipped sip. "But then," he

says, "sometimes it's the other way around and I think, what took you so long?" He takes another drink and then passes me the bottle. "Do you think I'm responsible?" he asks.

He's drunk.

I grab the whiskey, take a long drink and wedge the bottle between my legs. "I think we're responsible," I say, "for a lot of things that aren't our fault." And then the front left tire dips into a pothole and the whole truck is swallowed by the recoil.

I've spilled on myself. "Shit," I say, shoving the bottle at Patrick. "Look what you've done."

Before he can start up again, I find CBC. The signal's weak and the announcer crackles when he says now is the national time signal. There are the three short tones and I strain my ear for the long dash that'll cue the top of the hour but the signal dies.

I veer us off the highway and onto a dirt road. The headlights flicker between the trees and it begins to snow. At a swelling in the road, big enough for us to turn around, I stop and the headlights go black.

Out of the cab, Patrick unlatches the tailgate and we scramble into the back of the flatbed and start kicking out the election signs. Once all the signs are heaped on the frozen mud, I have to piss so I walk into the woods. As I leave, Patrick begins to glug out a half-quart of engine oil onto the smiling faces of our fellow citizens.

The forest is deep and quiet. I concentrate on my crunching footsteps. The snow dresses the trees in white. Maybe I'll ask Janny to marry me when she gets back. The solstice isn't even here yet but I can't remember what summer was like. A pile of deer bones glistens with ice, sparkles like treasure.

When I get back to the vehicle, there's a churning pillar of smoke tilting in the wind. The signs are soggy so the flames can't get bigger than embers. And through the smoke I see it, the face of my child when it's my age. When he is my age. Because it's a boy. Randy. His eyes are full of shame and pity. And he's calling my name. "Danny. Danny. Danny." My son has put me in a trance. "Danny. Danny."

"Danny!" Patrick shouts from the other side of the fire. "This is good enough." He jogs back to the truck, blowing on his fists to keep warm, and sits shotgun.

I stumble back behind the wheel, steer us out of the forest and onto the paved road that lifts us onto its smooth back. I gag on a strand of hair in the back of my mouth and when I get it on the tip of my tongue and pull, I feel the rest of it slither between my molar and cheek. Must be one of Janny's.

It's been a long night and we're beat, staring dumbly at the dotted yellow line spinning beneath us. The sky has cleared up, but the wind is hauling the snow out of the ditch and onto the road. In the thick light of the headlights the snowflakes turn to stars as we travel at warp speed, combusting through galaxies, their distant corners of darkness.

Patrick offers me a smoke but my stomach's all gurgly. He's burning through an entire pack, lighting the new ones with the butts of the old ones, something he calls "making the tips kiss." He's kept the window up so the smoke layers itself around us. He coughs and says something but the hearing in my right ear isn't great so I get him to repeat it. He holds the cigarette in front of his face. "I said, the things I love are killing me."

When I turn back to the highway, a shadow bolts from the ditch and is swallowed fast by the tires. I slam on the brakes.

"What the fuck was that?" Patrick says, spinning his head back.

In the rear view mirror, there's a black heap on the yellow line. "I think it was a coyote."

"Lovely," Patrick says. "We can skin it for fur." He's out of the truck, running to the corpse.

At first, I think the coyote is still alive and is yelping to its pack for help. But as I get closer, I see that it's Patrick who's howling. I see a glint of metal. A collar and a dog tag. Emily.

Her body is so big and limp that her legs keep falling free from Patrick's arms. He's rocking her back and forth, "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry. Oh god, mom, I'm so sorry, so sorry, so sorry so sorry."

"How the fuck did she get out here?" I ask. But Patrick doesn't answer. Janny once told me that aliens probably don't exist because for all of the things a planet needs to sustain life, there's only, like, a one in a trillion chance of them ever lining up. So, stranger stuff has happened.

I head back to the truck, finish off the whiskey and stargaze for a bit.

I think Janny is home tomorrow. I know I have it written down on the fridge. I should get her a bouquet or something. If it was lighter out, I'd pick her some highway flowers. To Janny, Some wild-flowers for your wild heart. But I guess the winter has already killed everything. And Susan Lane charges a fortune for a bouquet. I'll just make a card. It's all about sacrifices.

You'd think from Patrick's moans that it was him I'd hit. I went to his mother's funeral. After the closed-casket ceremony had finished, Patrick was a pallbearer. Was dead-eyed the entire time.

Walking back towards the bodies, I make my voice all gentle because I'm trying to respect the situation. "Patrick, look, it's just bad luck. Let's get her in the flatbed and we can go home and I'll help you bury her early tomorrow morning. Give her a good funeral."

"Fuck you!" he shouts, his face sopping wet with tears and snot.

"Patrick, buddy, let's go."

Patrick just keeps rocking her back and forth, apologizing and apologizing.

"Patrick, we have to go."

"Why, Danny? Why the fuck do we have to go? It's my truck. I don't have to go anywhere."

"Patrick," I say, "It's Wednesday night, Thursday by now. We have school tomorrow."

I pull out Woodside's roll of twenties, rip Patrick's half out of the band and throw it onto the road.

So here's Patrick kneeling in the middle of the road, the blood beginning to freeze to his coat, the truck idling behind him like some red-eyed mourner. And the snow continues to scatter. It's all like an oil painting in a museum, something you can touch only when nobody's around.

"Patrick?"

He takes a big sniff of snot. "Yeah?"

"Can I have the last pill?"

"What?"

"The last pill. It's a really long walk. Can I have it?"

He doesn't do anything for a bit, just rocks



Emily's body, her tongue lolling out. Then he looks up and I'm startled by how raw his eyes are, blooming like roses.

Patrick throws the pill across the tarmac and I hear it bouncing like a pebble. I don't say anything. I pull out Woodside's roll of twenties, rip Patrick's half out of the band and throw it onto the road.

I hunch over and scour the road with my keychain flashlight until I find the pill, the deep red capsule like a drop of blood. I look up and there's Patty-Cakes watching me, hating me. We both know the second I'm on the far side of that horizon, he's diving into the ditch to search for his money.

At first, I was going to pick up the pill. But I've changed my mind. Patrick so badly wants to see which one of us has sunk further and I want that to be a secret that's dug so deep even I don't know where it's buried. Besides, it might actually be just a drop of blood.

I start the walk home on this blacktop treadmill, Patrick's howls beginning again behind me. I toss the empty whiskey bottle over my shoulder and there's that sharp inhale of silence before it shatters.

God, I can't wait to hold that kid. Randy. Janny. Everything's going to be perfect then.

I can no longer tell what is star and what is snow. I shut that gate, didn't I?

Now that I think about it, maybe Janny is actually back this time next week. Whenever somebody says "I'll be there next Friday," I'm never sure if they mean the Friday coming up or the one after that.

◆◆◆

I trudge past town hall. Its clock says 3:20 but that thing's broken so often, who knows if it's right. I roll up my sleeve to find my wrist bare and tender. What happened to my watch?

Travis is outside the liquor store, heaving on a cigarette so hard I can hear the paper crinkle. He waves me over and his eyepatch has been flipped up onto his forehead.

"Where's Patrick?"

"In bed," I say. "He was beat so I told him I'd walk. You done your shift?"

"Just about," Travis says, his bad eye sinking from my gaze to stare at the concrete, gravity winning. "Couple kids from Calgary drove



in and robbed me. But I'd made a drop a few minutes earlier so they only got sixty bucks."

"That's fucked. Did they have a gun?"

"No," Travis says and begins to chuckle.

"A knife?"

"Almost." He's really trying to hold it back.

"A bat?"

He shakes his head in tight little jitters.

"Did they have anything?"

"A sword!" he says, busting a gut.

"A sword?"

"A motherfucking sword."

Travis acts out a couple moves, swooshing his hands. And I start laughing with him. Really letting myself go. Travis and I lean in, holding each other up, laughing and laughing. So hard I can barely breathe, the laughter suffocating me.

This'll be what I miss most when the kid comes, this infinite simplicity where everything is either black or white. But something is coming for us, dragging us.

We calm down. And there's a moment of silence.

"So you're having a baby," Travis says.

"Yeah," I say. But I've thought about that kid so much tonight I don't want to talk about it anymore so I let the silence sink back in. I can feel a headache starting to dig behind my eyes.

After a while, Travis asks, "If we were old enough, who should we vote for?"

"Nobody," I say, wiping my nose with my sleeve. "You can't let anyone hold you down."

Richard Kelly Kemick's debut collection of poetry, Caribou Run, published in 2016 by Goose Lane Editions, was selected by CBC Books as one of the season's Must Read Collections. He lives in Calgary and at www.richardkemick.com



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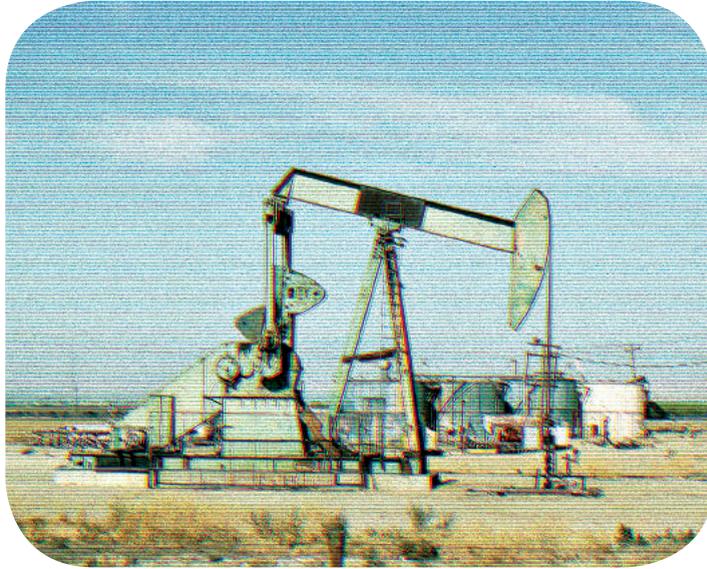
GEIST

Fact + Fiction • North of America

Hinterland Who's Who

C.R. GILPIN

For more than fifty years Hinterland Who's Who kept Canadians supplied with little-known facts of interest



THE PUMP JACK

The North American Pump Jack
is a type of the nodding donkey
also found
in Arabia.

The Pump Jack flourishes in
the Great Plains of America
and adjacent prairies of Canada.

It can be found in packs or alone,
feeding on fossil residue deep beneath its iron snout.

One habit of the Pump Jack is to die
standing with its head lowered,
as if at the end of a lifetime of bowing prayers.
Thus,
a metronome of industriousness
becomes
a monument to exhaustion.

For a more complete story of the Pump Jack,
why not contact the Canadian Wildlife Service
in Ottawa?

THE TALL POPPY

The Tall Poppy
is also called
the Great Northern Atwood
because of her ability to emit popular literature
from Toronto.

Poetry, every genre of fiction, economics, and lit crit
all provide good homes.

The conspicuous stature of the Tall Poppy
drops a sundial shadow across the Canadian hinterland.
Neighbouring poppies, disoriented
by one so like and unlike themselves,
complain
of the shade.

Accordingly,
they discharge a variety of parasites
to attack her attitude and reduce her altitude.

For a more complete story of the Tall Poppy,
why not quit grumbling about her persona
and actually read her books?

THE NFB DOCUMENTARY

The NFB Documentary
is the smallest member of the film family.

Once a populous species riding the Canadian airwaves,
it now hovers on the brink of extinction.

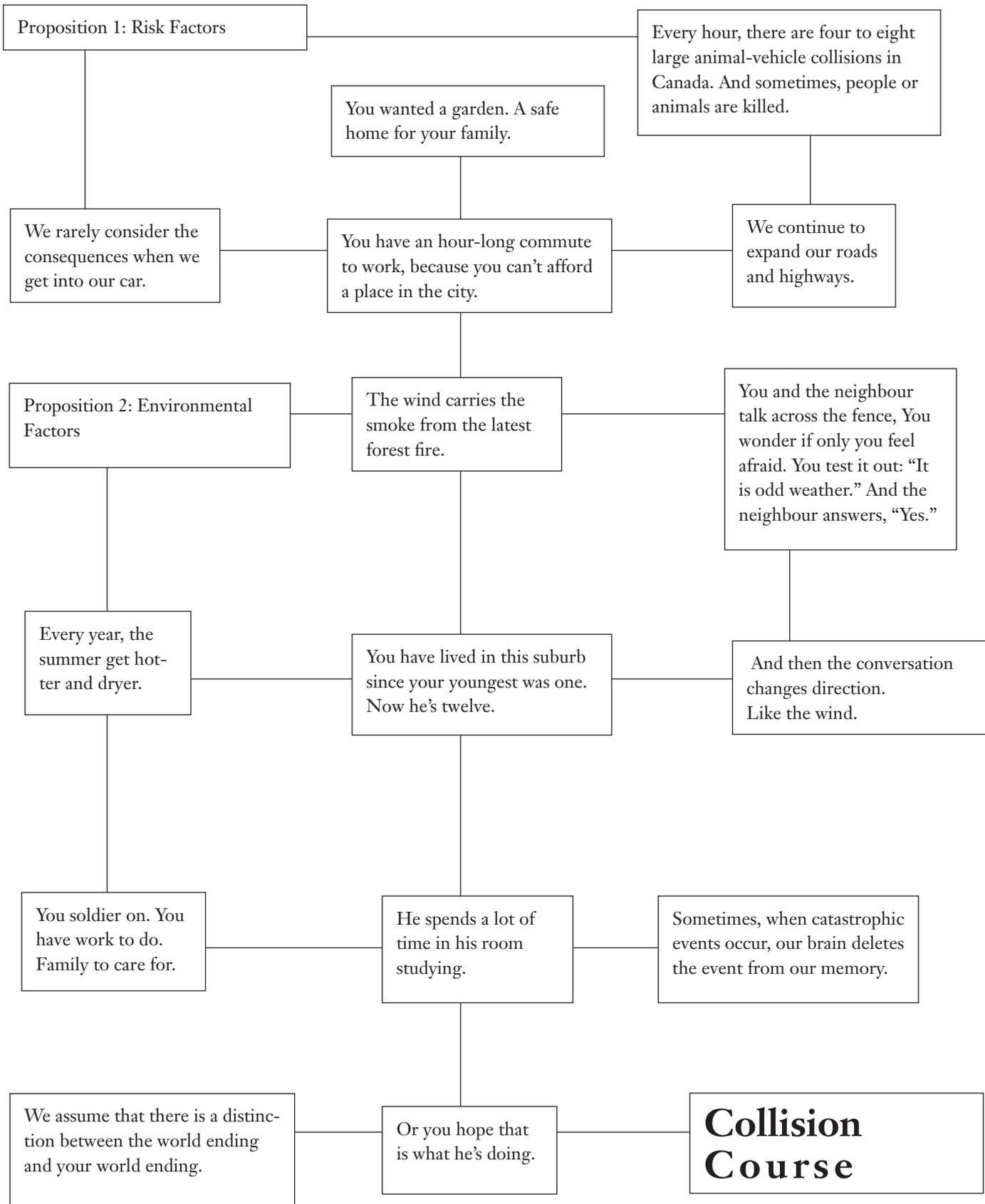
The NFB Documentary spends much of its time
gathering scraps of nationalist pride.

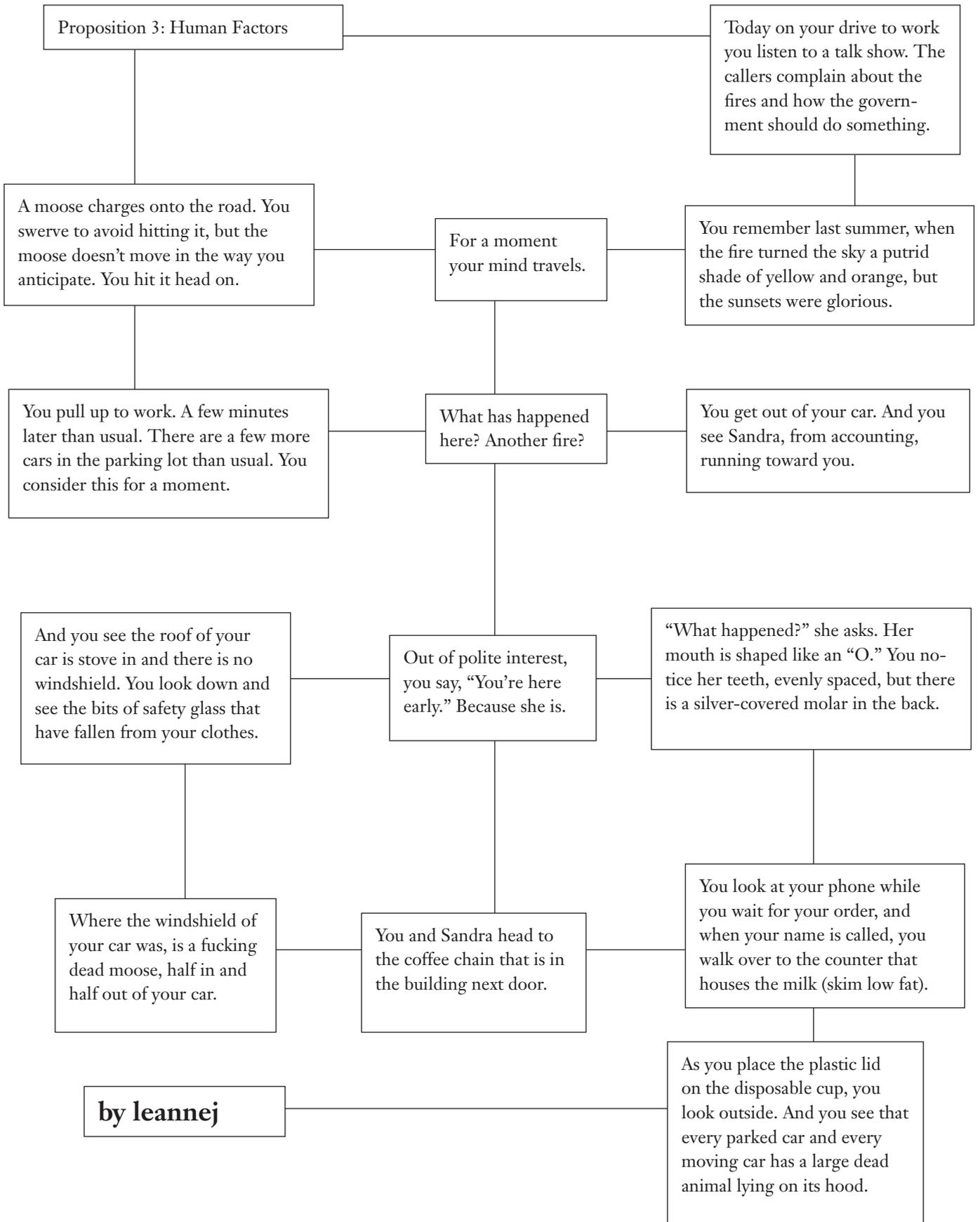
When the celluloid is full of itself,
it stores these scraps
in close-ups
or caches them
in its archives.

The call of the NFB Documentary
—and it has but one call in its repertoire—
has come to narrate the internal wilderness
of many Canadians with its stiff, stilted, and
hesitant quality.

For a more complete story,
why not contact the National Film Board
in Montreal?

C.R. Gilpin was born in Edmonton. He is a regular contributor to the Canadian Review of Literature in Performance (litlive.ca). His chapbook Faux Reals was released in 2008 by Full Court Press. He lives in Vancouver.





Write What You Can Imagine

STEPHEN HENIGHAN

Self-imposed limits blot out the glorious messiness of life

Like most advice given to writers, the injunction to “write what you know” is misleading. A staple of writing workshops, this dictum encourages a literalism that reins in creativity. Writers who internalize “write what you know” risk never finding out how far imagination can carry them. These writers set up walls before they begin to write by circumscribing their identity and the experiences to which it gives them access. The establishment of self-imposed limits is an inevitable, and even salutary, part of an artist’s development. But these limits must emerge out of the writer’s creative explorations. To start with assumptions about what you can and cannot do, rather than to discover them through trial and error, is to curtail your imagination and deprive yourself of an essential stage in the process of developing your range and abilities.

One of the dangers of the “write what you know” maxim is that it clamps the neat boxes of unitary definitions of identity over the glorious messiness of life. In fact, few of us know what it is that we know. Out of necessity we adopt labels to describe our place in society, but the insights and outlook fostered by our experience clarify only as we draw upon them in our writing. People who may share cultural, ethnic, geographical or gender identifications, unavoidably, will differ in their personalities, emotional tendencies and perceptions

of the community where they were raised, reacting differently to similar experiences. As we confirm our adult identities, these discrepancies become more pronounced. Recently, in an airport shuttle, I found myself sitting next to a high school classmate whom I had not seen in more than three decades. In our late teens we were both members of the “Reach for the Top” quiz team. In my recollection, we had similarly alienated views of our rough rural high school. My subsequent educational experience made me regard having attended this school as a handicap. This has led me to emphasize the negative features of my experiences there: the cultural narrow-mindedness of students and teachers, the pervasive drugs and violence, the low academic level of many classes, the sinister fondness of certain teachers for inflicting corporal punishment. My former classmate, who has become a research scientist, remembered receiving a solid preparation for university in his biology and chemistry classes. Now living in a region of the southern United States where public schools are held in low esteem and middle-class parents pay to educate their children privately, he recalled our public school, which was seen as deficient by Ontario standards, as better than most. “That place didn’t give us a bad start,” he said. I choked on my reply. Even though we came from similar backgrounds and had belonged to the same small clique during our school years, our respective

recollections of that time would not be recognizable as being based on the same institution.

While youthful experiences shape us, adult experience shapes how we enshrine the memories of our youth. Our underestimation of how much we learn in adulthood can deter us from valorizing our ability to imagine lives that we have not lived. Sometimes, in fiction, the life whose elaboration requires hard imaginative work is more persuasive than that which is dictated with confessional intensity by our surface conception of our identity. This is a difficult lesson to learn. A few years ago, after a period working in Guatemala, I started to write a novel set in the country. My work supervising a semester abroad for Canadian students, which included accompanying them on field trips to rural development projects, had introduced me to non-governmental organizations and the lives of the foreigners, mainly Americans and Canadians, who worked for these organizations. During the same period, for my own interest, I took intensive private lessons in the indigenous Mayan language of Cakchiquel; this not only taught me some of the language, but led to weeks of conversation (in Spanish) with Mayan women from nearby villages.

When I returned home, I started to write a novel about the tensions in a long-distance relationship between two middle-class Canadian professionals, one of whom was an NGO worker in Guatemala. The fact that I was in a long-distance relationship myself at this time strengthened my conviction that I was writing what I knew. To create an ironic counterpoint to my protagonists’ dilemma, I included brief interludes describing the marriage of an indigenous Mayan couple. I hesitated before attempting these passages. “I really can’t do this,” I thought. While the scenes about the Canadians flowed from my word processor without effort, I ransacked

my imagination and agonized over every line to write the Mayan scenes. Though short, these sections detained me for days. When I showed the manuscript to two editors from respected literary presses, both said that the novel was a non-starter because the Canadian characters were unconvincing. The Mayan scenes, on the other hand, they described as credible and promising. It took me months to realize that I had not done the hard work of imagining my protagonists' lives, and years to acknowledge that, in spite of the chasms of cultural difference, economic status, language and gender (my central Mayan character was a woman), my real Guatemala

novel resided in the murmurings left in my head by my conversations with the women from the villages. I had developed a feeling for their lives, problems, assumptions, beliefs, voices and "cosmovision," as they called it, that I did not have for those of NGO workers. I began to string the Mayan scenes together and found that the characters' desires overlapped in ways that were dramatic and meaningful. The scenes required to complete the story were arduous to write, but they emerged with weight and authenticity. Years after I had begun, and in a form I had not expected, my manuscript was finished. This time readers told me it was viable. To my surprise,

I had written a novel about the life of a Mayan woman in Guatemala. I'm convinced that this novel, *The Path of the Jaguar*, is far from being the only work of fiction that exists because a writer stopped trying to write what he knew and allowed himself to write what he was able to imagine.

Stephen Henigban's Sandino's Nation: Ernesto Cardenal and Sergio Ramírez Writing Nicaragua, 1940-2012 was awarded the Canadian Association of Hispanists' Prize for Best Book 2013-2016. The Path of the Jaguar is his most recent novel. Read more of his work at geist.com and stephenhenigban.com. Follow him on Twitter @StephenHenigban.

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Dictionary Story

ALBERTO MANGUEL

This is part one of a two-part piece; part two will appear in Geist 103

We are condemned to loss. From the moment we come into this world, we lose everything we believe is ours, from the comfort of the womb to the memory of a lifetime. Circumstances change, desires wane, our memory loses its hold. We walk toward the grave shedding stuff: toys, playmates, parents, teachers, homeland, enthusiasms, dates, tastes, beliefs, knick-knacks accumulated on the shore throughout the years. All these and many more (but I can't now remember what they are) drift away, forgotten, as if to lighten our descent into the realm of shadows. Death is not, as we like to suppose, a sudden night caller, but rather resembles one of those dishonest guests who come for a weekend and gradually outstay their welcome, taking up more and more room over longer and longer periods, until we feel that neither our house nor our life belong to us any longer. "Where did we put that book?" we ask. "Where is that photograph I knew I had?" "What was that name, that address, that unforgettable look, that memorable line?" *Alms for oblivion*, someone wrote, but rest of the lines I knew have also vanished, gone into the guest's pocket, never to be seen again.

And yet, a cluster of these things clings on, doggedly resisting abduction, so that in the dim light of old age we might recognize a few familiar faces, a few dear bits and pieces—a few but not many, and not always. Most of them are neither notorious nor prestigious: our memory is not picky. A smile floats down, disembodied, like the grin on the Cheshire Cat; a snippet of a song; a paragraph in a story; the dappled image of a forest; a

conversation of no importance—these persist, scattered on the ground after the garbage truck has passed. In this heap of leftovers are also a few solid objects: maybe a cup, a pen, a stone, a volume of poetry and, why not, a dictionary.

For my generation (I was born in the first half of the previous century) dictionaries mattered. Our elders treasured their Bible, or the *Complete Works* of Shakespeare, or Betty Crocker's cookbook. For the generations of this third millennium, it will perhaps not be a book at all but a nostalgic Gameboy or an iPhone. But for many readers of my age, the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Petit Robert*, the *Sopena*, *Webster's* were the names of our libraries' guardian angels. Mine, when I was in high school, was the Spanish edition of the *Petit Larousse Illustré*, with its pink stratum of foreign phrases separating common words from proper names.

In the days of my youth, for those of us who liked to read, the dictionary was a magical object of mysterious powers. First, because we were told that here, in this small fat volume, was almost the entirety of our common language; that between the drab covers were all the words that named everything in the world that we knew and also everything in the world that we did not know; that the dictionary held the past (all those words spoken by our grandparents and great-grandparents, mumbled in the dark and which are no longer used) and the future (words to name what we might one day want to say, when a new experience would call for them.) Second, because the dictionary, like a benevolent Sibyl, answered

all our questions when we stumbled over difficult words in a story (even though, as Helen Keller's teacher complains in *The Miracle Worker*, "What use is a dictionary if you have to know how a word is spelled before you can find out how to spell it?").

We were taught to be curious. Whenever we asked a teacher what something meant, we were told to "Look it up in the dictionary!" We never thought of this as a punishment. On the contrary: with this command we were given entry to a magic cavern in which one word would lead without rhyme or reason (except an arbitrary alphabetical reason) to the next. We learned that even a great poet like Robert Browning could make dreadful mistakes for failing to consult the dictionary, as when, in his poem "Pippa Passes," he speaks of a "nun's twat" under the misapprehension that it is an article of religious clothing.

We would look up "snow banner," for example, after reading in a Jack London story that "from the tip of every peak, swaying, undulating, flaring out broadly against the azure sky, streamed gigantic snow banners," and discover not only the sense in which London used the word, but that, in Canada (a name that for me was still nothing but a vast pink shape on the map), "snow banner" meant the cloud tinged with pink that carries horizontal flurries across the skies. Several decades later, when caught in a blizzard in St. John's, Newfoundland, I found that I had the word to name the experience. Aby Warburg, the great reader, defined for us all what he called a library's "law of the good neighbour." According to Warburg, the book with which one was familiar was not, in most cases, the book one needed. It was the unknown neighbour on the same shelf that contained the vital information. The same can be said of the words in a dictionary, though in the electronic age a virtual dictionary offers less of a chance for serendipity, or for the kind of happy distraction

which filled the lexicographer Emile Littré with such pride: “Many times,” Littré reported, “it happened that, looking up a certain word, I became so interested that I would continue reading the next definition and then the next, as if I were holding in my hands an ordinary book.”

These magical properties were probably unsuspected that singular hot afternoon, almost four thousand years ago when, somewhere in Mesopotamia, an inspired and anonymous ancestor of ours scratched in a piece of clay a slim list of Akkadian words and their meanings, thus creating what must have been, to all effects and purposes, a dictionary. For a dictionary designed much along the lines of ours today, we had to wait until the first century, when Pamphilus of Alexandria put together the earliest Greek lexicon with the words in alphabetical order. Did Pamphilus intuit that among his descendants would be swarms of illustrious lexicographers toiling in languages not yet born?

Sebastián de Covarrubias in Spain, Émile Littré in France, Noah Webster in the States, Dr. Johnson in England: their names became synonymous with their scholarly creations. Today we speak of fetching a *Langenscheidt* or a *Sopena*, or of consulting a *calepin*, after the Italian Ambrogio Calepino put together, in 1502, a gigantic multilingual dictionary worthy of the Epiphany. I remember once, at the house of a friend in Montreal, discussing whether the word *névé* (which appears in a novel by Erckmann-Chatrion, meaning “a pile of hardened snow”) came from Quebec. My friend called out to his wife: “*Chérie*, bring Bélisle to the table!” as if inviting the learned Louis-Alexandre Bélisle himself, author of the *Dictionnaire général de la langue française au Canada*, to share our dinner. I believe this familiarity says something important about the nature of a reader’s relationship with dictionaries.

Dictionary-makers are astonishing

creatures who rejoice, above everything else, in words. In spite of Dr. Samuel Johnson’s definition of a lexicographer as “a harmless drudge,” dictionary-makers are notoriously passionate and don’t believe in social niceties wherever their great task is concerned. Think of James Murray, mastermind behind the great *Oxford English Dictionary*, who for many years received thousands of earliest instances of English words from an American surgeon living in England whom he never met, until at last he discovered that his contributor, in addition to being a talented researcher, was also a clinically insane murderer whose home was the lunatic asylum of Broadmoor. Think of Noah Webster, who was said to have been caught by his wife in the arms of the maid. “Doctor Webster,” she exclaimed, “I am surprised!” “No, Madam,” he corrected her. “I am surprised. You are *astonished*.” Think of Thomas Cooper, the sixteenth-century scholar, who compiled for many years an important Latin-English dictionary.

When he was halfway through his work, his wife, angry at him for always sitting up so late at night, crept into his study, seized all his notes and threw them in the fire. “For all that,” reported the gossipy antiquarian John Aubrey, “the good man had so great a zeal for the advancement of learning, that he began it again, and went with it to that Perfection that he has left us, a most useful work.” Aubrey concludes admiringly: “He was made Bishop of Winton.”

Readers of dictionaries are equally passionate. Gustave Flaubert, himself a great dictionary reader, mockingly noted in his *Dictionary of Received Ideas*: “Dictionary. Say of it, ‘It’s only good for the ignorant.’” Gabriel García Márquez, while writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, would start every day reading the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*—“whose every new edition,” judged the French-Argentinian critic Paul Groussac, “makes you nostalgic for the previous one.” Ralph Waldo Emerson read the dictionary

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Shady Characters

MARY SCHENDLINGER

Translating a translation

for literary pleasure. “There is no cant in it,” he said, “no excess of explanation, and it is full of suggestion, the raw material of possible poems and histories.” Vladimir Nabokov found in Cambridge a secondhand edition of Vladimir Dahl’s *Interpretative Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language* in four volumes and resolved to read ten pages a day since, away from his motherland, “my fear of losing or corrupting, through alien influence, the only thing I had salvaged from Russia—her language—became positively morbid.”

As Nabokov understood, the language we use is not just an instrument—however feeble, inexact, treacherous—for communicating as best we can with others. Unlike other instruments, the language that we speak defines us. Our thoughts, our ethics, our aesthetics are all, up to a point, defined by our language. Each particular language provokes or allows a certain way of thinking, elicits even certain specific thoughts that come to our mind not only through but because of the language we call ours. Every translator knows that passing from one language to another is less an act of reconstruction than of reconversion, in the profoundest sense of changing one’s system of belief. No French author would ever come up with “*être ou ne pas être*” any more than an English author would write, “For a long time I went to bed early.” Their language, not their experience, disallows it, because though human experience is universally the same, after Babel the words we have to name that common experience are different. After all, the identity of things depends on what we call them.

Alberto Manguel is the award-winning author of hundreds of works, most recently (in English) Curiosity, All Men Are Liars and A History of Reading. He lives in New York. Read more of his work at alberto.manguel.com and geist.com.

Some years ago, when a client offered me the first and only hush-hush book-editing contract of my career, technically I didn’t have time to do it. But this was a good client and the assignment was to undertake the line edit of a translation into English, a task I love. The book, written in French by a Canadian government insider I’ll call Philippe, was a first-hand account of a politically sensitive public inquiry that would soon conclude. Philippe had been active behind the scenes, privy to details of submissions, testimonies, experts, schedules, media and more, and had been inspired to write a clear, vivid narration of the process—a good read that would show the rest of us how a commission of inquiry works. The French and English editions were to be launched together in a few weeks’ time, when the inquiry report was released, to take advantage of the media attention. The French edition was at the printer; the English edition, to be published by my client, was being translated and would need only a “quick copy-edit”—a monstrous contradiction in terms, but I understood the shorthand—before being rushed into production. To streamline the process, the translator would courier a couple of chapters at a time as he finished them (these were the days when ink-on-paper was still the most efficient method), and I would iron out any rough spots and shoot them right to the production manager.

The first envelope arrived the next morning, marked *Personal* and *Highly Confidential*. I closed my office door,

tore open the package and began to read.

Oh, dear. The text contained English words, but it was unintelligible: few of the sentences made sense all the way through, and none of them fit together. “The motive of this initiative had almost certainly been culled.” Had there been a computer glitch? “On this first class case they had left a bill of health.” Was I having an aneurysm? I pondered these questions seriously: no editor likes every text she encounters, but I’d never, ever seen one that I could not enter. “One could almost rather understeer the course.” I read the chapters over and over, fell on some oases of readability, smoothed out the few bits I could comprehend, tried to remain calm.

But then I got a little stab of shock: a passage that referred to the “secret life” of the judge heading up the inquiry. My understanding, from the marketing tip sheets I’d read in preparing for the edit, was that Philippe held this judge in high esteem, that he had consulted him often for insight as he worked on the book, that in his text he pondered the effects of a judge’s character on such a process, and so on. The book was a respectful, even-handed insider’s look at our democratic machinery, not an exposé. With my high school French and Latin, my ancient *Larousse* and my publishing hunches, I worked out that “secret life” should have been “private life.” I highlighted the passage and kept moving. But the No-Feeling roared back when I ran smack into

the term “shady characters.” Again I pored over the cryptic text and racked my brain and saw that Philippe certainly meant “shadowy figures.”

Book editors pride ourselves on sorting out ungainly sentences, poor logic, potential copyright infringement, errors of judgement, personal crises and much more without running to Mama for help. But we also know when to trip the alarms. I called the managing editor, scanned a few pages and emailed them to her. She called the publisher—I’ll call him Gordon—who was in Europe. I emailed copies of the note and scanned text to Philippe and told him we were working it out.

Two days later Philippe, who had finally taken a minute to read the text in my note, phoned me. “Pardon, Madame,” he said charmingly, “but what the hell is going on?” Meanwhile, the translator was forging ahead, as I realized upon receiving two more *Personal* and *Highly Confidential* packages, containing more of the same.

Philippe’s French publisher notified us that the book launch date for both editions was set. It would take place in Ottawa, on the Hill, coordinated with the release of the inquiry report. The invited guests included elected officials with bodyguards, high-level bureaucrats with clout and selected business executives. The printed invitations were about to go out. A caterer had been engaged.

The managing editor phoned me back, having connected Philippe and Gordon. Philippe had read out some of the gobbledegook English text to Gordon on transatlantic telephone, in prime billing time (this was before video/voice chat technology and the ubiquitous mobile phone). Gordon had phoned the French-language publisher, who was shocked: he himself had chosen the translator, “one of our very best.” Gordon then phoned me. Having signed for a large *Personal* and *Highly Confidential* packet

containing the rest of the translated chapters that day, I could confirm that the entire manuscript was in the same condition.

The choices seemed pitifully simple: start over with a new translation and launch the book well after all the hoopla had died down—i.e., blow the one opportunity for great sales—or cancel the project. But none of us could bear either option, and so another idea surfaced. Philippe and I would get on the telephone, go through the text sentence by sentence and bang it together. It would be hard: every sentence! And expensive: I was in Vancouver, Philippe was in Ottawa; Skype had not yet swooped in to rescue people in this fix. But we could do it.

Gordon called in all his favours with the printer and persuaded him to be on hair-trigger call to drop everything and rush the book into print the moment it arrived. The

French-language publisher, abject to say the least, had persuaded a very busy translator—a good one, he swore—to check the chapters as Philippe and I finished them.

Each morning I poured myself a coffee and phoned Philippe. He sat at his desk with his edited manuscript in French, the bad English translation and his *Larousse*. I sat at my desk with the bad translation and my *Larousse*. We proceeded paragraph by paragraph, taking turns asking each other about anything we weren’t a hundred percent sure about. That is how we discovered that the translator had gone with “referrals” rather than “denunciations,” “secret meeting” rather than “in-camera meeting” and “best place” rather than “last resort,” among many other infelicities (to use an editor’s euphemism). The jarring appearance of a “starship” seemed an auto-correct non sequitur, until a



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bit of talk and *Larousse*-flipping led us to “flagship.” “Ay, ay, ay, Madame,” Philippe said. “I do not know whether to cry or to break into laughter.” “You mean burst out laughing,” I said, and we did.

The bad translation generated good talk about small but large differences: “preoccupations” vs. “obsessions,” “shudder” vs. “shiver,” “oversized” vs. “larger than life,” “fervent Liberal” vs. “Liberal hack,” “I reached for his hand” vs. “I reached out to shake his hand.” And how could a reputable translator allow a distinguished judge to carry a suitcase into the meeting room every morning, rather than a briefcase?

“Madame,” Philippe said to me one morning as he carried his cordless phone through the house to let the cat out, “I am learning English.”

“Monsieur,” I said, “I too am learning English.”

Some days Philippe was tired; some days I was tired. Some days it all seemed futile. No fun, no relief, no end in sight, a snowball’s chance in hell of meeting the deadline. Surely it made more sense to give this document a decent burial, not whitewash it and pray that we’d get away with it. But neither of us ever said so. We just kept going. When we had finished a chapter, I would input our edits and fling it off to the rescue translator. Then Philippe and I would open another chapter and dig in. Late in the day I would phone the rescue translator, who was brilliant, and she and I would work out fast solutions to any lingering bits. The next morning I would check the bits with Philippe, and he and I would grapple with the next expanse of text. And so on. Gradually the book gathered strength—even we could see it.

Some terms took a while to work out, because we could not see each other’s gestures as we groped for the right tone or connotation. Many times I would suggest word after word after word until finally

Philippe delivered us with “That’s it!” With some effort, for instance, he described the wonderful word *riffifi*, which means trouble of some sort, with fighting attached or threatened, and implying more than two participants. “Brawl?” I said. *Non*. Combat? Scuffle? Tussle? Fray? Fracas? Rum-pus? Dust-up? Silence. Then: “Fisticuffs?” “That’s it!” It wasn’t, in terms of denotation, and we both knew it. But we wanted to keep the onomatopoeic effect.

“Madame,” Philippe said toward the end, “I think this is a pretty good book. The English is better than the French!” That is one of the gifts of an edited translation. Given the time, budget and publishing will, the writer can update, rethink and reimagine the book, having gone through the writing and publishing process with the original and then returned to it with fresh eyes, in a new context, with a new audience, and with input from

an editor and translator who like the book and know what they’re doing.

Miraculously, we made the deadline, and so did everyone else. Finished books were airlifted to the launch, and Philippe signed many copies of both editions. When the dust had settled, I called the managing editor on the project and asked her what rock the French publisher had upturned to find that translator. It turned out to have been a respected and experienced employee of the federal government. His name appears on the title page of the book, and in the cataloguing record at Library and Archives Canada, just after Philippe’s name.

Mary Schendlinger is a writer, editor, comics maker (as Eve Corbel) and retired teacher of publishing. She was Senior Editor of Geist for twenty-five years. She lives in Vancouver.

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ENDNOTES

REVIEWS, COMMENTS, CURIOSA

ESPRESSO NERD HEAVEN

My espresso machine was in the repair shop and I had begun to despair of ever seeing it again until the very last minute, when an email arrived from International Plumbing and



Forum Appliances Ltd, on Pender Street, Chinatown, Vancouver, where I had dropped off the machine three weeks ago. Dear Sir, it says:

I am writing from International Plumbing and Forum Appliances regarding the Breville espresso maker that you brought into repair. Our technician had looked at your machine and have the valve repaired and internal tube Clean Up. Below is the video clips for your reference:

Based on the performance, we decided to return the unit to you. You can come pick it up between 9:30am to 6:00pm from Monday to Sunday.

Please feel free to contact Derek or I if you need further information.

Thank you for choosing Forum Home Appliances!

Three video links inserted into the message are titled as follows: “One Shot,” “Two Shot,” “Water and Steam.”

Each video follows the format of “One Shot”: opening with an establishing shot of the Work Order with my signature clearly visible, and then

tracking seamlessly up to the espresso machine (my old friend!) in full frame; here the camera lingers and a hand in a blue glove enters the frame: a finger presses the One-Shot button; The pump rumbles into action and coffee begins running into a cup. The hand in the blue glove leaves the frame and, as the coffee pours, the camera moves in for a closer look at the pressure gauge.

The effect is hypnotic and more than convincing. Possibly surreal.

My machine had come back to life.

In “Two Shot,” the finger in the blue glove pushes the Two-Shot button; in “Water and Steam,” two fingers twist the toggle switch to release steam and then hot water, in turn.

I ran all three videos several times.

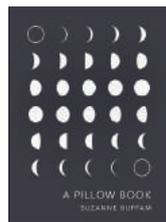
I felt like dancing.

(The videos “One Shot,” “Two Shot” and “Water and Steam” can be seen at geist.com/espressoheaven.)

—Stephen Osborne

PERCHANCE TO DREAM

A Pillow Book by Suzanne Buffam (House of Anansi) contemplates the pillow, an ordinary object, as the buffer between internal and external life. Inspired by Sei Shōnagon’s famous book of the same name, Buffam cre-



ates her own series of short reflections on daily life with her husband and young daughter, lists of thematic or alphabetical things (my favourites include Moustaches A to Z, Altered Proverbs and Things That Make My Heart Beat Faster) and odes to the sleep that eludes her. Woven through each passage is a pillow: historical pillows, insomnia or dreams spent

on pillows, pillows sat on in Japanese restaurants, and the items she finds underneath her daughter’s pillow. Each new pillow marks the text’s restlessness, moving among lists, forms and genres as Buffam observes the muted passing of time; however, instead of measuring out her life in coffee spoons, Buffam counts the pillows that mark her days. Not quite essays, not quite poetry, Buffam’s prose is a quiet and lyrical celebration of the anxieties of life and motherhood. What I liked most about this book was the struggle of form and content, the internal insomnia of the text that explores the liminal space of the pillow, where the privacy of sleep meets the demands of family life. I’ve returned to this book several times for Buffam’s humorous lists, and expect I’ll go back again for her dreamy stories. —Kelsea O’Connor

CLOUDS OF INTRIGUE, RAYS OF HOPE

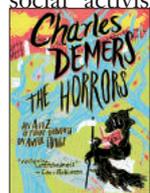
Like most people who have seen the stand-up comedy and other stage-work of Charles Demers, I sure couldn’t pass up a book of his personal essays. The main thing that struck me about **The Horrors: An A to Z of Funny Thoughts on Awful Things** (Douglas & McIntyre) is how the author, born in 1980, was able to capture the inner feelings of various generations. For example, in the chapter “F for Fat,” Demers has voiced the thoughts of nearly every baby boomer who descended into the blackboard jungles of the 1960s: “Each of us was still sizing each other up, sizing ourselves up, breathlessly negotiating a new world so much more sordid than the elementary school we’d left behind just months before.” He goes on to

say: “Some students brought clouds of intrigue with them...” We can intuit that Demers brought no clouds of intrigue, although he likely made up for it a few years later, when he immersed himself in the world of social activism. Whenever I read a stirring and provocative book, the writer part of my brain tries to find ways to make it even better. With *Horror*s I’d probably choose to omit such limiting conditions as the A to Z format, and simply wing it with a series of random segments. It takes a lot of work to think up “X for Xanthan Gum,” or “Z for Zzz,” and then produce an informative chapter about it. The freedom to write beyond that structure of A-B-C could offer even more creativity.

—*Jill Mandrake*

CYCLING INNOCENTLY INTO THE ARCTIC

I Cycled into the Arctic Circle: A Peregrination by James Duthie and Matt Hulse (Saltire Society) is a “newly revived and revised edition of deaf Scotsman James Duthie’s rare journal.” It’s one end-result of a thirteen-year labour of love by the artist-filmmaker Matt Hulse (the other, a film adaptation of Duthie’s journal titled *Dummy Jim*, hit the film festival circuit in 2013). Both projects had funding from the Saltire Society, an arts organization devoted to “celebrating the Scottish imagination.” In the book’s introduction, the Society’s executive director explains their willingness to help Hulse “revive and revise” an awkwardly written, fifty-five-year-old self-published account by a deaf Scottish cyclist who had set out for Morocco, but ended in Norway: “Both James and Matt might be seen as ‘Saltire people’: people who have a

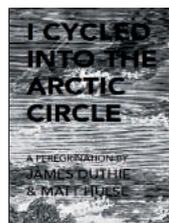


hopeful curiosity about the world and its possibilities beyond national boundaries or the limits of orthodoxy, who nurture a generosity of spirit and a willingness to take others as they find them.” You’d never use Duthie’s account as a practical guide for a similar trip: there are few “how to” tips, and no maps. There are, however, copious illustrations—this is more of an artist’s book than a travel book—that document Hulse’s thirteen-year obsession with Duthie’s expedition: reproductions of vintage postcards and period photographs, sketches and doodles by the filmmaker, and a scattering of illustrations by children in crayon and pencil, showing their impressions of “Dummy Jim” and the places and people he encountered along the way. Best to think of *I Cycled into the Arctic Circle* as the literary equivalent of an oil painting by a “naïve” visual artist (Henri Rousseau, or Grandma Moses): an artifact that documents an earlier, more innocent time.

—*Michael Hayward*

BUDS KISSING BUDS

Chuck Tingle writes hilarious, absurd satirical gay erotica. I purchased on Amazon ebooks **Slammed in the Butthole by my Concept of Linear Time** (Amazon Digital Services), a story in which a man has sex with time itself personified as a buff man with a clock for a head, and **I’m Gay for My Living Billionaire Jet Plane** (Amazon Digital Services), in which a man falls in love with an airplane named Keith. The stories, or “tinglers,” as the author calls them, are incredibly funny and entertaining—in one, a protagonist asks Tingle if he could use the word “butthole” instead of “anus,” because he says “anus” sounds too clinical. Other “tingler” titles include *Bigfoot Pirates Haunt My Balls*, *Pounded in the Butt by My Own*



Butt, *Schrodinger’s Butt*, *Oppressed in the Butt by my Inclusive Holiday Coffee Cups* and *Pounded by the Pound: Turned Gay by the Socioeconomic Implications Of Britain Leaving the European Union*. When Tingle was asked in an interview why he writes what he does, he wrote, “Reason to write tinglers is to prove that love is real for all who kiss. saw a man on TV talking about buds kissing buds and he said ‘oh whats gonna happen if we let buds kiss buds whats next are they gonna kiss PLANES TOO?’ so i thought ‘YES ALL LOVE IS REAL WE SHOULD KISS PLANES because they are HANDSOME.’” Each “tingler” costs between two and four dollars. —*Roni Simunovic*

AIMING FOR ROSES

First there was the Canadian daredevil Ken Carter who, for five years (starting in 1976), made repeated attempts to jump the St. Lawrence River in a rocket-propelled car. He planned to land on the US side, in two hundred square feet of roses (planted specially for the occasion), which he speculated would be “a fairly soft target.” In 1981 Robert Fortier made an NFB documentary about Carter; this inspired Mark Haney, a Vancouver composer and double bassist, to spend the next five years composing music that for some reason he based on the first 499 digits of pi, and recording it on a concept album for double bass, guitar and vocals, along with audio clips from the documentary, and to call it *Aim for the Roses*. Haney’s album, described by one music critic as “utterly amazing and completely fucking ridiculous,” fuelled the imagination of the Vancouver filmmaker John Bolton, who started with the music, used some scenes from the original documentary, built a shortened version of Carter’s ramp that stands in for a Shakespearean stage and hired some actors and singers, all so that he could add his own crazy movie to this chain of obsessions. Much like the works that inspired it,

the movie **Aim for the Roses** (Opus 59 Films) started small and grew to include two men in bright-coloured jumpsuits and/or red and white striped long underwear, three women in white one-piece shorts sets and green fishnet stockings (one of whom is the “Statistician,” because what would a daredevil be without statistics?) who are backup singers and dancers but who could also be angels, and one announcer/singer/dancer who could also be the devil. Plus the two and only members of the Ken Carter Preservation Society, who are storing several parts of Carter’s original rocket car in a shed in Ontario. Throw in the composer playing a darker, more dramatic version of himself (and also playing the double bass), the filmmaker (playing an inscrutable bartender) and Renowned Psychic Raziell Ross (playing herself), and all the audience can do is sit there and wait to see where this wacky road is heading. We laughed, we cried, we worried, we rolled our eyes, we shook our heads, and in the end we may have come away inspired to try stuff that we’re pretty sure won’t work, just in case it does. —*Patty Osborne*

KNOWN TO BE STRANGE

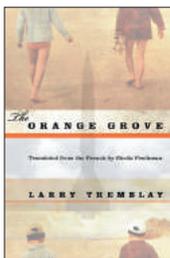
Known and Strange Things (Random House) is a collection of Teju Cole’s essays and other short pieces, many of which have previously appeared in *The New Yorker* and elsewhere online. You might have come across his piece “A Reader’s War” from 2013, which included Cole’s versions of the opening lines of seven famous novels, reimagined for an era of drone strikes: “Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. Pity. A signature strike leveled the florist’s”; “Call me Ishmael. I was a young man of military age. I was immolated at my wedding. My parents are inconsolable.”



The book opens with “Black Body,” which describes Cole’s visit to the Swiss town of Leukerbad, where James Baldwin spent several winters in the early 1950s, an experience that led to “Stranger in the Village,” Baldwin’s landmark essay on race. Cole is the photography critic for the *New York Times Magazine*, and several pieces in *Known and Strange Things* explore that medium. The essay “Google’s Macchia,” for example, considers photography “in its moment of crisis”: “There’s never been so much photography on view, and most of it is bad.” Another, “The Atlas of Effect,” explores the ramifications of Google’s Image Search. Cole is thoughtful, angry and articulate, and well worth reading. —*Michael Hayward*

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

The Orange Grove by Larry Tremblay, translated by Sheila Fischman (Biblioasis), is dry and sparse and heartbreaking, much like the unnamed country in which it takes place. Start with nine-year-old twin boys whose grandparents are killed by a bomb from the other side of the mountain, add a manipulative leader from the next village who is steeped in the culture of revenge, put them together with the myth of “the other” and a belt of explosives and you soon realize that you are slowing down your reading pace in order to avoid what seems to be the inevitable ending. “Think of Paradise” and “You have been chosen by God,” says the village leader, using rhetoric that contrasts strongly with the quiet domesticity of the family’s life portrayed so well in the strong, unadorned writing. As the sadness builds, so does a feeling of powerlessness: a pattern has been set and the characters must play



their parts, although the brothers do manage one act of autonomy. We are spared the gory details, which occur out of sight, on the other side of the mountain, but the story and the feelings it invoked stayed in my mind and heart for a long time after I closed the book. This is a great addition to the Biblioasis International Translation Series. —*Patty Osborne*

RAIN FALLS IN NORWAY

It’s time to check in again on the Norwegian writer Karl Ove Knausgaard, whose six-volume memoir-as-novel is being released in annual installments in an English translation by Don Bartlett. In the 2016 episode, **Some Rain Must**



Fall (Knopf), volume 5 of his ongoing struggle, we find our hero at age twenty, about to be admitted to a prestigious writing academy in Bergen. In this volume we see Knausgaard wrestle with ambition and envy, self-doubt and despair, lust and shame. You cannot overstate the urgency of Knausgaard’s desire to become a writer: it is all-consuming. “What was the point of looking,” he asks at one point, “if you couldn’t write about what you saw? What was the point of experiencing anything at all if you couldn’t write about what you had experienced?” As in the earlier volumes of *My Struggle*, Knausgaard demonstrates his remarkable ability to make every banal detail, and each minor decision, seem heightened by his attention to it: “Surely *this* incident must be crucial to the narrative, or it wouldn’t be included.” And yet it almost never *is* crucial: “This opera we call life,” we conclude with some surprise, “is simply one ordinary event following another.” And so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past. —*Michael Hayward*

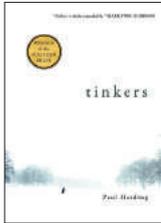
NOTES ON THE COSMOS

Three generations of the Crosby family live and die, but all you really need to know about **Tinkers** by Paul Harding (Bellevue Literary Press) is the writer's exceptional use of language. From Howard Crosby's notebook: "*Cosmos Borealis*: Light skin of sky and cloud and mountain on still pond. Water body beneath teeming with reeds and silt and trout (sealed in day skin and night skin and ice lids), which we draw out with silk threads, fitted with snags of fur or bright feathers. Skin like glass like liquid like skin; our words scried the slick surface (reflecting risen moon, spinning stars, flitting bats), so that we had only to whisper across the wide plate. Green drakes blossomed powder dry among the stars, glowing white, out of pods, which rose from the muck at the bottom of the pond and broke open on the skin of the water. We whispered across the galaxies, Who needs Mars?"

—*Thad McIlroy*

PANIC DEFENCE

barbara findlay, QC, prefers to see her name in lowercase letters. She is a renowned rights activist and lawyer whose life and whose work for LGBTQ and indigenous people are revealed in **In Particular, barbara findlay**, a 54-minute documentary brilliantly directed by Becca Plucer and released at film festivals in 2015. barbara findlay describes herself as a lawyer, and therefore a member of a privileged group, who did not herself have the same civil and human rights as everyone else: a paradox that became central to her life and her "lawyering." In 1967 (when gay sex was a crime and homosexuality a form



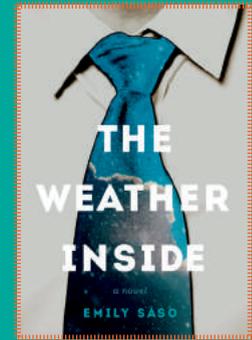
of insanity), she was incarcerated in a mental asylum in Ontario for the (unnamed) affliction of "lesbianism," a term that she had to discover through her own research. In the film she describes a road trip to San Francisco in the 1960s, where she discovered her first women's bookstore and, even more liberating, a shelf filled with lesbian books. When she entered the legal profession in 1977 she had to produce a certificate of sanity; and as her self-consciousness developed further, she understood that she herself had absorbed society's view of her as someone evil, criminal, crazy or all three. Her field of struggle began with the rights of lesbians and gay men, and has grown to include the safety of transgendered kids in schools, gender identity on legal documents, the rights of same-sex couples to attend each other in hospitals and at deathbeds, and even at funerals; the rights of children and same-sex parents; the rights of First Nations children and their parents extends the field into the roots of our history. This is a dry list of "causes": their reality is visceral and can be felt throughout the movie, which rises and falls with paradox, laughter and tears. I for one had never heard of the gay panic defence (still allowed in Canadian law): to hear of it (at last) is to laugh and cry at the same time. The "in particular" clause referred to in the title of the movie is from section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms: barbara findlay's explication of those two words demonstrates how the structures of legality select for membership in a community, a nation, and how they can equally can deselect, exclude and even eliminate. This is a brilliant and necessary film, entirely suitable to its illustrious subject. Download the movie for six bucks at iTunes, linked from: <http://www.barbarafindlay.com/>.

—*Stephen Osborne*



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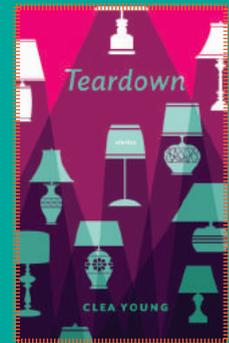


The Weather Inside

A NOVEL BY EMILY SASO

"The Weather Inside is a mighty examination of faith and love. Saso masterfully shows why those are two different words. Gritty and heartfelt and hilarious in all the right places, this is a gift for readers who are looking for something fresh."

—BRADLEY SOMER



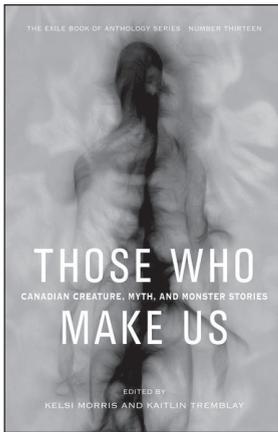
Teardown

STORIES BY CLEA YOUNG

"Clea Young writes vivid, whip-smart stories about people coping with the perils and pitfalls of modern life. I was bowled over by her talent as a storyteller and a stylist. Fans of Ann Beattie and Jennifer Egan will rejoice. A huge thumbs-up for Teardown."

—NEIL SMITH

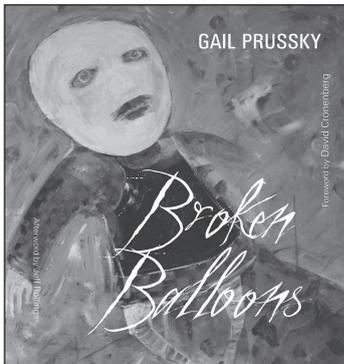
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BROKEN BALLOONS Beautifully drawn and painted, accompanied by stories and poems, this wonderful menagerie of insects, animals and people are startling, at times frightening, but always grin-inducing over the pages. These 54 black and white and 16 colour artworks see Gail Prusky take her place alongside creators like Edward Gorey, Ralph Steadman, Gary Larson, Tomi Ungerer, Robert Crumb and Maurice Sendak. Foreword by David Cronenberg. \$19.95 ~ 104 pages



BOZUK A middle-aged sex/massage therapist unexpectedly finds herself wonderfully alive in her parents' home country of Turkey, amid a tumultuous mix of pluralism, soul-searching matters of family breakdown, personal fragility, and human connection. This novel is a tale for our times, enveloping the reader in a fictionalized travel memoir that blossoms with vivid language and imagery. \$19.95 ~ 240 pages

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ARCPOETRYMAGAZINE

OFF THE SHELF

The man in the bar bathroom suggests Mike blast his colon with salt water and secret herbs in *Dog of the Moon* by **Stan Rogal** (Insomniac Press). Adam Sandler sings a Hanukkah song to soothe a man who needs to pee in *The Woods* by **Amber McMillan** (Nightwood Editions). Witchwoman mutters exaltations in a foreign tongue in *A Desolate Splendor* by **John Jantunen** (ECW Press). **Angeline Schellenberg** calls a vasectomy a highly effective form of border control in *Tell Them It Was Mozart* (Brick Books). A serial killer targets victims who wear brown shoes after 5 p.m. in *Where Did You Sleep Last Night* by **Lynn Crosbie** (House of Anansi). **Vanessa Shields** remembers the first time she watched porn, complete with fuzzy perms and bow-chicka-bow-bow music, in *Look at Her* (Black Moss Press). The cheesy smell of a balled-up nylon wafts from a box marked “Precious Things” in *The Adjustment League* by **Mike Barnes** (Biblioasis). In *Buoyancy Control* (BookThug), **Adrienne Gruber** says that despite the temptation to use your eight arms to impersonate Jesus, the show must go on. The boys in **Nick Comilla’s** *Candyass* (Arsenal Pulp Press) stay up for three nights, tweaked out on methamphetamines and social acceptance. Two deformed brothers introduce their driftwood puppet to the leech-boys in **David Clerson’s** *Brothers* (QC Fiction). **Jana Prikryl** reads about Zeus flying Hermes in on winged sandals to murder the masses in *The After Party* (Tim Duggan Books). **Don Domanski** watches “Jesus bugs” walk on water in *Fetishes of the Floating World* (espresso). The world is run by pigs and not worth living in according to *German Mills* by **John Steffler** (Gaspereau Press). **Svetlana Lilova** defines frozen fish as a waste of lemon in *Metaphysical Dictionary* (Dumagrad

Books). **Tim McCaskell** discovers that Irish revolutionaries can be gay in *Queer Progress: From Homophobia to Homonationalism* (Between the Lines). Mrs. White wants to get her hands on a ballet dancer’s private parts in *Mister Nightingale* by **Paul Bowdring** (Vagrant Press). Poppy gives up her Catholic morals and her virginity in the back of Miles’s pickup truck in *Border Markers* by **Jenny Ferguson** (NeWest Press). A ferry rider gets caught shoving an apricot danish into her purse in *Teardown* by **Clea Young** (Freehand Books). According to *Price Paid* by **Bev Sellars** (Talonbooks), in the early days of Vancouver Island, “no one ever heard of an Indian driving a motor car.” One’s moral fibre might come loose like the stuffing from a sofa in *Becoming Unbecoming* by **Una** (Arsenal Pulp Press). In *The Weather Inside* by **Emily Saso** (Freehand Books), an awkward weatherman cups the Great Lakes like a pair of testicles and pinches the Rocky Mountains like nipples. The giant wheel of a car squishes Superwoman’s miniature body in *There Is No Escape Out of Time* by **Jacqueline Valencia** (Insomniac Press). A Good Samaritan tries to blow life into a reptilian river beast in **Martin West’s** *Cretacea & Other Stories from the Badlands* (Anvil Press). Daniel freezes time during a plane crash and is forced to relive the time he peed himself in fifth grade in *Into the Current* by **Jared Young** (Goose Lane Editions). In *Queers Were Here: Heroes & Icons of Queer Canada*, edited by **Robin Ganey** and **RJ Gilmour** (Biblioasis), dressing in drag is a toxic miasma of hairspray and sweaty pantyhose.

NOTED ELSEWHERE

Publisher’s Weekly says that *The Days* by **M.A.C. Farrant** (Talonbooks) “gleefully riffs through cultural ephemera”; Chloë on Goodreads says it’s a few shades darker and more

morality-centric than Farrant’s previous work; author Diane Schoemperlen calls it a “brilliant and uneasy theory of modern life” and the *Vancouver Sun* says the collection “takes the pedestrian and makes it fly.” *As-deep in Wonder* by **Christopher Gudgeon** (Anvil Press) is a “methadone shot into the veins of our contemporary polis,” says author John Barton; Foreword Reviews calls it a “quirky valentine to irreverent readers” full of “glorious bursts of vulgarity,” and author bill bissett says it’s a “genius marvel uv a book.” Fab Book Reviews calls *A Boy Named Queen* by **Sara Cassidy** (House of Anansi) “a stand-out piece in children’s lit,” and Ms. Yingling on Goodreads says, “I don’t think I’ve ever read a book that I felt was so unfinished”; Rob at unquestionably-palatable.blogspot.com wishes it had been longer, and says that the story did in under 100 pages what some novels are unable to do in 300. Edmonton Poet Laureate Rollie Pemberton calls *even this page is white* by **Vivek Shraya** (Arsenal Pulp Press) a “provocative meditation on what it means to grow up anything other than white in Canada”; Neyat Yohannes at Vagabond City says it’s a collection that stomps around race in heavy duty Doc Martens; Greg on Goodreads says that it would have worked better as spoken word, and Reem says that “modern ‘poetry’ shouldn’t be classified as poetry”; author Shani Mootoo praises it for “finishing the sentence that hurts.”

CONGRATULATIONS

To *Geist* contributor **Connie Kuhns**, who was named first runner-up in the Los Angeles Review Literary Awards for Creative Non-Fiction; to **Gary Barwin** for making the 2016 Giller Prize shortlist; and to **Jill Mandrake**, whose film was screened at the Dead on Film 5th Annual Short Horror Film Competition.

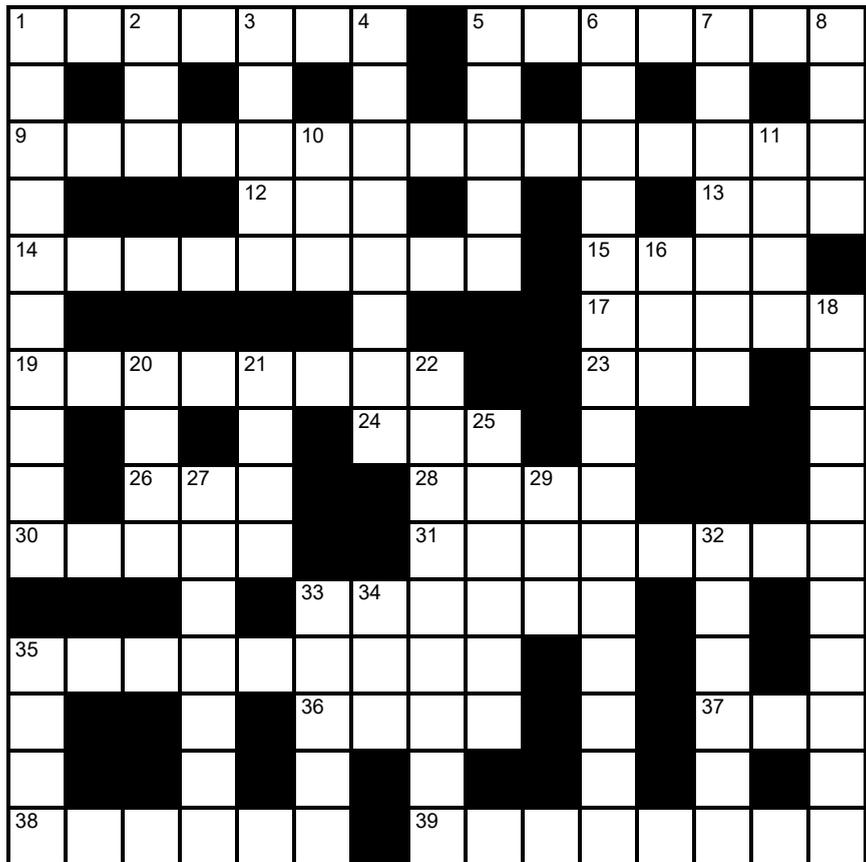
The GEIST Cryptic Crossword

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ACROSS

- 1 Art tapped his shoe in Elks Bay
- 5 Oh Lord, those lizards are bound to be jumping on Annie
- 9 After pounding the parchment, thirty of them figured out the system of intervals (2)
- 12 This is not only the beginning of my text (abbrev)
- 13 Is this a spiritual one, or just a rag?
- 14 So there's no confusion, remember that when the mob smiles, we close the whole place down
- 15 I can't stand that bloody style
- 17 No one improvises like Don
- 19 Gamer wins jewel with stellar but raucous music (2)
- 23 Sounds like she disapproves of that short task
- 24 Those girls work in the muck
- 26 That tracker will figure out what's available everywhere (abbrev)
- 28 Jimmy was a rebellious administrator, wasn't he?
- 30 When you get the OK, take off!
- 31 Whichever way you look at it, we're using the same angle
- 33 Bessie thinks things over with her number one organ
- 35 To change styles, just pass one foot in

- front of the other
- 36 Stop complaining and have some toast
 - 37 Your bed is not out there
 - 38 He drops tiny footsteps
 - 39 Quietly, she foots the bill for shuffling around (2)

DOWN

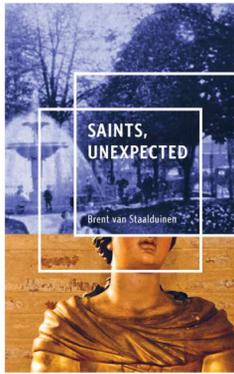
- 1 Tappers and flyers sometimes turn over (2)
- 2 Some unspecified ones
- 3 Did Wilson make up a story or was she really Fred's partner?
- 4 Shuffle step right, then left, and if you get mixed up, smash him (2)
- 5 She runs slowly through the gate
- 6 We're thinking of getting Ivan a cat if it causes him to get off the couch (2)
- 7 That's too cold for tea and it's good for lightweights (2)
- 8 All those happy people on the radio are hilarious
- 10 The Quebecers thought it was me
- 11 In India, I ran after a princess
- 16 Those guys think they invented WordPerfect (abbrev)
- 18 For the smoothest step, alternate putting weight on your testicle (2)
- 20 Sounds like we should drink up right now!
- 21 Seasoned sailor was fond of white

- 22 In the beginning stages we saw truism end
- 25 You're so uppity when you say what you want
- 27 What a riot! Gus gets himself dressed up
- 29 Everything and the opposite are on the line (abbrev)
- 32 What he wins is kind of novel
- 33 For her, life is but a dream
- 34 Things should get shady with that extremely purple scale (abbrev)
- 35 To avoid getting it, keep time with your hands

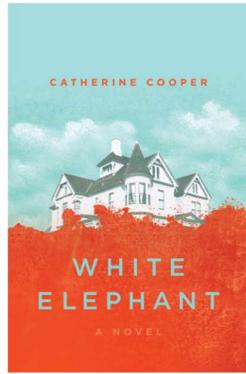
The winner for Puzzle 101 was Bill Kummer of Newmarket, ON.



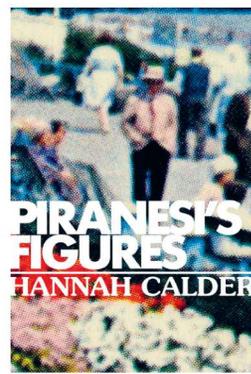
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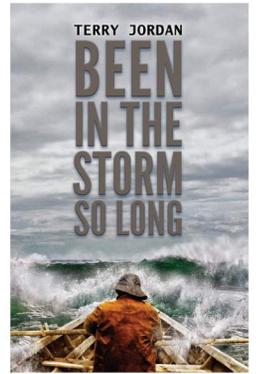
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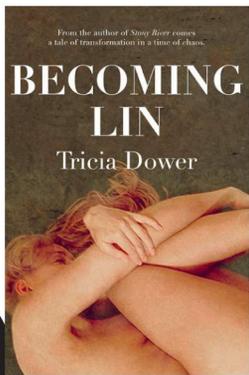
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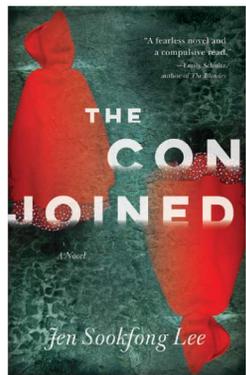
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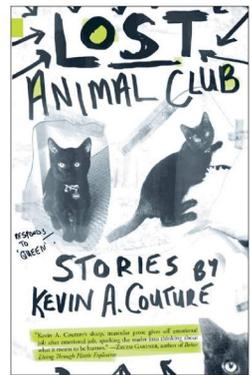
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terry jordan
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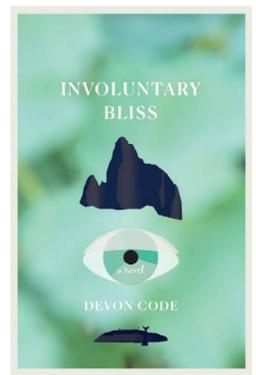
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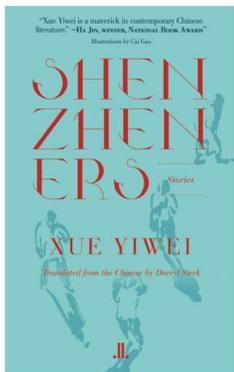
the conjoined
jen sookfong lee
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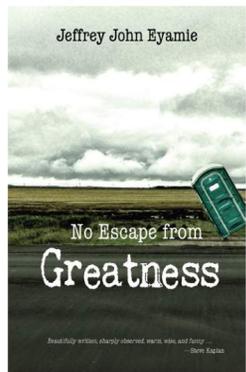
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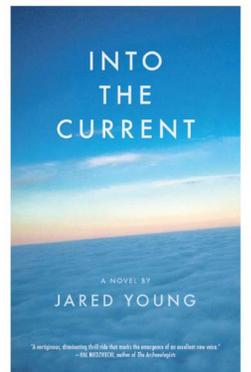
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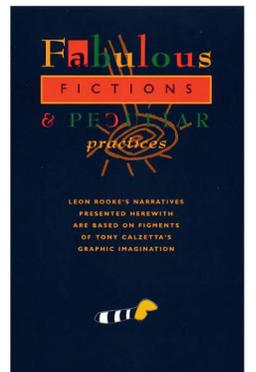
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