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# GEIST

Volume 27 • Number 104 • Spring 2017

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Against the odds



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COVER: *The image on the cover is “Fun, fun, fun,” (2016) a paper collage by Amélie Jodoin, a multimedia artist from Montreal. See more of her work at [ameliejodoin.com](http://ameliejodoin.com) and on page 10 of this issue.*

# GEIST

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# MISCELLANY

## READERS WRITE

I had to write and say that, of the many, many hours of pleasure I've had reading *Geist*, few things have been more delightful than "Shady Characters," Mary Schendlinger's tale of struggling to edit a bungled translation (*Geist* 102). I worked in French to English translation for years and I just love this piece. "A text I couldn't enter," yes, indeed. *Rien plus penible*. Does the eye recoil first or the brain? Thank you for more amusement than a barrel of *singes*.

—Julie Vandervoort, Halifax

Thank you for sending me an extra issue of your magazine—No. 103—even though my subscription had expired. While I've enjoyed reading *Geist* over the last couple of years, none of the issues has impressed me as much as this one. The photoessay by Terence Byrnes is remarkable in its sensitive treatment of a place and time, and the people therein. Powerful, familiar photographs. The issue is filled with all sorts of other gems. I've particularly enjoyed the poems by Evelyn Lau and Louise Bernice Halfe. Excellent cover art by Brandon Constans. I'm not usually susceptible to marketing ploys, but in this case, I may just have to renew my subscription!

—Suzanne Chiasson, Vancouver

## WRITE TO GEIST

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

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#210 – 111 West Hastings St.  
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Letters may be edited for clarity, brevity and decorum.

## APROPOS OF...

*Progress*. Tisdale, Saskatchewan, has changed its slogan from "The Land of Rape and Honey"—rape referring to rapeseed, also known as canola, the town's main export—to "Opportunity Grows Here" after years of complaints.

*Gravity*. Scientists discovered that the Hudson Bay region has less gravitational pull than the rest of the world because the massive ice sheet that covered the area during the last ice age melted and the Earth is still rebounding from the absent weight.

## Signage.



## CONTACT NO CONTACT

*Geist* is embarking on a new project: Contact No Contact, a gathering of personal Contact narratives from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal writers and storytellers. "Contact" is a term used to denote initial encounters of Aboriginal peoples with European settlers and carries a special charge in accounts of Aboriginal history. But for most Canadians, Contact remains an abstract "historical" event that has (d)evolved over centuries into a continuous state of "No Further Contact." The finished works of Contact No Contact—written anecdotes, audio and video—will be arranged in

suites by theme and published in print and curated on a website. Each narrative will be short and to the point: together they form an array of anecdotes, each acting as a door into the space created by Contact: a glimpse, a surprise, a shock, a new connection.

*An entry from Randy Fred:*

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

## TRUMP & TRUMPERY

Is it my imagination, or has the word “trump” begun to creep into daily news and conversation at an accelerating rate?

That is, “trump” as a transitive verb meaning “override”; not “trump” meaning “foil or thwart... esp. with an unexpected move at the last minute or by means of a previously secret resource” (*Oxford Canadian Dictionary*). I prefer the latter, but Merriam-Webster has already accepted the former.

Maybe someone will send in some beautiful writing in which this new incarnation of “trump” appears, but in the meantime it’s going on my list of space-saving newspaper words to avoid, which includes “oust” and “opt.”  
—*Mary Schendlinger in The Writer’s Toolbox. For more on writers and writing, visit [geist.com/writers/writers-toolbox](http://geist.com/writers/writers-toolbox)*

## EXCUSES, EXCUSES

Sometime in March I succumbed to an impulse to see the Adolf Hitler movies that I seemed to recall seeing years ago in my youth, but nowhere

in the forty-six movies (“ranked as the greatest by the community”) listed on Google under Best Movies About Hitler could I find what I was looking for, which was a snappy, deep, at times bloody (of course) recounting of events and subevents presented within a frame of meaning—but I must have been much younger when I saw the Hitler movie that I seemed to remember and therefore more susceptible to mistaking general spectacle for significance. I ran bits of the forty-six Hitler movies (well, bits of some of the forty-six) on my second monitor and let them run on ambiently so to speak with the sound very low, as I “worked” at other projects. From time to time I looked up at the sound of explosions, assassinations, loud voices, etc., but nothing reminded me of the Ur-Hitler movie that I seemed to recall. In the end I had nothing to report, no insights to offer, no one-liners with which to liven up the Endnote that I had planned to toss off in idle moments between scenes of mob violence, terror, etc., and all that was unspeakable, to be expected.

—*Stephen Osborne, Vancouver*

## ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE

**David Blackwood’s** etchings and paintings can be found in nearly every major public gallery and corporate art collection in Canada, as well as in major private and public collections around the world, including the collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He lives in Port Hope, ON.

**Amélie Jodoin** is a collage artist, painter and graduate of the Université du Québec à Montréal. Her work was selected twice for annual student showcases and she received an award at the *Passage à découvert* students’ exhibition. She lives in Montreal.

**Rob Kovitz** is the founder of Treyf Books. His previous works include *Dead and Cold, According to Plan* and *The Sweets of Home*. He lives in Winnipeg.

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# GEIST

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# Question Period

ROB KOVITZ

“Look at that face!” he said. “Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?!”

*Tu Thanb Ha, In His Words: A Look at Some of Trump's Most Incendiary Comments (The Globe and Mail)*

“How stupid are the people of Iowa?”

*Rafi Schwartz and Andrew Joyce, The Collected Donald Trump: 107 of His Worst, Weirdest and Most Outrageous Quotes (Fusion.net)*

“The record shows that I’m right. When I did an interview with Howard Stern, very lightly, first time anyone’s asked me that, I said, very lightly, I don’t know, maybe, who knows? Essentially.”

*Michiko Kakutani, Donald Trump's Chilling Language, and the Fearsome Power of Words (Vanity Fair)*

“You always have to say something, even if you say the opposite the next day. On Twitter, who cares?”

*James Naughtie, The Donald Trump Tweets That Say So Much and Reveal So Little (BBC)*

“As far as the cyber, I agree to parts of what Secretary Clinton said. We should be better than anybody else, and perhaps we’re not. I don’t think anybody knows that it was Russia that broke into the DNC. She’s saying Russia, Russia, Russia—I don’t, maybe it was. I mean, it could be Russia, but it could also be China. It could also be lots of other people. It also could be somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds, okay?”

*Adrienne LaFrance, Trump's Incoherent Ideas About 'The Cyber' (The Atlantic)*

“Well, someone’s doing the raping, Don! I mean, somebody’s doing it. Who’s doing the raping? Who’s doing the raping?”

*Rafi Schwartz and Andrew Joyce, The Collected Donald Trump: 107 of His Worst, Weirdest and Most Outrageous Quotes (Fusion.net)*

“The other candidates—they went in, they didn’t know the air conditioning didn’t work. They sweated like dogs ... How are they gonna beat ISIS?”

*Yes, the President of the United States Really Has Said This (Marie Claire)*

“You know what it’s called? Management ... I’m a great manager. I know how to manage things. I hire unbelievable people. What we’re doing here will work great,” Mr. Trump replied.

*Tu Thanb Ha, In His Words: A Look at Some of Trump's Most Incendiary Comments (The Globe and Mail)*

The newly inaugurated President Trump, and many of his Cabinet picks, have repeatedly cast doubt upon the reality of human-made climate change, questioned the repeatedly proven safety of vaccines. Since the inauguration, the administration has already frozen grants and contracts by the Environmental Protection Agency and gagged researchers at the US Department of Agriculture. Many scientists are asking themselves: What can I do?

*Ed Yong, Professor Smith Goes to Washington (The Atlantic)*

It’s precisely because of his apparent inarticulateness that I give him the benefit in the incident from last week, when he said after the Fox News Channel debate that Megyn Kelly had “blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever” as she pummeled him with questions on stage. He maintains that “wherever” was a placeholder for “nose,” which his tongue failed to locate. Trump is capable of invoking a woman’s menses in a put-down, but I would wager he lacks the felicity to do it in real time.

*Jack Shafer, Donald Trump Talks Like a Third-Grader (Politico)*

Global warming will certainly affect the future of B.C. agriculture. So why not prepare for the new crops by turning B.C. into a political banana republic?

*Steve Burgess, Please Advise! Does It Take the New York Times to Spook a Premier? (The Tyee)*

Was this article helpful?

*Dara Lind and Dylan Matthews, The Trump Era Has Begun (Vox)*

## Six String Nation

Robbie Robertson's new book, *Testimony: A Memoir* (2016), is not only a great account of Robertson's life and musical career, but also a down-to-earth, straight-ahead read. I can't help comparing it with Bruce Springsteen's memoir, *Born to Run*, published around the same time. It's a much more detached, philosophical account, and his over-analysis of unfolding events takes away from his story.

Jaime Royal "Robbie" Robertson spent summers with his mother's family on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, and learned to play the guitar there. He was a brave kid who left home at age sixteen to play music, and before long he was invited to join Ronnie Hawkins' backup band. The experience sharpened his guitar playing and put him in touch with those who later became his bandmates in the famous group, the Band. He also met Bob Dylan, and performed with him in the 1965–66 World Tour. They played two sets, one acoustic with Dylan, the other plugged in with both musicians, and at every show they were booed by fans who could not accept Dylan going electric.

Robertson was playing with the Hawks (which later became the Band) when Bob Dylan lived in Woodstock, New York. There they worked together to record the "Basement Tapes," and wrote much of the highly acclaimed album *Music From Big Pink* (1968). This launched the Band's career into many more years of influential albums, and playing with Carly Simon, Emmylou Harris, Ringo Starr, Neil Diamond, Joni Mitchell and many more of the best rock and blues musicians in the business. Robertson's guitar playing continues today to influence guitarists around the world. Eric Clapton, George Harrison and other celebrated musicians have noted his

influence on their guitar playing. Next year marks the 40th anniversary of the release of the Band's movie, *The Last Waltz*. Robertson's excellent account about the making of the film is another good reason to read *Testimony*.

Jesse Ed Davis was another great Aboriginal guitarist, a full-blooded Kiowa/Comanche who played with Taj Mahal, three of the Beatles, Leonard Cohen, Ry Cooder and other giants of blues and folk, and even some obscure musicians. One of his last gigs was with John Trudel, famous for his radical involvement with the American Indian Movement.

Duane Allman credits Davis for influencing the sound of the Allman Brothers Band. Many guitarists give him credit for teaching them rock, country and blues techniques. Davis played lead guitar and piano on Taj Mahal's *Giant Step/De Old Folks at Home* and John Lennon's *Rock 'n' Roll*. I have gone through several copies of each of these records on vinyl, and they continue to be in my top ten albums of all time.

Like Robbie Robertson, Jesse Ed Davis never learned how to read music. He claimed he played guitar notes that sounded good to him, and he played piano by ear.

Another influential Aboriginal musician was Candido "Lolly" Vegas, guitarist for Redbone, a band that came together in 1969. Lolly and his brother, Pat, bassist for Redbone, got their start in Hollywood after Pat won the first ever Coca-Cola singing contest. They played a lot on the Las Vegas strip through the 1960s, and worked with Tina Turner, James Brown and Elvis, among many others. I believe that's where Lolly refined his guitar technique. You can hear the jazz influence in the variety of genres they recorded.

The name Redbone is a Cajun term for "mixed race." Lolly and Pat were Yaqui/Shoshone/Mexican. They incorporated many Cajun terms into their lyrics, and they were the first Native American rock/Cajun group to have a No. 1 single in the United States and internationally. Jimi Hendrix claimed Lolly was his favourite guitarist and Pat his favourite bassist. Like Robertson and Davis, the Vegas brothers played with, recorded with and influenced many other musicians. I have found it impossible to find a decent copy of Redbone's double vinyl album set, *Redbone*. The ones I have purchased from used record shops always have "popcorn"—the popping sounds caused by small scratches on vinyl. I like to think the popcorn indicates heavy use of those records.

The late Johnny Paull, of Squamish Nation, also crossed paths with many famous musicians, especially bluesmen. He once turned down an offer to tour with Albert Collins so he could stay home with his wife and children. Johnny was part of the well-known Whyte Feather Band in BC, who never recorded an album because they played covers. When Johnny first started performing in a band he was so shy that he played guitar with his back to the audience. But as with other accomplished musicians, his style was natural. Johnny died in 2013, but he continues to influence up-and-coming Aboriginal guitarists in the Lower Mainland of BC, and beyond.

Rock, blues, jazz and other genres of popular music are richer for the contributions of these and other influential Aboriginal guitarists. Rock on, brothers!

---

*Randy Fred is a Nuu-Chab-Nulth Elder. He is the founder of Theytus Books, the first Aboriginal-owned and operated book publishing house in Canada. He has worked in publishing and communications for forty years. He has won gold at the Canadian National Blind Lawn Bowling Championships five times. He lives in Nanaimo.*

# Dear Geist...

**GEIST**  
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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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*"Lunchtime" by Amélie Jodoin (ameliejodoin.com). Paper collage, 2017.*

---

## Corpse Reviver

MICHAŁ KOZŁOWSKI

*Who are these "persons with relevant knowledge"?*

Last summer in Vancouver I went out for dinner with a couple of friends in Chinatown.

The restaurant had white concrete walls and chrome lights dangling from the

ceiling that gave the place an operating theatre vibe. The waitress wore a plain white T-shirt and round glasses with gold frames.

We ordered pizza with organic sausage and locally foraged mushrooms.

A few seats away a man said, taste is the phenomenon associated with the tongue, whereas flavour involves the whole impression, the way it tastes and feels, its aroma.

The speaker was a pale-skinned, blond man in a white shirt. He was speaking to a brown-skinned, black-haired man in a black shirt. Each had his hair parted at the side, cropped close at the neck and ears.

The black-haired man leaned in. The blond man swirled his glass around and let the wine rise up and then he watched the wine run down the insides of the glass.

Flavour perception has a huge role to play in aesthetics, the blond man continued, much bigger than is often talked about. It's a whole new exciting field and Vancouver is the place for it.

At home that night, I looked into the idea of flavour and aesthetic in the works of Hannah Arendt, who makes a distinction between the "common" senses of sight, sound and touch and the "private" senses of taste and smell. Taste and smell, according to Arendt, cannot be shared or recollected, because we experience those senses subjectively, inside our bodies.

For example, the blond man went on, there are many more flavours than there are movies. I can tell you my favourite movie, but I would be hard pressed to pin down my favourite flavour. You see, with flavour perception, you get far more fine-grained than with the other senses.

The waitress came by and collected our plates. How are we feeling about dessert? she asked.

The black-haired man said, by the way, what do you think of the wine?

Not my first choice, the blond man said, but it's okay.

After dinner we went for a stroll up Main Street. The sun had set and I suggested that we go to a bar by the train station that I knew would be quiet. We entered through a green door and climbed the flight of stairs.

The ceiling was low, made of dark wood, and the walls were painted a dark green; a dark wood bar occupied a corner of the room. The bartender wore suspenders and his moustache was turned up at the ends.

The room had the vibe of a New York speakeasy, or at least the New York speakeasies I'd seen in movies.

Groups of bearded men and tattooed women sat around a dozen tables.

We ordered three Corpse Revivers No. 2.

The bartender rattled the martini shaker high over his shoulder, a serious look held his face, eyebrows furrowed, his eyes fixed on the middle distance in front of him.

Is this a hipster place? asked my friend, who was in his sixties.

Of course, I said, this is the nighttime hipster joint, the place we were before is the daytime hipster joint.

My friend said that he had been reading about hipsters in a book by Mark Grief. The essence of the hipster, my friend said, is the quest for superior knowledge. In North America the process often takes the form of disenfranchised people from the dominant culture, historically it's been white men, rejecting the dominant culture and turning to non-dominant cultures for knowledge. They then transform that knowledge into art or literature or music, or even restaurants and bars, and then release it back into the dominant culture, which in turn gives them legitimacy as agents of the avant-garde. In a way, my friend said, the process of hipsterism resembles the process of colonialism.

Three Corpse Revivers No. 2, said the bartender.

Then a woman behind me said, I heard there is a woman who is designated as the alien ambassador for Canada. So if the aliens came she would be the one to make first contact. Every country in the world has one.

At home later that evening, following up on these comments, I found no references to a Canadian ambassador to extraterrestrials, but I did stumble on the website of the International Academy of Astronautics, a (UN-recognized) group of hundreds of scientists from around the world who have drafted the "Declaration of Principles Concerning Sending Communications with Extraterrestrial Intelligence," which says that in

case of contact with extraterrestrial life forms "States participating in this Declaration and United Nations bodies should draw on the expertise of scientists, scholars, and other persons with relevant knowledge." The declaration says nothing about who constitutes a person with relevant knowledge.

The woman continued, the reason that all these alien stories are coming out about Area 51 is that all the guys who worked there are now retired and old so they can confess what they saw. Like, they don't have to worry about getting fired anymore; they can just say what they know.

We ordered three more Corpse Revivers No. 2.

The bartender shook the martini shaker and poured the drinks. Three Corpse Revivers No. 2, he announced.

We fell into an argument about whether the proper expression should be corpse reviver number twos or corpse revivers number two.

And what of the other several dozen Corpse Revivers, 1 or 3 or 27? Why did we stick with 2? I recalled then a story my grandmother had told me about the time that she and my grandfather travelled from Krakow to Dubrovnik in the 1950s on their honeymoon. The sights of Dubrovnik were enchanting, she said, but the practicalities of everyday life were challenging. We could not read the language, and so, in restaurants, we ordered the only dish that we recognized on the menus, namely, wieners. We ate wieners for lunch and for dinner, for two whole weeks. After that, your grandfather refused to eat wieners again, she said.

The woman behind me said, in an exhausted tone now, if god put us here, why didn't god put people on all of the other planets? Why just here?

---

*Michał Kozłowski is the publisher and editor-in-chief of Geist. Read more of his work at [geist.com](http://geist.com).*

# Stumped

BARBARA ZATYKO

*Despite attempts to reattach my pinkie, I woke up with nine fingers*

About three years ago I adopted two rescue dogs, a sister and brother Akita-German shepherd mix that I named Bonnie and Clyde. They're big, they're loud, they're beautiful. And mine was their first home after five years of starvation, confinement and abuse at the hands of a hoarder.

One evening, about a year after I adopted them, I was feeding Bonnie and my friend's dog, Brody, dehydrated chicken fillets outside on the second-floor deck while Clyde finished his dinner inside. At one point, Brody stole Bonnie's portion, which led to a bloodcurdling fight. Bonnie was under Brody and I grabbed her harness to pull her out. I don't remember the bite. I don't remember screaming. I do remember straightening up from my crouch with a sick feeling and thinking, what have I done now? I didn't look directly at my hand for fear that I would faint, but I could tell from the angle that a piece of my little finger was missing. Later on I learned that Bonnie had crushed the second knuckle and my instinctive recoil had essentially pulled off my finger, which dangled by a tendon.

My neighbour's daughter was staring up at me from her driveway and I told her to call 911 and get her father. My tenant came running and I told her to get a bowl of ice and help me down the stairs. I slipped my feet into my shoes, grabbed my purse and got ready to go downstairs so I wouldn't have to be carried if I passed out. On the deck, the dogs happily lapped up my blood.

My neighbour Scott was at the foot of the stairs in his bathrobe when I got there, pulled out of the shower by his daughter. I asked him to tie up my shoes. When the ambulance arrived the paramedic said it was the calmest

accident scene he'd ever been to. My blood pressure was 120/80, lower than it had been the week before when I'd visited my doctor. In the ambulance, lights and sirens blaring, the paramedic told me that his colleague and he take turns driving and ministering aid; if a call didn't require medical attention, it didn't count as a rotation so the driver still had to drive on the next call. I rated my pain as 3 out of 10, earning praise for a high pain threshold. We discussed my Hungarian last name and his visit to Budapest.

At Emergency in Toronto General Hospital I called Brody's owner, Belinda, who was already distraught, having heard the news from my neighbour, and on her way to the hospital. I told her to turn back and take care of Bonnie and Clyde instead. I called my boss and told him I might be late for work tomorrow. I called my brother and said, Guess what I've done now?

I was eventually examined, x-rayed, interviewed by the police, given morphine, consulted by a plastic surgery intern (My name is Dr. Hansen. Dr. Handsome? Dr. Hansen.), interviewed by Animal Services, examined again and then consulted by another plastic surgeon, who told me there was a less-than-twenty-percent chance of saving the finger and would I like them to try to save it or would I prefer to get it amputated in the ER?

Outside the operating room, the orderly, an excited woman in her forties, kept badgering me to take off my earrings and rings, which I wasn't able to do. She kept bleating, No family! No family! to the operating room staff, to explain that the reason I was still wearing my jewellery was because I had no family present to remove it. The kindly anesthesiologist took my jewellery off and deposited the pieces

in a specimen jar, which one of the nurses promised to look after.

Several hours later I woke up with nine fingers, despite attempts to reattach my pinkie by the world-class surgical team, who a few months later performed the first successful hand transplant in Canada.

A week after the amputation I went to the hand clinic for a post-op exam. The surgical fellow introduced himself and sat across from me and my friend Johanne and asked: how was I feeling, what was the level of pain, any fever, and so on. When he removed the bandage I saw my stump for the first time. It was bigger than I'd anticipated and the swollen red flesh was criss-crossed with menacing black stitches.

He pointed at my hand and asked, Where's your finger? Johanne and I looked at each other. I asked him if this was some kind of psych evaluation to determine if I'd accepted my new reality as an amputee. No, he said, I'm just wondering where the finger is. I explained that it was wherever digits are sent after unsuccessful attempts at reattachment in the operating room.

When physiotherapy started I was a model patient, adjusting beautifully and healing quickly. I pooh-poohed warnings about PTSD expressed by concerned friends and medical staff. For a finger? I'd scoffed. Then, over the next few weeks, my ring finger swelled up and my purple palm throbbed with pain if I so much as walked quickly. Follow-up appointments and further examination of the x-rays couldn't explain why I was no longer healing as I should. My puffy dark palm was due to vascular trauma, as the veins in my hand slowly figured out how to rewire themselves.

I took more drugs, slept with my arm propped up and dreamt that Bonnie and Clyde were going to eat me. I was jumpy and impatient, and couldn't stop crying. Friends brought food, shampooed my hair, walked my

dogs, cleaned my house, weeded my garden. Eventually I joined a finger and thumb amputees support group online and found a large community of people missing digits. A few new members joined our group every week. I learned that contrary to popular belief, the pinkie is immensely important in the hierarchy of fingers. The most important are the thumb and index finger on one's dominant hand, but the pinkie is the foil to the thumb; other fingers can be compensated for, but not the pinkie.

Without the pinkie, not only is it hard to open jars, but you can't cup your palm to hold things. Twenty percent of my hand strength was gone. I hit the caps lock button less often than I used to when aiming for the shift key. I started to buy more pre-cut frozen vegetables.

Coming up to the two-year mark, I still have some soft tissue damage and swelling. Friends continue to help me walk the dogs as I can only walk one at a time. Too much pressure on my palm can still send my stump into orbit with pain. But compared to others I've come to know, my recovery was straightforward. I wasn't faced with multiple surgeries, neck trouble, nerve damage, bone infections, job loss, problems with self-image or chronic phantom pain. If I'm in a meeting and somebody is droning on or annoying me, I'll steeple my hands and let the pinkie on my whole hand flap in search of its counterpart. A little discomfiture often gets things moving. A girl's gotta use what she's got.

But mostly, I don't even think about my hand and how it's changed. The only time I'm taken aback is when I'm walking along with the sun at my back and I catch sight of the shadow of my hand on the sidewalk.

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*Barbara Zatyko is Vice President, Operations & Development at Magazines Canada, and Managing Editor Emeritus of Geist. Read more of her work at [geist.com](http://geist.com). Zatyko lives in Toronto.*

## 1827 Sul Ross #1

VANESSA STAUFFER

*Vanessa Stauffer is the author of a chapbook, *Cosmology* (dancing girl press & studio), and a 2016 recipient of a Writers' Works in Progress grant from the Ontario Arts Council.*

Had hardwoods and crown moulding  
I thought I could afford. I signed the lease,  
sick of driving everything I owned  
down every street, a stack of scratched-out Greensheets  
like a ledger of the city's mildewed  
studios & flimsy gates, each backyard  
bungalow adrift in weeds. In one, new glass  
in a window overlooked a sagging fence,  
chain-link wrapped with kudzu from the wooded lot  
behind. The landlord's sheepish grin.

*Last month someone broke in. He took  
a shower, ate some leftovers out of the fridge.  
Good thing she wasn't home. What do you think?*

I told the first lie of my rental history:  
I'd think about it. On Sul Ross, 1827  
sat high above the street, above the flood  
that took out half the block last spring.  
The landlord's wife showed me the ornate scrolls  
that made the windows safe. Deadbolts,  
front & rear. A church across the street.  
*The girls across the hall are sweet. Upstairs  
we have an Oriental but don't worry—  
she stopped having company. I don't know why  
this closet smells like this—I think  
the girl before smoked pot. She was Mexican.  
What will you study at the university?  
English, I said. My mother studied English.  
Did she teach? A laugh. Teach? Honey,  
she married money. Her husband owned  
this place. At least this block's still safe.*

The price that one must pay. I moved right in.  
By winter, they'd turned off the heat.  
I could barely pay the rent. Mrs. Pimlott changed  
the locks. I moved in with a friend.  
When I walked by in spring the guy next door  
wondered where I'd been & had I heard  
about the tenant after me?  
She'd been raped & beaten in her bed.  
Such mercy in regret: that I lived  
to tell you my mistakes.

# 'Til the End of Time

JEFF SHUCARD

*My father's talking watches kept him tethered to this world*

**O**n the top shelf of the fridge in our house in Nanaimo, behind the jars of capers and anchovies, sit two atomic-powered talking men's wristwatches. If the fridge door is open on the quarter hour, you will hear the watches announce in stereo the time and date, in deep, penetrating digital male voices: "The time is now 10:45 p.m., Thursday, February 16th, 2017." "The time is now 11 o'clock p.m., Thursday, February 16th, 2017."

The watches belonged to my father, Manny, who passed away several weeks ago at the age of ninety-four. In his later years, he succumbed to dementia-fuelled shopping sprees in the mail-order catalogues of what I called "elder gizmos"—those unique products designed to attract housebound

geriatrics who are susceptible to the allure of illuminated toilet seats and headbands that dissolve brain tumours. My father purchased many such items from these catalogues, but they all paled beside his talking watches. He truly loved them and was wearing one when he died. If he had not left instructions to be cremated, I would have buried it with him in his coffin.

My father didn't have many belongings when he passed away: everything worth keeping fit in just one large suitcase. Besides the talking watches, there were only some photo albums, classic car trophies and his Congressional Medal of Honor. In his nursing home room in New Jersey, he spent his days in pull-ups, sweatpants and sweaters—easy on-and-off clothing

for a guy who could not dress himself. He no longer read, took things apart, went to garage sales, or met his friends at the Goffle Grill because they had all passed away by then. His only excursions into the greater world were to the hospital emergency ward as he began to suffer through repeated falls and increasing health troubles. The talking watches, I imagine, kept him tethered to this world, regular reminders of a life he was drifting further and further away from.

Toward the end, as he lost interest in conversation, visits with my father became visits with his constant companion, the digital time-keeping voice. "The time is, the time is, the time is" was beginning to drive my wife and me nuts. But during meals in the dining room of the nursing home, the other geriatric residents would marvel at the thing. "Where can I get that?" they'd ask. My father was only too happy to share his elder gizmo catalogues with everyone.

I didn't know what to do with my father's suitcase that first evening I brought it home. It seemed so sad that his possessions had been reduced to such a pitiful end. For sixty years he and my mother, children of the Great Depression, had shared a large three-storey house they stuffed to the rafters with a vast, eclectic accumulation of antiques, junk, Jaguar car parts, cameras, radios, books, clothing, kitchen gadgets and more. My mother had saved every handbag and pair of shoes she had ever bought. She had kept every bill, every paycheque stub, every receipt, every Christmas and birthday card. Boxes and boxes of them. My father refused to throw out even old balls of string, used nails, wire, screws, nuts and bolts, hinges, doorknobs, decades-old phone books. It took me a solid month, working day and night, to empty their house for sale.

Now I stared at my father's forlorn suitcase. I finally put it away in the hall closet.

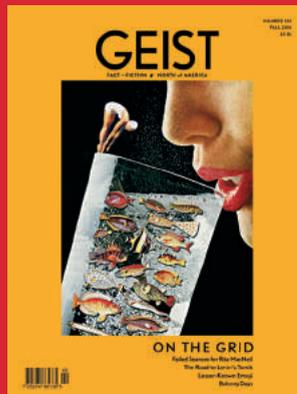
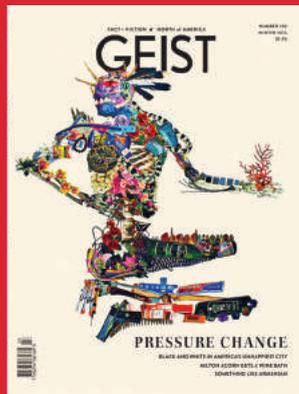
Later that night in bed, my wife nudged me awake.

## PLAID JACKET

*Veronica Gaylie is a writer and professor. Her work has been published in many periodicals, including Grain, Ditch, Room, Lake, Carte Blanche, theyee.ca and Geist. She lives in Vancouver. Read more of her work at [geist.com](http://geist.com).*

All the kids in the smoke pit wore one. I never saw a new one. They had to be old, musty and fit badly. Long arms. Too tight. Never clean. Soaked in the smell of perfume and poutine. They'd been in the water. They'd washed up on the sand. They'd been drenched in beer. Used as a rag. Red or green and black. Sometimes yellow. They stood at bus stops after the buses stopped running. Never on time. On the Greyhound. They walked through turnstiles at Canucks games at the Pacific Coliseum. At the Agrodome they reached out to Stiff Little Fingers. The Clash. DOA. Worn by cousins from Medicine Hat, Moose Jaw, Carrot Creek. They got you in trouble. Asked if you wanted to skip class and visit the CN tracks. Singed on the sleeves. Too close to BIC lighters. Sat around campfires. Put out the flames. Landed on sidewalks. Smelled of gasoline. Lost in potholes. Found in alleys. Covered in fir needles. Stepped on. Rained on. Twisted in trees.

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"I hear it," she said.

"Hear what?" I asked.

"Manny's watch. Where is it?"

"In the hall closet, buried deep in the suitcase," I told her.

We both started laughing.

"There are two of them," I said.

"Two? No wonder it's so loud. Why did he have two of them?"

"Why did a man who rarely sets foot outside buy six pairs of black plastic shoes?" I said.

I got out of bed and carried the suitcase to my office at the other end of the

apartment. Thirteen or so minutes later we could still hear the watches. "What are we going to do?" my wife asked. "It's like a horror movie!" She laughed again. "Put your earplugs in," I said. "I'll figure something out tomorrow."

---

*Jeff Shucard was born in Paterson, New Jersey. He attended the Minneapolis School of Art (now MCAD) and Franconia College. Since then he has worked as a teacher and musician. He lives in Nanaimo. Read more of his work at [geist.com](http://geist.com).*

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## Hand Grenade

EVEL ECONOMAKIS

*Bones, teeth and hair gel—the life of a materiel marauder in Russia*

My nerves were frayed and I needed a change of scenery. Walking my dog on St. Petersburg's Nevsky Prospect in the summer of 1997, during Russia's violent, helter-skelter transition to the free market, I'd witnessed the assassination of the city's deputy mayor by a hit man firing a German-made Blaser R93 tactical sniper's rifle from an abandoned loft. So when my friend Anton, a junior editor at *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, invited me to join him and some friends for a weekend in the woods, I agreed.

I went to Anton's flat, where he treated me to a breakfast of fried eggs and pork fat before we pulled down a tent, two sleeping bags, a khaki backpack from the top of a chest of drawers and a spare *fufaika*, a thick cotton-filled jersey worn by workers in Soviet times, which he had me wear instead of my Canada Goose jacket. We loaded the gear into the sidecar of his heavy Dnepr-650 motorcycle, and rode to the city outskirts, where we stopped at a gas station and filled the tank with 76-octane fuel. Soon a green Lada pulled up and four guys piled out. I shook hands with Igor, the

long-haired driver, who looked a little less hungover than the rest, a wild-eyed, porcupine-haired guy named Oleg, another Oleg—this one clean-cut, and a Kostya.

We headed out of town and joined the Murmansk highway, one of the longest, straightest roads in the world, which pointed northeast. It was cold with the wind-chill, but bearable in our *fufaiki*. I was glad I wasn't in the cramped car that followed behind. The ride was smooth and Anton's boxer twin hummed contentedly. The landscape was pleasant to look at: forest interspersed with patches of meadow, and clusters of quaint farm buildings.

When we reached Lake Ladoga, we turned into a rutted, rock-solid dirt road that led into the forest. Black-and-grey crows circled their nests in the trees. The woods went from mostly fir and birch to a sparser pine. Before us, a snow-covered dell opened up; a frozen stream meandered through it like a white snake. Anton downshifted to first gear and stopped at the far side of the meadow. "We're here," he said.

The car parked behind us and the guys spilled out. High in the pines, a

maggie shrieked. After we smoked, we tossed the butts into the snow and stomped on them. Then we got the gear from the sidecar, and two Soviet army metal detectors, three shovels and two axes from the Lada's trunk.

Soon we approached what looked like a dilapidated hunter's lodge. But it wasn't what I thought. This was an underground dwelling built at the centre of a Z-shaped ditch. The dug-out was a little bigger than two phone booths, but not that much more to shout about. Its floor and walls were made of soft, rotted birch.

We started out in two teams. Antsy Oleg and I followed Anton. The others followed Igor. Zigzagging back and forth, we covered terrain about forty metres wide. The Red Army had fought horrific battles in these woods against the Wehrmacht and its allies between 1941 and 1943.

Half an hour later, Anton broke step. "I've got metal," he smiled over his shoulder, and called the others over.

Three of us began digging. The earth was soft beneath the frozen topsoil. My shovel slid into it like caramel. Then, with a ping, it struck something.

"Yes!" exclaimed Oleg, and he got down on his knees, blinking excitedly. He dug with his bare hands until he pulled out a German helmet with a bullet hole in it, discarded cartridge belts, pots, a gas mask and an empty blue-and-white tube of toothpaste that said *Dr. Hittel's Blendax Zahnpasta* on it. Something strange, too: hair gel.

"The Germans needed hair gel in these godforsaken woods?" asked straight-laced Oleg.

"Yes," nodded Anton. "It made them feel human. It wasn't just louse powder the Nazis kept. And they drank dark beer and coffee, and smoked pipes instead of cigarettes."

"Why pipes?"

"Kept their hands warm," he explained. "But toward the end, they used dried cabbage leaves laced with nicotine extract."

“Let’s move on,” Igor said with a frown. “This is a garbage heap.”

About an hour later, the other team signalled us over. Kostya had unearthed an unexploded Soviet F1 hand grenade.

“Wow!” leered mad-hatter Oleg.

“Careful with that thing,” said Anton. He took it from Kostya, wiped it carefully with a cloth and put it in his rucksack, cleverly placing it inside the helmet. If the grenade went off, it might not kill anyone.

“I’m starving,” said Igor.

“Okay,” said Anton. “Let’s bivouac for lunch.”

Using an axe on dead branches, I helped gather firewood. When we had the fire going, we sat around it on fallen logs. Igor put sausages on a grill and Oleg cracked open a bottle of *Moskovskaya*. I thought he looked like a character out of a comic book. Hair cut unevenly, with an expression of permanent surprise.

We passed the bottle around until it was empty. When the sausages split on the grill, Anton handed them to us.

Oleg produced a second bottle. Our stomachs filled with meat and drink.

Our *kommandir*, as the others called Anton because he’d been a materiel marauder the longest, told us that every day in 1942 thousands of soldiers had died in these woods. He said the bodies were stacked high on the platform at Mga Station a few kilometres away. He told us he’d once dug up a young German lieutenant who looked like he’d just died or fallen asleep, he was so well preserved after all those years in the mud. Then, when his body made contact with oxygen, it began to stink like a corpse. Two hours later, he said, only the lieutenant’s bones, teeth and fingernails remained inside his uniform.

Anton then told us about a trench he’d once found with five dead Italian soldiers in it. He said it was queer because there was no jewellery on any of them, not even watches. Walking away, his metal detector went wild. He dug down and solved the mystery. It was another dead Italian with all his

dead comrades’ valuables in his pockets.

Oleg went off to relieve himself. The wind had picked up, and the leaves rustled. The trees were whispering tales of gore, I fancied darkly.

Now Anton recounted the most gruesome of his finds: a group of eight Red Army corpses scattered not in a trench but in a small open field with a large hole in its centre. None of the bodies had any legs. His guess was that the men had been sitting around a campfire, resting and warming themselves, when German artillery scouts spotted them and radioed their coordinates to a battery. The shell must have sliced into the soft clay and exploded directly under them, blowing their legs off.

“They died a hellish death, bleeding, crawling about and screaming,” Anton said. “We found all of them with their mouths wide open.”

Oleg returned. Instead of sitting back down at the fire, he went over to one of the bags—Anton’s—and pulled the hand grenade out of its nest in the helmet. That made me nervous, especially when he began to pick at the clay that was caked on it.

I wasn’t the only one. “Hey, genius!” Kostya snarled at him. “Go farther away if you’re going to mess with that thing.”

“Relax, I just want to take a look,” he grunted.

“Put it back into the fucking bag!” Igor shouted, tracking him with angry eyes.

Seconds later, a dull thump filled the air, followed instantly by Oleg’s piercing yells as he jumped up and down like a jackrabbit, cursing fluently and clutching his right hand, blood spouting forward like water from a garden hose.

“Shit!” yelled Igor, who was the first to reach him. “His hand’s gone! The idiot unscrewed the grenade and the primer blew his fucking hand off!”

I didn’t care to see what the grenade had done to him, but I removed my belt, grabbed a piece of wood, and

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gave both to Igor and the others, who applied a tourniquet to Oleg's arm.

The difficult part lay ahead. In agitation the guys debated whether or not to return to the car and drive Oleg out of the forest, which they figured would take us at least an hour. Igor suggested we walk him out. From the occasional sound of vehicles in the distance, we knew there was a paved road about two kilometres away.

Igor's view won out. Now we had to carry Oleg. But he solved that problem himself. Looking like an electrocuted cartoon character, he called us all *gomiki*—homos—and took off in the direction of the road, moving very fast. We jogged after him through the snow-covered thicket for about fifteen minutes before we came to a one-lane asphalt road. There were no vehicles on it, but the sound of a car engine reached our ears.

"Fuck!" said Anton, who spotted it first. "It's the police!"

The UAZ jeep's door was flung open and a *militioner* jumped out before it had come to a full stop. "What the hell are you doing out here?!" he yelled at us, eyes ablaze. "You'd better not be digging!"

"We need to get him to a hospital right away." Anton pointed to Oleg. "He's lost his right hand."

Another cop climbed out of the jeep. "Eh, *partisani!*" His lips didn't exactly form a smile. "The war ended over fifty years ago, haven't you heard?" Then, still shaking his head at us, "We'll take your friend to Mga clinic."

"I'll come too?" This from Anton.

"Get in."

"One second." Anton winked meaningfully at me and gave me the keys to his bike, along with his licence and registration.

We made our way back to the vehicles. The Dnepr wouldn't start. I fidgeted with the fuel petcocks and gave it about fifteen kicks on the starter before it came alive.

A small blue hole had formed in the sky. The clouds would get lighter soon. Highballing down the trail, I held the throttle pinned wide open. Soon a frozen lake opened up before me. In the distance I made out grey patches of asphalt beyond the tree line, and saw cars: Murmansk highway.

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*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 lives in Greece, where he teaches history in high school and works construction.*

whether the story's central conflict was between the young man and his family or the young man and himself. "This may be another story about mental illness," a student remarked.

Five years ago the university where I teach assembled a President's Task Force on Student Mental Health, designed to gather information about the mental health of the campus community and create support services for those in need. Action groups, webinars, focus groups, presentations, community consultations, surveys and training ensued. Peer Health Educators and the Reducing Stigma Action Group held a pajama day campaign ("Reduce your stress—don't get dressed!"), and on National Depression Screening Day the president of the university sat cross-legged on a colourful patterned rug in the main hallway, popping bubble wrap with students to create the sound of a crackling fire. Ever since the Task Force presented its forty-one "Recommendations for Mental Health" to the campus community, the topic has remained highly visible. Bulletin boards once relegated to advertising intramural sports and upcoming campus gigs now remind students how to access *Breathing Room: an online resilience tool*, and feature tips on getting a good night's sleep.

As the workshop went on, our discussion of each story kept returning to the question of conflict. Did the child possess a sixth sense, or was she just seeing things? Did the ninja warrior flee after slaying his master because he feared retribution, or was it guilt that haunted him? Was the man changed by his mother's advice, or did he simply regret the way he spoke to his lover? I listened to my students debate the cause of each character's struggle, and I wondered if the much talked-about subject of mental health on campus had found its way into my fiction workshop—or is the question of where external conflict ends and internal conflict begins a legitimate storytelling conundrum? Perhaps the boundary between our interior and

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## Depression Screening Day

JILL BOETTGER

*Reduce your stress—don't get dressed!*

Early this winter I led a writing workshop where students presented stories meant to demonstrate the narrative building blocks of conflict, crisis and resolution. One story featured a conversation between a young woman and a ghost. The class debated whether the ghost was indeed a supernatural presence, or a manifestation of the

young woman's internal conflict. "Is this story about ghosts," one student asked, "or mental illness?" In another story a young man took a coconut to brunch with his parents, and introduced the coconut as his girlfriend. *You can't have a relationship with a coconut*, his mother said. *Don't be racist*, the young man replied. The class debated

exterior worlds is more permeable than we like to think.

Midwinter in Calgary is a season of extremes. In February, 80 centimetres of snow fell and the temperature dropped to  $-33^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The following week a chinook arrived, and the temperature rose to  $+16^{\circ}\text{C}$ . A current of melted snow streamed down our street, and outside the kids stripped down to T-shirts. The pressure change hurt my head, made it hard to think, while the accumulation of winter had already taken a toll. For months I'd struggled with low energy, and the collective unrest and despair following the American election had got hold of me and hung on into the dark months. By February I was ragged. Sunk.

Having exhausted an extensive list of self-care strategies, I walked the three blocks to Lukes Drug Mart, a prescription for anti-depressants folded in my pocket. The pharmacy was at the back, and on my way through the store I passed a display for

a 10,000 LUX Full Spectrum Light. The pamphlet featured an image of a woman with her eyes closed and her arms outstretched. Her face was serene as she basked in a golden glow. It's an image I'd expect to see in a leaflet for religious salvation, but here I'd found it at Lukes Drug Mart. Reluctant to fill the prescription, I decided to try the light instead.

I took it home, unfastened its jacket of bubble wrap and placed it on my desk. It was the size of a small cereal box. When I plugged it in, there was a brief flicker followed by a brilliant, steady brightness. The rectangle of light looked like a door into a bright new world. I sat at this door for thirty minutes every day, and after a week I felt as though the curtains had been drawn in my brain. I could see again. While I'd been focusing on remedies for my insides—nutrition, exercise, meditation, medication—it was the light outside that restored me.

Back in my fiction workshop the last story we discussed described a tropical

storm—a straightforward example of Person versus Environment. In the story, the air grew thick and humid. The main character nailed plywood against the windows before the wind could throw the patio furniture into the glass. When the storm passed, she emerged from her house to find *everyone assessing their own damage*. Much was said about the story's excellent use of imagery: "I could feel the wind and the chaos," one student said. "I felt like I was in this storm too," another remarked. I turned to the student who wrote the story and asked if she had any questions for us. "Yes," she said. "The storm is a metaphor. How can I make it clear this story is actually about mental illness?" At this point I realized we may not have found our resolution.

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*Jill Boettger writes stories and poems in Calgary, where she lives with her husband and two kids. She teaches writing and literature at Mount Royal University. Read more of her writing at [geist.com](http://geist.com).*



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# FINDINGS

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*From Ritual by Vincenzo Pietropaolo. Published by Black Dog Publishing in 2016. Ritual documents the annual Good Friday procession in Toronto's Italian community between 1969 and 2016. Pietropaolo has published eight books of photography, including Harvest*

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## Go for a Walk

CATHERINE LEROUX

*From The Party Wall translated by Lazer Lederbendler. Published by Biblioasis in 2016. Catherine Leroux is a writer and translator. She lives in Montreal.*

The twisting wind wraps itself around Angie's ankles, a ground-level wave that takes her by surprise. The wind, as a rule, does not linger at people's feet. Except the strong, low wind produced by a passing train. As if to trip you up. She looks down to examine her shins, her knock-knees. The children she knows are simply thin, or else they are chubby, plump, fleshy. Angie is nine years old and as

gnarled as a crone. She resembles the pine trees growing on mountaintops. The shape of her fingers and toes is complicated, and her elbows protrude from the middle of her spindly arms, two black pearls mounted on taut wires. She dreads the day her breasts will appear, convinced as she is that they will emerge, not like the pretty apples flaunted by the girls in junior high, but like two angular bumps,

two angry fists pounding their way through her chest.

Inside, Monette is still negotiating with her sandals. Though perfectly capable of putting them on, she takes an inordinate amount of time to fasten the straps because even the slightest misalignment of the Velcro strips is intolerable to her. She attaches them, detaches them, repositions the hook side over the loop side with the concentration



Pilgrims: Mexican and Caribbean Migrant Farm Workers in Canada, and his work has been exhibited in Canada and abroad. He lives in Toronto.

of a Tibetan monk, inspects her work, finds it wanting, and starts over. Under the silky rays of the sun, Angie does not lose patience. While waiting for her little sister, she contemplates the languid swaying of the willow, their tree, the biggest one on the street.

Mam told them, "It's nice out. Go for a walk!" She will use the time to swab down the house, a house so old and memory-laden that cleaning it is well-nigh impossible. Still, come May, Mam scrubs everything, including the wooden floors made porous by the floodwaters and the windows turned chalky from being permanently fogged-up.

Monette finally comes out into the bright daylight, blinks and wipes a tear

from the corner of her eye. Though dazzled, she manages to find her sister's hand. As usual, she twitches at the touch of the callused palm, which reminds her of the rough side of Velcro, but the next instant her own skin nestles in it as if it were the comforting cloth of an old woollen blanket. Together, they walk down the four cracked concrete steps. The crack in the second-to-last stair looks like a dragon. She avoids treading on it. The pavement leading to the sidewalk is also broken and has weeds sprouting in the gaps. Mam does not pull them out and has taught her daughters to respect these humble shoots. "There's no such thing as weeds. That's just a

name for some flowers thought up by racist gardeners." Monette ruffles their petals with a caress.

As always, the moment they reach the street they instantly leave behind the world of home. Yet no fence separates the front yard from the avenue. There is, however, an invisible barrier that makes it possible to be completely oblivious of what transpires on the other side and that hides the house from strangers, Angie hopes. Two boys go by dribbling a basketball. They wear loose-fitting t-shirts and their skin is coated with a fine mist. Their voices are loud and they spout obscenities. Angie covers her younger sister's ears. Monette has heard far

worse, but Angie believes in the gesture of covering her ears, in the intention behind it. Once they've let the teenagers pass, Angie motions with her chin in the direction they're to walk: south. Before starting out, Monette looks down, examines her sandals, hesitating momentarily. Then she sets off, her pudgy little hand welded to her sister's.

The street is divided in such a lopsided way that it seems about to keel over, like a boat in which the passengers have all gathered on the same side. The houses on the eastern side are narrow and dilapidated, and the paint on most of them is peeling off in delicate white plumes; across the street, they are massive, stately, adorned with a complex arrangement of balconies and bay windows. Mam claims the railroad is the reason the east side of the block

has such modest dwellings. No one well-off wants to move there, right beside the tracks. But surely, Angie says to herself, the residents across the way must also hear the whistle and the inhuman squealing of the train.

As usual, Monette pulls Angie by the hand to cross the road and walk past the luxurious homes, but her sister rarely gives in. The small houses remind Angie of her own; she seems to know them by name, and their windows, though cracked, watch the girls benevolently as they go by. By staying on this side, Angie feels she is restoring balance and keeping the neighbourhood from capsizing.

At the fifth intersection, the row of posh-looking residences tumbles over a wide cross street and gets dispersed in a middle-class district. The area, according to Mam, was developed years ago in the hope of attracting prosperous Black families. Today it's almost deserted. Monette and Angie continue along a sparsely populated stretch of road riddled with vacant lots where the grasses reach dizzying heights and hide the crouching cats and opossums gnawing at their meagre prey.

They walk past a wrecking yard; recognizing the place, Monette starts to hop up and down and sets the heavy braids Angie had plaited that very morning dancing around her head. They come to a shack painted pink that exudes a warm odour of manure. Monette's hand grows damp with excitement; she gives her sister a pleading look that is answered with an approving nod, at which she loosens her grip. Monette dashes ahead.

The enclosure looks empty, and Angie is afraid the child will throw a fit, but for now she shows no signs of discouragement. Monette resolutely tears little fistfuls of grass and dandelions out of the ditch and comes back

to jiggle them between the slats in the fence while emitting sharp, amazingly precise sounds through her clumsy lips. A shape stirs in the shadows, and Angie's heart inconspicuously leaps into her mouth. The swayback pony obediently steps forward. As always, Angie is overcome by a strange sensation at the sight of this horse, perpetually small, yet so old, so weary.

The animal chews tamely on the proffered snack, then Angie lifts up Monette so she can stroke—ever so lightly—its peeled muzzle, its scrawny croup, its ragged coat. From the back of the pink shed, a man wearing a flawless moustache appears and, beaming with pride, greets them. Old Craig is fond of his filly.

"What's the horse's name?"

"She's not a horse, she's a pony. Her name is Belle," Craig replies patiently.

"How old is she?"

"Thirty-nine years old."

Monette solemnly nods her head and stores the information in a place where it can slumber until something can make better sense of it. The old man enters the paddock and, pulling on the halter, leads the animal back toward the shed.

"She has to rest now. She's working this afternoon," Craig says, pointing to the junk wagon that he has been driving through the streets of Savannah for decades.

The little girl reluctantly lets the animal move away and returns to the sidewalk, where she once again takes her older sister's callused hand. Angie and Belle resemble each other, but Monette does not understand why. Overhead, a military jet cuts through the sky and the droning of the cicadas. Having taken off from the nearby base, it streaks toward an unintelligible country where death is not content merely to lurk in the tall grass of vacant lots. 🌱



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# Salaa Hussein

EVAN WEBBER

*From The Coming Envelope, Issue 10. Published by BookThug in 2014.*

*Evan Webber is a writer and artist. He lives in Toronto.*

**M**y father wanted to buy an herbal remedy sold under the trade-name Calm, or Calm-Now, one or the other, so he had gone to the health-food store and he was standing in the aisle with the woman who worked there when he noticed, walking towards him, a man wearing (as he put it) a blue fedora-style hat.

My father said, that's quite a hat you have.

The man stopped and looked at my father steadily. He said, do you always see the hat before you see the man?

Yes, I like hats. It always catches my attention to see a man wearing one.

The man said, and what colour is the hat that I'm wearing?

My father said, it's a blue hat.

And what colour am I? said the man. What colour?

Yes, what colour is my skin.

My father pushed the heavy glasses he wore to account for his macular degeneration higher on his nose. He squinted up at the man in the hat.

The man said, my skin is black.

The woman from the store turned to the rows of pill bottles and began to straighten them into rows. Then my father said, yes, you have black skin. My father is white.

The man in the hat cocked his head and purred. He said, New York City, 1988.

My father looked down the aisle into the grey light coming from the street. New York City didn't ring any bells.

We had a conversation. About poetry.

Through the posture of the woman who worked in the store my father sensed, or thought he could

sense, that the man in the hat was radiating a powerful aura. My father said, would you like to have tea?

The man said, yes, but I have no money.

My father felt the aura flow over and enter him. Inside it, he felt suddenly peaceful and alert. He said, no money is good.

The man said his name was Salaa Hussein and my father said his name, which is David. Then my father asked Salaa his name again and Salaa said it and said the letters that spelled it in English. My father said it aloud—Salaa Hussein—and Salaa said, that's it.

Things followed their own obscure, inner system. At the cafe next to the health food store—a miserable place that I know unfortunately well—my father ordered green tea and Salaa ordered Earl Grey tea with five sugars and cold water. The order confused the cashier or cafe worker and had to be repeated a number of times before Salaa got what he wanted, which was two separate drinks. He drank the water from the plastic cup in a long, ragged series of swallows, which gave occasion for my father to remark that he sometimes struggled to stay hydrated himself, especially considering the morphine that he was taking. To this Salaa replied that one should consider one's body as if it were the planet earth and drink water in proportion to the earth's rivers, lakes and oceans—although, he added, he had been unable to do so the previous night because he'd been in jail, where sufficient water had not

been provided. They talked for a while about jail and about the writing of Nikos Kazantzakis.

For lunch they sat on the patio of an Israeli restaurant. It was a dry, cool, late-summer day, with a high sky full of tiny clouds. People sped by their table, and it seemed to Salaa and my father that mostly these were people who had lost their way in life—both rich and poor—people with pasts but no futures, who hadn't looked up from the sidewalk in years.

My father said, do you like to eat meat?

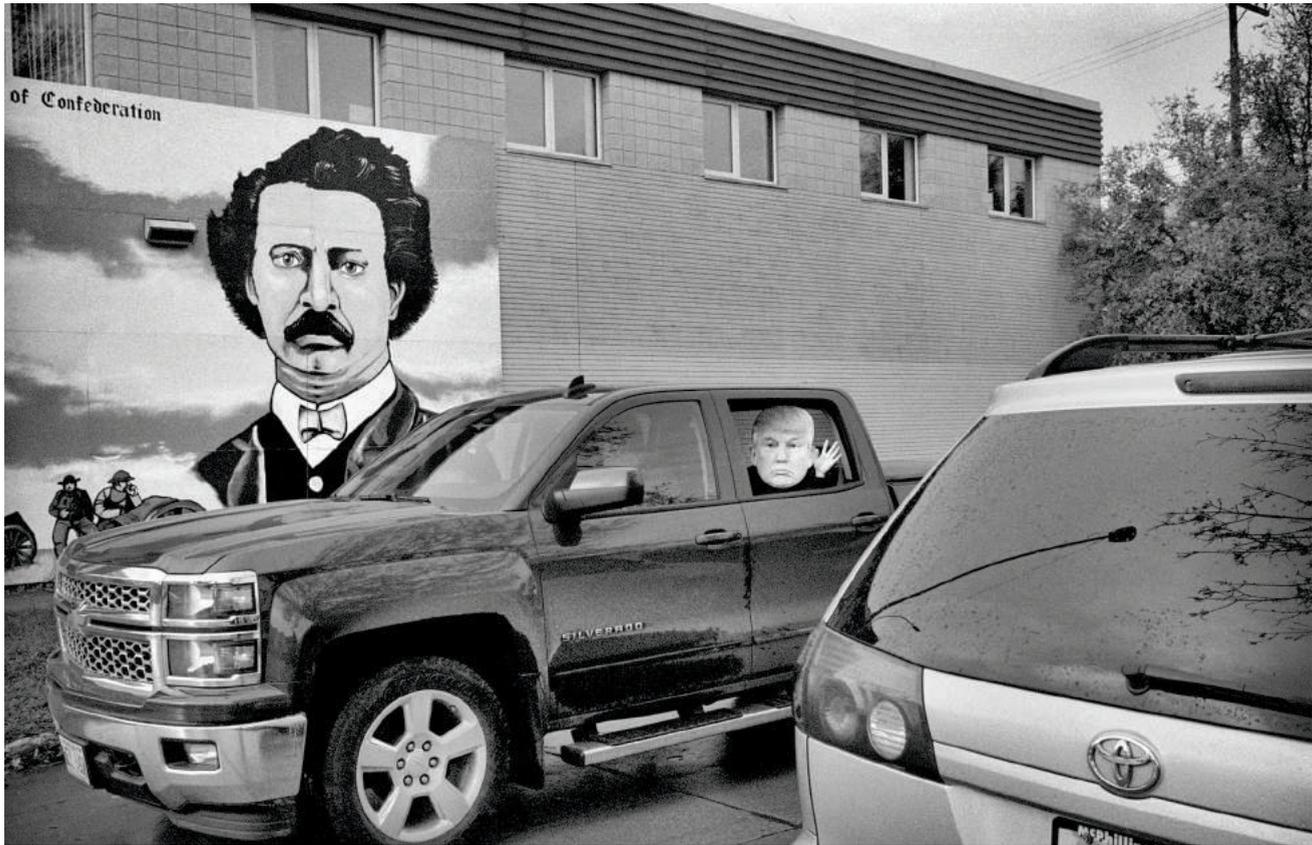
Salaa raised his eyebrows quickly. Yes, he said. And bread. He put his hat on the table beside him. His hair was close-cropped and silvery, the same as my father's. They ordered lots of food, fried eggplants and tabbouleh and grilled lamb and some kind of omelette. Salaa's way of eating was to scoop up food with a piece of bread he held in his right hand and pause to shake his sleeves off over the sidewalk, scattering crumbs and clumps of parsley and tomato. When you're hungry, don't worry about your clothes. Salaa was wearing two different sweaters overtop each other, despite the summer.

My father said, it's so good to eat when you're hungry. Then, looking at Salaa's hands he added, it's such a pleasure to have lunch with a man who knows how to eat. Then he said, it's not good to eat alone, is it?

Salaa said he was from Aden, on the coast of the Red Sea. My father said he knew Aden; he'd stopped there while he was travelling on a Japanese freighter maybe in 1976 or 1978 (though I don't think it was the old city of Aden where he stopped but the British-built coal-port called Little Aden across the bay). In Aden, where they say that the tombs of Cain and Abel lie side by side, Salaa was born

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dog worm trend might actually be doing more harm than good. THE QUANTUM PHYSICS OF DONALD TRUMP: This is a more humane, just, compassionate, holistic, sustainable, regenerative and enlightened world. HOMELESS PARENTS RAN HOLISTIC WEBSITE AS MALNOURISHED KIDS LIVED IN CAR: Barron and Hart reportedly



*From The North End Revisited by John Paskievich, upcoming from University of Manitoba Press. Paskievich is a documentary filmmaker and photographer.*

and went to Jesuit school. He didn't know his parents. My father asked if he had done the exercises, and Salaa said yes, he had, but he didn't like them. When he turned 18 he went to London to study and then to Switzerland. Like nearly everyone in the West, he didn't hear about the confused negotiations that marked the start of the British withdrawal from Aden and the partition of the Gulf territory. By the time he found out, the Marxist-Leninist People's Democratic Republic of (South) Yemen was setting like a cooling silver ingot in the retreat of the Royal Marines. Salaa took his money and left the Jesuit college. He started teaching classes in literature at the University in Aden.

Then he started writing journalism, publishing in a student newspaper under a false name and later writing articles in a state newspaper.

In 1986 Abdul Fattah Ismail, the ousted first president of the PDRY, returned from his exile in Moscow and fighting immediately broke out between his old supporters and the supporters of his more moderate successor in the Supreme Council, Ali Nassir Muhammed. Salaa was arrested. He was tortured for six or eight months in jail. Then one day his cell door opened. His jailer lifted him by his armpits from the floor and put him into the hands of another man who hugged him and dragged him on his heels out of the cell and across the tiles

of the police station and then out into the tea-coloured light of the evening and the cool air. Salaa thought, why will I be shot outside in the street?

Then he felt the man's rosary pressing into his forehead and he knew that he was among the Jesuits again. He was sent to London, and then to New York, by ship. He stayed at a Jesuit-owned boarding house and started going to English literature classes at Columbia. He thought New York was wonderful. He loved the music he got to hear, especially the jazz music, but he couldn't believe how similar everyone at Columbia was. They looked the same, they talked the same, they all expressed the same opinions. He started to

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run a blog website titled "Holistically Beautiful for those interested in a holistic and balanced lifestyle." TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SALMONELLA MANAGEMENT: Have you noticed lower than average daily gain or poor conversion rates in your pigs, but have trouble pinpointing why they aren't gaining weight? COMFORT IS BECOMING

have difficulty telling his fellow students apart—their faces began to melt together. Soon he wasn't able to go to classes anymore. He couldn't sleep and when he did sleep the faces of the people in his dreams were soft as wax, inhuman and indistinguishable, as in his waking life where he couldn't tell people apart—the difference was that in the dreams he was going to be extradited back to Yemen. Some people he knew who played jazz were going to Toronto because they had old draft-dodging friends there, so he went too. He'd been in Toronto ever since. He said, I'll do any work at all now, I don't care. He began to shiver.

My father said, are you cold?

Salaa said, I get cold because my bone marrow died on the floor of the jail in Aden.

My father said he had had a recurring dream in which he was a young woman, and was holding a newborn child that was dead—his child. He held the body in his arms. My father didn't weep in the dream because he was beyond weeping. He only thought, my body is a stone: a stone that holds another stone—my dead child—two stones next to each other. He felt like this knowledge was hanging over him like an axe to split his body in two—and not just his body but the whole earth's body. But gradually, in the dream, he became aware that the rhythm of this thinking was producing a slight but perceptible rocking movement, forward and back, the pelvis turning around the hips. The sensation of this was that in the bones of his pelvis were a liquid. The liquid was his bone marrow. The dream was especially significant, my father said, because of his lymphoma.

Salaa said, anything can come out of the desert: death, storms, flowers, all the religions come out of the desert. He said, do you believe in reincarnation?

I'm not sure, said my father.

You don't think that you're King David? Salaa leaned across the table and looked right into my father's eye.

Maybe I am, said my father. He was starting to get tired. He needed morphine.

Salaa said, you were very sick?

My father said, yes. But I'm trying to get better. Then he said, more

determined: I need to, because I'm going on a trip in a few days.

Salaa said, where are you going?

My father said, actually—I'm going to New York City. He'd completely forgotten.

Salaa said, will you please send me a postcard from New York City?

My father said he would be happy to. Do you have an address?

## THE MORTGAGE BROKER ASKS FOR MY NET INCOME FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR

*From Beautiful Children With Pet Foxes by Jennifer LoveGrove. Published by BookThug in 2017. LoveGrove is the author of four books, including Watch How We Walk, which was longlisted for the 2014 Giller Prize. She lives in Toronto.*

One frantic downpour phone call  
several million drops of rain  
three stricken siblings  
four hours fishtailing  
two different hospitals  
thirty-six stitches  
thirteen staples (for luck!)  
one missing hatchet  
and we three deserters  
dreaming of our own cold bunkers  
deep down under the dirt.

One small-town police station  
glinting quartz-like  
among a thousand marching rows  
of corn, tobacco, canola  
one smirking front desk cop  
two plexiglass eyes flickering  
cold wet gun rot  
my name in his mouth and  
Do you want me to bring her up?

Desperate, I show off  
my two double-jointed thumbs  
then slide six lit torches  
down my throat  
like a citizen, like a taxpayer—  
Is this what you mean  
by resale value?

Two looming leanmeat morning cops  
one hour early as I shower  
off the previous day  
hoping I'll dry into  
someone else, someone kind  
with actual feelings  
maybe a vegetarian  
or a washcloth  
I yell to my brother  
Go get my clothes!

The cops' laughter  
like high school, like six more  
kicks to the gut amid  
fifty feet of yellow tape  
two tall shadows leering close  
and Please, sit down  
No thanks, I say  
I'll stand and I stand  
and stand and stand  
and stand and stand  
and stand and stand  
and I'm still standing. 🍷

Salaa pushed his chair back and got up from the table.

Alone then, my father felt pain pressing outwards coldly from inside him. His mouth was dry. Elsewhere, time had been passing and now it was catching up. He tried to feel if his backpack was still on the ground under his chair, with its shoulder straps looped double around his ankle. It was. He checked his wallet and his phone. Still there. No danger, no unpredictability. The bill was on the table and he paid it, counting the plastic bills out shakily.

After further time, enough time that every shadow had changed its place on the street, my father began to wonder whether Salaa Hussein had been an angel or celestial being who had visited him. He saw the

blue fedora hat, still on the table. He thought, how clever for an angel to leave his hat.

Very cautiously, he reached out and picked it up and put it on his own head. It was too big. He took it off. He really needed the morphine bad now.

Salaa came back and drew his chair and sat. He said, do you read the bible?

Lots of people who know the bible already.

Yes, said Salaa. What's the point of doing what people already do?

My father took out his phone and used Siri and said, Professor Salaa Hussein. Salaa put the address in and then my father closed his eyes and said, I need to go.

Salaa said, I wonder why we're alive?

The fact was that he was just a man. I should have said to my father, when

Salaa came back to the table, what did you feel? Was it relief? Or disappointment? You really thought—this is an angel or celestial being?

And did every religion come out of the desert? Like what about Buddhism? Maybe from a different kind of desert?

What is a desert?

It's so much better to eat with someone else than to eat alone!

David, do you know how they made *Zorba the Greek*? Anthony Quinn the actor was making a movie in Athens and he got very sick. The flesh of his face was peeling off of him. So he went to a pharmacist, he flew down through the winding streets of Athens, away from his hotel, found a tiny room with a woman there behind a wooden counter and pointed to his face and rolled his eyes to demonstrate how he was sick and in pain. The woman looked upon him and left and came back and she was holding a book in her hands. You're not sick she said, you don't have an illness. She gave him the book. It was *Zorba the Greek* by Nikos Kazantzakis, the first English edition, brown paper. Anthony Quinn took the book, staggered back to his hotel in confusion. That night he read the book and the next day he came early to the set where he told the director, we have to stop making this movie we're doing. We're making a different movie now: we're making this! And he held out the book.

My father heard this story. Imagine you were my father and you heard it—how would you have felt? Could your feeling inspire me to forgive you? Could it have softened me? Is that what you were seeking, that softness, when we ate our soup and you told me about your day? 🍷

## SECOND PERSON

*From Leaving Mile End by Jon Paul Fiorentino. Published by Anvil Press in 2017. Fiorentino is the author of ten books, including I'm Not Scared of You or Anything, which was shortlisted for the ReLit Award for Short Fiction and Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction. He lives in Montreal.*

You think you will write in the second person so you open a new file and type hailing the reader and yourself at the same time

You think that the second person will be at once a sublimated first person while allowing you to employ the rhetorical effect of the imperative mood

You think it will give the reader a unique experience to understand motivation and agency interiority and exteriority self and other

You think that the reader by virtue of being addressed will be taken aback and disarmed by the cleverness of this approach

You are wrong 🍷

out of Southern California. OHIO BOUTIQUE TAKES HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WOMEN'S WELL-BEING: Women come to Conversations & Co. for more than the jewelry and handbags; they also come for the empowerment. A HOLISTIC ESTHETICIAN'S GUIDE TO DEWY, RADIANT SKIN: Drink at least half your bodyweight in

# Detention Conventions

LEONARD BILSKI

*From 30 Minutes After Being Busted: Trying to Handle Your Arrest. Published by LifeRich Publishing in 2016. Bilski is an ex-boxer, Wildlife Control Specialist and author of 30 Minutes of Laughter and a Few Minutes of Fear. You can purchase his books at barnesandnoble.com.*

## SHOCK FIRST

At your first time in a cell, you cry, you remember your life. You play over and over in your mind every good part. But your jail time is still there no matter what you do or dream. You can't rush the jail time. It is a nightmare that never ends. The thoughts of what you should have done, how, why, when, but nothing changes. You are in jail. You don't know what to tell your family. Jail is a different world. You have no idea, not from TV or stories. Jail is like a bad video game you can't stop playing or get out of. So go through the motions as best as you can and focus on your release date.

## JAIL JOBS

In prison you get a job. Jobs could be cleaning floors, toilets, the yard, the gym, working in the kitchen giving and cooking food, working in the library. You could be on grounds clean up.

Still remember everyone is watching you, all inmates and officers. It takes five minutes to make a toothbrush into an eight inch spike to put in your heart. In a crowd of inmates no one will know who did it. Be careful. Officers are bad many times. They investigate the fights. Be careful. Trust no one. Take no favors from anyone. Read, work out, stay to yourself.

## PAROLE/PROBATION

When on probation or parole, your PO is just trying to put you back in prison. It is their job. They follow you, drug test you, verbally aggravate you to get you

to snap verbally or go back to drugs or crime, especially when you are doing well. It is a game to them to violate your parole or probation. No one is your friend. But usually your family is. Stay clean. Work. Keep to curfews, no drugs. It is not worth going back to prison. Remember, all jealous people have to do is complain about you and you go back to jail.

## HOW TO THINK STAYING CLEAN AND JAIL FREE

Many many inmates have fool proof ideas. They feel that when they get out of prison they have a plan. They'll also try to convince you about doing the plan with them. They create an illusion that you will be wealthy and you are their partner and their friend. After weeks of this friend illusion, now they ask you to have people send them money and to write to them. Don't fall for the scams. You will be trapped.

Never display your pictures in the open for others to see, as it is perceived as showing off. Jealousy will get you robbed or beat up, set up or even worse. Now if inmates see you get a lot of magazines or mail, when you are done with your books or magazines, pick a big tough person and say, I finished with these, do you want to look at them. This will give you a person that will usually watch your back as he feels your next extra books you will give to him. He will trade for cigarettes or favors. This will help you.

## THINGS NOT TO DO IN PRISON

- Do not hang around the correctional officers. Remember that correctional officers are not your friends.
- Try not to ask favors from inmates. Do not ask for food or clothes.
- Do not show off your sneakers or clothes or anything, possessions you receive.
- Try not to cry or let anyone know your crimes or personal information on your life.
- Do not fight unless you absolutely have to, but don't look easy. Always hit when they don't expect it. You cannot resolve a matter by not addressing it.

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# Writing With Light

WADE DAVIS

*From Wade Davis: Photographs®. Published by Douglas & McIntyre in 2016. Reprinted with the publisher's permission. Davis is the author of twenty books, including Into the Silence and One River, and was Explorer-in-Residence with the National Geographic Society for thirteen years. He divides his time between Washington, DC, Vancouver and the Stikine Valley of northern British Columbia.*

When I was a college senior a brilliant and irreverent photographer, Tod Papageorge, later director of the graduate photography department at Yale for three decades, came to Harvard as a visiting artist to teach an advanced seminar. It was designed only for those few highly accomplished photographers who had majored in visual studies and intended to work as professionals in the field.

In no way did I qualify, but by good fortune several of the young photographers were close friends and

they essentially obliged Papageorge to accept me in the class, if only to provide entertainment value. And that was about all I could come up with for the first weeks of term. But Papageorge was an inspired teacher, in good measure because he had no interest in soliciting student opinion about anything. Each week he projected on the screen the work of the masters and for two hours, without pause, he explained why a photograph was good. He did not tolerate discussion and thus the atmosphere of the

class was mercifully uncluttered by idle opinion. His laser insights went right to the source and like the photographs themselves became indelibly imprinted on the emulsion sheet of one's mind. I can still see Atget's Paris in the morning mist, the raw urban notes of Robert Frank, the timeless landscapes of Ansel Adams that led Henri Cartier-Bresson in frustration to lament during the 1940s that the entire world was falling apart and Ansel was still taking pictures of stones. "You are writing with light," Papageorge would proclaim; "go and find something to say."

After weeks of frustration I went to Virginia over spring break and found, in the shadows of a landscape, something magical and moving. I returned and showed Papageorge my images. Something had happened. Somehow I had got it right. It was not about talent or skill or raw creativity. It was about listening and seeing and paying attention. ●



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based holistic nutritionists say our oil of choice is just as important for wellness as the farmer's market selections that make up the meal. **EAT THE DOUGHNUT:** a holistic guide to New Year's resolutions. **HOW THE PATRIARCHY STOLE FRIDAY THE 13TH FROM WOMEN AND MADE IT EVIL:** Both Friday and the number 13 have been

# Séan-tific Femininity

BETH A. ROBERTSON

*From Science of the Seance: Transnational Networks and Gendered Bodies in the Study of Psychic Phenomena, 1918–40. Published by UBC Press in 2016. Robertson is a historian of gender, science, medicine and technology who teaches in the History Department at Carleton University. She lives in Ottawa.*

Despite enormous gains by feminists in opening up scientific and medical professions to women from the late nineteenth century onward, femininity continued to be associated with intellectual ineptitude. Women, still defined largely by their bodies rather than by their minds, were assumed to be incapable of the rationalism necessary for scientific pursuits.

In attempting to construct and portray psychic investigations as a science, researchers enacted boundary-making practices that fell along gendered lines. The scientific self envisioned as explicitly male became the standard of a credible investigator. Nevertheless, numerous women attempted to conduct psychic investigations in apparent contradiction to the masculine image of the scientific identity. Yet these women did so only within certain bounds and commonly evoked not their own authority to observe and collect reliable data but the expertise of scientific men.

Lillian Hamilton, T. Glen Hamilton's wife, went to great lengths to support her husband's research and became instrumental in compelling him to continue his investigations of the paranormal. It was she who began to hold sittings with the medium Elizabeth Poole—the woman who would act as the main medium for the Winnipeg experiments for several years following. Although T. Glen had begun experiments with

telepathy in 1918, he had decided to give it up, partly due to professional commitments but also for fear that psychic research may be “a dangerous business” that he would be best to avoid. Thus, even when prodded, he resisted dabbling in such practices for a time. Lillian, in contrast, was not to be dissuaded once her interest was “aroused in the possibilities” of such experiments.

Lillian Hamilton continued holding sittings, determined to discover something of value, and in July 1921 her expectations were met. At this time, she observed that when Poole placed her hands on the seance table, it began to tilt on two legs, the other side levitating and offering due resistance against efforts to push it down. “What was holding it in place?” Lillian Hamilton asked rhetorically. “Having recently read Dr. Crawford's account of the telekinetic phenomena which he had obtained with Miss Goligher in Belfast, I jumped to the conclusion that in Elizabeth we had perhaps discovered a medium with potential of the same type.” Lillian Hamilton recorded this significant seance on July 24, 1921, in short staccato phrases reminiscent of a scientific report: “Mrs. Poole and Lillian H. present. They place their hands on the table. In a few moments the ‘power’ is exceedingly strong—the table tilts on two legs ... L.H. tried to depress it back to the floor but found the table seemed to be resting on a sort of ‘air cushion.’”

Despite the promising experiment, Lillian Hamilton met with difficulties when she attempted to pursue and present these psychic experiments to others. Her struggles with being recognized as a scientific experimenter came first of all from her husband. T. Glen Hamilton did not initially believe the account of his wife or the medium. Drawing attention to his wife's body, which he assumed could easily lead her feminine mind astray, he suggested that “probably the ‘force’ was due to unconscious muscular activity.” He remained unconvinced until he experienced first-hand such extraordinary powers. On July 31, 1921, T. Glen relented to Lillian's urgings, and they held a seance in which table tilting again occurred. T. Glen was unable to push the table back down in place due to the incredible force. Perhaps unsurprising, the recorder of the seance, Lillian, reported that she “was very much amused to hear TGH ‘grunting’ ... as he struggled with the table to push it down.”

After this experiment, T. Glen Hamilton finally viewed Poole's mediumistic gifts as potentially valuable. Tellingly, only once he himself had experienced the phenomenon was he “convinced for the first time of the reality of psychic force,” which he thus deemed worthy of his scientific investigation. A drive to “know the facts of psychic manifestation for one's self” undoubtedly reflected the individualist ideals of his interwar context. Yet it also made Lillian Hamilton merely incidental to his own interests in the paranormal.

Feminist thinker and physicist Evelyn Fox Keller identifies a powerful mythology embedded within the modern scientific enterprise that has cast women as “the guarantors and protectors of the personal, the emotional, the particular.”

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twisted to carry negative connotations, according to Gina Spriggs, a North Carolina-based futurist and holistic intuitive; she blames patriarchal religions for this. SEAT BELTS CAN DRASTICALLY REDUCE ROAD FATALITIES: More holistic seat belt laws, time management and better road behaviour could mean safer roads, expert says. FROM



From *Hostage* by Guy Delisle, which chronicles the kidnapping of Doctors Without Borders administrator Christophe André in 1997. Forthcoming from *Drawn & Quarterly* in May 2017. Delisle is the author of several award-winning books, including *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City*, which won the Prize for Best Album at the Angoulême International Comics Festival. He lives in France.

Meanwhile, “science—the province par excellence of the impersonal, the rational and the general—has been the preserve of men.” In the process of adopting a scientific framework through which to investigate the paranormal, psychical researchers espoused a similarly gendered division of knowledge. T. Glen Hamilton did value the work of his wife and other female participants in his psychical experiments and, by all appearances, enjoyed conversing with women and communicating to them the methods of his research and results. Yet despite his favourable opinion of women, he did not align them with critical reasoning and

experimental methods. He insisted, rather, that women’s “psychology is different” from that of men. According to Hamilton, women, unlike men, were innately trusting, emotional, uncritical, and “more disposed to accept with less demand for fundamental detail.”

Women, in some instances, seemed to adopt this characterization. As much as Lillian Hamilton articulated a sincere dedication to the scientific method, she also conveyed a much more subjective side to the investigations than did her husband. Whereas T. Glen Hamilton insisted upon his objectivity and unsentimental approach, Lillian freely admitted that

the psychical investigations of both herself and her husband had led her to the conviction that “the problem was settled: religious faith in survival no longer walked alone.” Expressing her desire for faith alongside her scientific persuasions, she embraced the close links between women and spirituality that several historians have identified. According to Lillian, her spiritual belief “went hand in hand with evidence of a scientific nature.” This revelation comforted Lillian, who immediately viewed it in light of the loss of her young son Arthur only a few years before: “A new world had opened up—a world of belief that helped me part with Arthur without

CELEBRITY ESTHETICIAN AND HOLISTIC SKINCARE EXPERT TAMMY FENDER: It's not just the lotions and potions that help her to perfect the visages of her A-list clientele. MOBILE WELLNESS ON WHEELS: A new business model offers transportable holistic health services to the corporate world of San Diego. RETIREMENT INCOME

tears and with an inner joy that one of my beloved at least was safely over and ready for other-world evolutionary endeavours.” The connection she drew between these investigations and her dead son was far from unfounded, as apparently the ghost of their child made frequent appearances in Poole’s visions, through which she described him “as increasing in age and stature.”

Lillian Hamilton adhered to scientific empiricism much like her husband, but she did not equate her dedication to empiricism with an inability to express grief and hope. T. Glen Hamilton did not admit to such emotion, at least in public, quite possibly out of fear that he would lose legitimacy as an appropriately manly and rational investigator. Seen in this light, the ideal of masculine scientific authority constrained him as well as Lillian. T. Glen may have felt prohibited from communicating his grief over the loss of his son or the hope that his experiments provided. Lillian’s manner of forging her identity and perspective provided a degree of flexibility and dynamism that her husband could not afford. Nevertheless, it also safely placed her within the confines of ideal domesticity,

motherhood, and respectable, middle-class femininity.

Whereas T. Glen Hamilton experienced significant recognition as a scientific investigator, Lillian Hamilton found herself positioned as irrevocably tied to supposed qualities of womanhood, such as impressionability, irrationality, and emotionalism. She consequently remained unable to fully assume the position of a credible investigator in her own right, despite her invaluable service as a researcher, recorder, witness, and experimenter in the Winnipeg seances. Unlike her husband, Lillian remained defined by her “naturally subjective” knowledge and embodiment. Much as feminist theorist Lorraine Code argues, she could therefore never attain the status of “a knower in the fullest sense of the term.”

Lillian continued to experiment for years after the death of her husband. Yet, even when she acted independently, her investigations never received the recognition that his experiments had. Her role, at best, paralleled what Steven Shapin refers to as an “invisible technician”—an essential yet virtually unrecognized agent in the context of the psychical laboratory. 🍀

astronomy, games of chance, and—his greatest invention of all—writing. Thamus, king of the Egyptians, admired all of these gifts except writing, which he refused to teach to his subjects, claiming that “if men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder.”

Socrates tells the story to explain why he refuses to “write” his thoughts “in water” with pen and ink, “sowing words which can neither speak for themselves nor teach the truth adequately to others.”

According to Plato, Socrates called writing “in-human.” In striving to establish outside the mind that which can truly live only inside the mind, writing transforms thought into object, no longer of flesh and blood. Reading, in his view, was just as despicable. Because readers would be able to “receive a quantity of information without proper instruction,” they would “be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant.”

Almost 2,000 years later, the advent of the printed book provoked the same response. The humanist Italian editor Hieronimo Squarciafico was at first enthusiastic about books. But in 1477, less than a decade after Gutenberg died, Squarciafico wrote an imagined discourse between the spirits of great authors passing their time in the Elysian Fields. Some authors lauded the new printing press, but others complained that “printing had fallen into the hands of unlettered men who corrupted almost everything.” Yet even the naysayers felt they had to accept Gutenberg’s invention:

## Implanting Forgetfulness in Our Souls

MERILYN SIMONDS

*From* Gutenberg’s Fingerprint: Paper, Pixels and the Lasting Impression of Books. *Published by ECW Press in 2017. Simonds is the author of sixteen books, including The Holding, a New York Times Book Review Editors’ Choice and The Convict Lover, finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award. She lives in Kingston, ON.*

**E**ach of the paradigm shifts that pushed human communication forward has met with stiff resistance. Even the invention of writing. From the perspective of the twenty-first century, such resistance seems incomprehensible,

almost ridiculous. What kind of knob would say no to the written word?

Socrates, for one. In his dialogue *Phaedrus*, Plato has Socrates tell the story of the ancient Egyptian god Theuth, who invented geometry and

“Their works would perish if they were not printed, since this art compels all writers to give way to it.”

This sounds a lot like what writers today say about digital books, and self-publishing, too. They are the modern incarnations of that Florentine bookseller, Vespasiano da Bisticci, who said that a mechanically printed book should be “ashamed” to be set beside a hand-copied manuscript.

Squarciafico has become famous for his aphorism, “Abundance of books makes men less studious; it destroys memory and enfeebles the mind by relieving it of too much work.” It is well to remember that he wrote this at a time when books were still enormous, chained to lecterns, long before Manutius released them to everyone’s hands with his *para forma*.

The rotting impact of reading on the mind wasn’t the only criticism levelled against books. Inexpensive and easily available, books would devalue the work of scholars and undermine religious authority, spreading sedition and debauchery. And perhaps these critics were right. Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses would not have spread so far and wide without a printing press to publish his posters, and it’s unlikely the Enlightenment would have had the impact it did without the rise in literacy that the printing press made possible.

But is it true that writing and reading books have stolen our memories, made us stupid?

That argument was levelled against calculators (a small handheld device that could add, subtract, multiply, and divide at the press of a button). Keep them out of schools! our parents said. Children will lose the ability to add up long columns of numbers in their heads! Which they probably did, since that skill quickly became redundant in the face of a machine with the ability to calculate

complicated equations in seconds.

With the Internet fully upon us, the same old criticisms are being voiced once again. “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” Nicholas Carr asked in the *Atlantic*. “Over the past few years I’ve had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn’t going—so far as I can tell—but it’s changing. I’m not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I’m reading.”

I know exactly what he means. I feel it, too. Even writing these short vignettes, I interrupt myself a dozen times to check facts, scan incoming email, confirm my bank balance. My brain functions seem less linear, more scattered. More nimble, too, if I’m honest. Less able to focus, perhaps, but better able to make connections. In his seminal folklore text, *The Singer of Tales*, Albert Lord suggests that the act of writing drives us to a linear way of thinking, that oral memory is patterned differently than written memory. Perhaps computers are taking us back to a different—not necessarily inferior—spatial form of memory.

For at least five years, bloggers have been monitoring the phenomenon. “I used to be a voracious reader. What happened?” one moans. “I can’t read *War and Peace* anymore,” another admits. “I’ve lost the ability to do that. Even a blog post of more than three or four paragraphs is too much to absorb. I skim it.” “What if I do all my reading on the Web not so much because the way I read has changed, but because the way I THINK has changed?”

It’s a terrifying thought. Clearly, as a species, we aren’t crazy about change. We resist it at the very moment we embrace it. And we are right. There are monsters as well as

ghosts in the machine. We know this from experience (even if we don’t remember it). Nicholas Carr cites the example of the mechanical clock, which came into common use about a hundred years before the printing press. In his book *Technics and Civilization*, the historian and cultural critic Lewis Mumford describes how the clock “disassociated time from human events” and “helped create the belief in an independent world of mathematically measurable sequences.” The scientific mind with its measurable truths evolved in part because of the mechanical clock. A significant benefit, to be sure, but we lost something, too. We stopped paying close attention to our bodies and to the physical world around us. We eat at noon even when we aren’t hungry. We go to sleep at ten p.m. whether the summer sun is still shining in our northern sky or we are pulling up the blankets under a dark winter moon.

Reading onscreen may indeed be turning us into informational magpies, and writing probably did weaken the part of our minds in which long poems and speeches were stored and shared orally with friends and family. My nostalgic self yearns for what I can only imagine: a huddle of loved ones, all eyes fixed on the storyteller, knowing as I listen that the story this time won’t be the same as when I last heard it, or the next time, either, every moment fresh, unique, pure in itself.

Socrates and Squarciafico knew something in their bones that we no longer believe. Or at least, it is a truth that we fight against: life is ephemeral, it is different one millisecond to the next. No amount of pressing words onto paper or digitizing them on a screen will ever stop that flow. 🌊

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has been practicing holistic medicine for more than 30 years. HOLISTIC APPROACH—SHERIFF’S ANIMAL SERVICES DEPUTIES A BREED APART: Durham Sheriff’s Office Animal Services Division assesses the situation of a Cooper’s hawk trapped in a Durham. A HOLISTIC FACIALIST’S GUIDE TO TOTAL WELLNESS: The idea of using

# Deconstructing Newcomer “History”

JACINDA MACK

*From Price Paid: The Fight for First Nations Survival by Bev Sellars. Published by Talonbooks in 2016. Jacinda Mack undertook a project in which she deconstructed a series of photographs of Aboriginal Nuxalk people taken by European settlers in Bella Coola in the 1920s. In this excerpt, she discusses the process. Mack is a member of the Secwepemc and Nuxalk Nations. She lives in Williams Lake, BC.*



**ORIGINAL CAPTION:**

*Bella Coola Amerindians in ceremonial regalia, Bella Coola River Valley, B.C.*

**JACINDA'S CAPTION:**

*Albert King, Willie Mac, and Eliza Moody, on her wedding day, July 16, 1922*

**PHOTO BY**

*Harlan Ingersoll Smith. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 56909*

In the original photo series, the captions gave the full names and titles of only the European men and referred to the Aboriginal people simply as “Bella Coola Indians” or “people in costume.” As a descendant of these people, I understood that names are the biggest form of title and culture a person can hold in that part of the world. These people were efficiently silenced, disgraced, belittled, and dismissed by the omission of meaningful photo captions. I chose to turn the tables in order to make visible the subtext of racism and ethnocentric assumptions.

I found out the names of the Nuxalk people by simply asking around the community where the photos had been taken, and living relatives provided me with the information I asked for, nearly a hundred years later. With this simply acquired information, I recaptioned the original 1920s photos with the Aboriginal names, titles, and villages of our Nuxalk nation. I labelled other photos showing European men (the photographers visiting the Aboriginal community), simply as “White Men” with no further information, despite the significant contributions to the anthropological record that their photo series represents.

When I presented the new “text” of the edited photos to my anthropology class, the effect was immediate. Both instructor and students were obviously shocked at the captions; they could not pronounce the Aboriginal names and were upset that the European men were so unceremoniously dismissed, despite their “obvious authority” as creators of the photo series. It was a great learning discussion for most as it questioned many aspects of culture, privilege, and how information is framed and understood. 🌱

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electronic devices in holistic skin care might seem counterintuitive, but Tess Adams says, “It’s just like going to yoga or reading a book, you’re stimulating yourself to be healthy.”  
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SHORT STORY

# Star of the Sea

SHANNON WEBB-CAMPBELL

*You aren't sure where to find men, because you aren't looking*



March Kite by David Blackwood, 1986. Etching. 35" x 15".

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Joseph always told me, you belong to Newfoundland. Don't call yourself a Canadian. You are an islander, despite an Alberta birth certificate.

You aren't a Newfie. You are a Newfoundlander. What you are is a Newfoundland Indian, even though you don't know what that means. You are Leigh; your family is in fragments. And Leigh reads, makes art and now lives in St. John's. You are a Newfoundlander, you are a Calgarian, you are only a Newfie in a Calgary hat.

You are a daughter, who doesn't cause much fuss, and did well in art school. You are Leigh, and you are looking for answers to questions you are too afraid to ask your father.

Instead, you are hanging out with your first cousin, Tara, who you just met and has ordered two glasses of Pinot Grigio at The Rooms Café, and is now doing a line of coke in the bathroom. She offers you some, you are too hungover to say no, and she is too high to care that you say yes.

You hate the feeling in your nose. It's like you've snorted pop rocks.

Tara isn't afraid of questions, everything out of her mouth ends with an inflection.

“Where are you living? Do you have a boyfriend? What did you do last night?” said Tara.

Because I’m Leigh, and I’m high, I answer in increments. I stutter, and get so nervous I forget what I am saying, so I try and speak slowly. The coke speeds everything up.

Answers tumble around: I live in the west end? I broke up with my butch girlfriend? Last night I got loaded at a women’s dance at the Legion?

I lean back against the bathroom stall and attempt to form an answer. My brain on pop rocks, exploding in question.

“I am living... I am living on Gilbert Street. I don’t have a boyfriend. Last night I was... Last night I was at a women’s dance. A women’s dance at the Legion.”

“A women’s dance? Is dat a gay thing?” said Tara.

“It’s a queer thing.”

“Lezzies only?” said Tara.

“Only a handful of guys show. Fags, mostly. The Zone closed. Nowhere else to go but Star of the Sea.”

“Are you da star of da sea?” said Tara. “Thought queer was a bad word.”

“Not in my world. Queer is whatever you want it to be. It’s not one thing or another. It moves in different directions. Sometimes, being queer leads to more questions than answers.”

“Many people go?” said Tara.

“A few. Many women come in from around the bay. Older crowd, for sure.”

“Meet anybody?” said Tara.

“Met a few new friends, no one special.”

Because I am Leigh, I have a square of toilet paper stuck to my red leather boot and a run in my tights, so I try fixing both things at once. I fail. I am wearing last night’s dress. I pick off the toilet paper and toss it in the garbage, I can’t do anything about my tights, so I take them off. I’m not wearing underwear.

Tara offers another line, this time you decline.

Leigh grabs a hand towel from the neatly folded pile, and imagines turning paper towel into origami doves and tossing them off Signal Hill into the harbour. Sink or swim, little birds.

“What actually happens at a women’s dance?” said Tara.

“What kind of interrogation is this? What happens at any bar? People drink, mingle, and hope to see someone they’d like to take home, and fuck their brains out.”

Tara cocked her eyebrow.

“Thought so. Cousin Liam’s gay. He’s a few years younger than you,” said Tara.

Facebook profiles leave little to the imagination. One rainbow flag post and you’ve outed yourself to 527 of your closest acquaintances, and family members you’ve never met.

Because you are Leigh, and you are Joseph’s biological daughter, you have a dozen aunts and uncles you don’t know. They could make up a small factory of employees, given all of the cousins, second cousins, nieces and nephews.

You posted the flag because you have to post the flag; it’s your social media obligation. You are queer, and Facebook says so, and the whole world knows.

“Liam found me on Facebook, and we wrote back and forth for a while. So I met him and his boyfriend for coffee in Toronto. Took me to his empty apartment in the village, said he was trying to stop using. Cracked a joke about us booze bags. We got drunk on Steam Whistle and promised to see each other again. We haven’t.”

“He’s married now,” said Tara, washing her hands in the sink. “I loves Liam, he’s da only person I can relate to in this god damn family. And now you.”

**H**ere you are, high on coke in the bathroom of The Rooms, with a glass of wine at your fancy table beside the floor-to-ceiling window view of St. John’s. You’ve left your purse under the golden tablecloth, and you hope no one notices you are drinking, again, in the middle afternoon.

“My boyfriend and I just broke up. Here I am in da city. Can’t find a man in Stephenville,” said Tara.

You aren’t sure where to find men, because you aren’t looking. You are Leigh, and you’re not sure about your new cousin’s means of coping with heartbreak. You are high on coke at The Rooms, and you are too hungover to drink the glass of wine back at the table. All that glass, the windows, your wine.

“It’s hard, ya know. Nothing in Stephenville. Let’s get back to our table,” said Tara.

Tara is cool as cucumber; completely unaware the art gallery isn’t where you go to get high. The jazz music annoys me with its inconsistency. I’d rather be listening to the conversation of the couple beside me who just got

engaged and are out for eggs benny on a Saturday afternoon.

Groups of tourists gather outside the café, taking in the panoramic scene from the lookout. Cabot Tower is swallowed in fog, and you can see your breath on the window when you exhale like you are in downward dog.

“Liam and I were close when he lived in Stephenville, he loves Darlene. Don’t understand it,” said Tara.

“I only met Darlene once, years ago. She scared the shit out of me. No offence, but I don’t feel like my father’s family is my family, you know? I belong to my mom and her family. Darlene isn’t my grandmother.”

“You tink she’s my grandmudder? I got a real Nan out of it?” said Tara. “Called me a slut when I came home pregnant for da second time. Two different fadders. It’s not like I got a knitting, baking, loving Nan either.”

Tara’s eyes start to well.

“I know you didn’t. It’s just not in Darlene to give. She never had it herself, how could she have it to give anyone else?”

I was saying too much, the cocaine was making my tongue loose.

“I tried. Went to see her all da time, looked for love, never got it,” said Tara.

“If I were Darlene, I’d resent every child and grandchild who passed through me.”

“What do you know about what Darlene’s been through?” said Tara.

“I don’t, really. I just assume it’s been tough. Poppa Smurf was a drunk and beat on his own kids, if he wasn’t beating on her. That’s what Liam told me.”

“Your father is da spittin’ image of Smurf. Identical, really. Must be da Indian blood. Joseph took the brunt of it before he left home, tried to protect Darlene. Smurf would come home loaded and take it out on her,” said Tara.

“Dad’s still a bit of a scrapper, if he has to be. Can hold his own.”

“He’s da oldest of thirteen. Joseph couldn’t stick around Flat Bay forever,” said Tara. “Smurf went after my mom when Uncle Joey left. Eventually she convinced Darlene to leave him. It took a lifetime. No wonder Darlene’s so fucking miserable. She had thirteen children, raped every time.”

“Dad still sends her money, phones her every day. Mommy, he calls her.”

“Bet he doesn’t say I love you. No one in our

family can say three words,” said Tara.

Joseph always told me he loved me. Even though our phone calls rarely last longer than six minutes, he says the words every time. I can never tell if it’s to reassure me, or himself.

“Do you have a girlfriend?” said Tara.

“Not anymore. I was dating someone before I moved to St. John’s. But couldn’t keep it going long distance.” Oceans tear hearts apart.

Tara chugs the remainder of her glass of wine.

“You should come to powwow dis year,” said Tara.

“I’d like to. I saw the CBC news clip a couple of years ago. Joseph nearly dropped a grand on a last-minute flight to get me there. I couldn’t go: exams.”

“It’s da best. Dancers, drummers, feathers. I loves sweat lodge,” said Tara.

“I’ve only been to a powwow once before. Grand Chief Membertou 400 on Halifax Common. Bawled my eyes out during the dances.” Colours blurred like melting pastels. I could hear my heartbeat over the drums.

**M**y girlfriend at the time had no clue what had made me so upset. Thousands of First Nations people gathered for the 400th anniversary of the baptism of Grand Chief Henri Membertou.

We wandered around the man-made “traditional Mi’kmaq village” together, in a haze. Hungover from the night before: retro dancing and cheap tequila shots. I remember we got into a fight over something stupid, so I snuck into a teepee and folded myself into child’s pose. Eventually she found me, and we made up.

“Are you gonna drink yours?” said Tara. Pointed at my glass of wine.

I shook my head no.

“Wanna go check out d’art?” said Tara.

Did I want to go see the art? I wanted to run up and down the stairs and take a zillion photos of the harbour from every pane of glass in The Rooms, and make an army of paper birds.

Tara paid for the glasses of wine. Tipped the waitress ten dollars. Took me by the arm. A group of knitters chattered in the atrium. The security guard nodded as we flashed our stickers stating we paid admission. His teeth sparkled against his dark skin. Tara winked.

Blackwood’s work tapped into the isolation and extremes of bay-life, depicted the poverty, wild weather and brutality of life on

an island in the North Atlantic.

Cocaine made me feel like I was capable of stepping inside a David Blackwood print. I was a boat on fire, my brain the iceberg, my heart a tiny rescue boat, and my soul the gigantic whale under the ocean. *Fire Down the Labrador*. Flaming ghost ships. Icebergs. Cod. Weathered men, broken dreams buried in their wrinkles. Portraits of mummies. Foghorns. Red lanterns. Seaweed blue skies. Whales. Men moving salt-box houses across the ice. Old dory boats.

"Pretty incredible, huh?" said Tara.

I nodded, and sunk into all that I didn't know. Blackwood understood the magic and seedy underbelly of this place. Overwhelmed by the ghost ships and concealed features of mummies, I looked to the red lanterns for answers, and found nothing but light.

"I love dis one most," said Tara.

Tara pointed at Blackwood's famous print on the cover of Annie Proulx's god-awful novel, *The Shipping News*. The streaks of sun shed hope on the dozens of men pulling the old house across the snow. A handful of women, children and a dog stood watch. A gigantic anchor off to the left of the print symbolized centralization, the government game.

"Imagine, by'. That's how they used to move houses," said Tara.

I transfix on the single woman in fur, off to the right of the print. She seems so out of place, like a fish out of water.

**Y**ou remind yourself; you are Leigh, you are Joseph's biological daughter, you are a new-found Indian. This is your cousin Tara. You are related, by blood, and your brain is on cocaine, and this is the David Blackwood exhibit, *Black Ice*.

"You know about our great-grandmudder, Mary?" said Tara.

I nodded.

"She was full Mi'kmaq. Medicine woman. Bootlegger. Quite da girl," said Tara.

Joseph had sent Mary's obituary. I keep a photocopy in my desk drawer.

"They have some information about her downstairs in the archives, a few photos, and a newspaper clipping. Checked it out a few weeks ago," said Leigh.

"Really? Let's go check it out. I'm tired bored of all d'ese depressing pictures, anyway," said Tara.

Tara grabs my arm and ushers me out of the gallery. She curtsies for the security guard on our way out. We take the stairs two by two. The afternoon light falls over the giant box obscuring the city view, and I catch my reflection in the shiny floor. I look haggard in my cable-knit sweater, and need a haircut.

Tara leans over the archivist's desk as if she was belly up to the bar.

"Can I get some help 'ere? My cousin and I want to find our great-great-grandmother. Mary. She's a healer and a midwife in Flat Bay. D'ere's a statue, life size, of her in Corner Brook. She's a big deal," said Tara.

The archivist looked at us suspiciously. I smiled. Hoped she didn't remember me.

"There's a folder of articles about Mi'kmaq people in Newfoundland. Otherwise, the rest is in special collections at MUN," said the archivist.

"Well, can we see it?" said Tara.

The archivist nodded, and went to the office to retrieve the files.

"I'm going to da bathroom. Wanna join?" said Tara, and nudged her.

No thanks. I take a seat. The weekend edition of the *Globe and Mail* in a pile on the table. The front-page headline caught my attention—*My Secret Identity*. The tagline read: "When science writer Carolyn Abraham turned to genetics to explore her roots, she uncovered more family secrets than she had expected. Welcome to a world where gene technology is opening a Pandora's box of human history."

You are Leigh, the archivist has already retrieved the folder of newspaper clippings about Mi'kmaq people in Newfoundland. You are Leigh, and didn't even notice her leaving it in a heap beside me, and forgot to wonder where Tara went.

Because I am Leigh, I figured Tara has decided to do a few more lines. Because I am Leigh, by the time I go to the bathroom to check on her, I only find Tara's scarf, and it takes looking under all three stalls to realize she's long split.

---

*Shannon Webb-Campbell is a Mi'kmaq poet, writer and critic. Her poetry collection Still No Word (Breakwater, 2015) was the inaugural recipient of Egale Canada's Out In Print Award.*

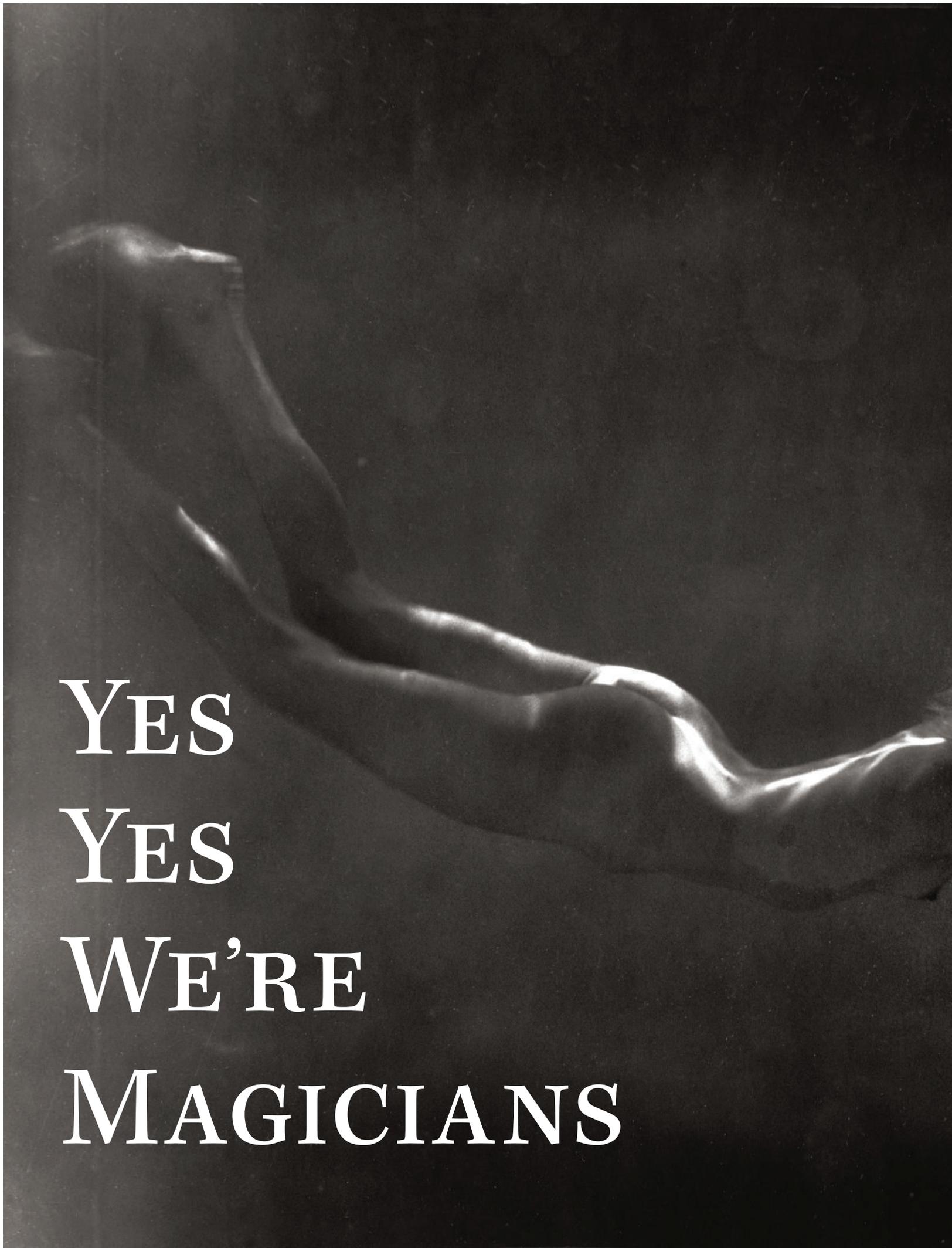
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YES

YES

WE'RE

MAGICIANS

**ESTRAGON**

We always find something, eh Didi,  
to give us the impression we exist?

**VLADIMIR**

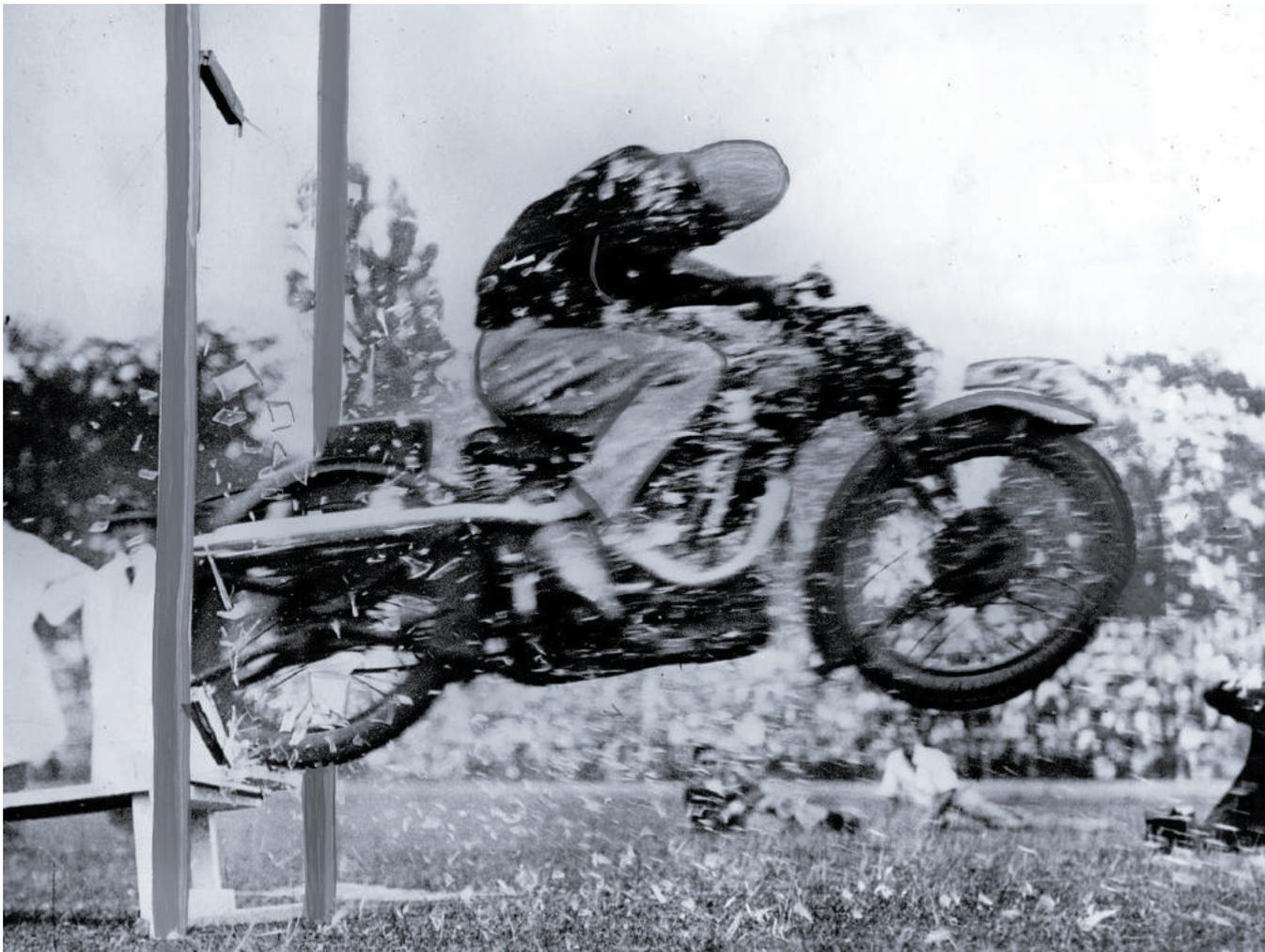
Yes, yes, we're magicians.

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

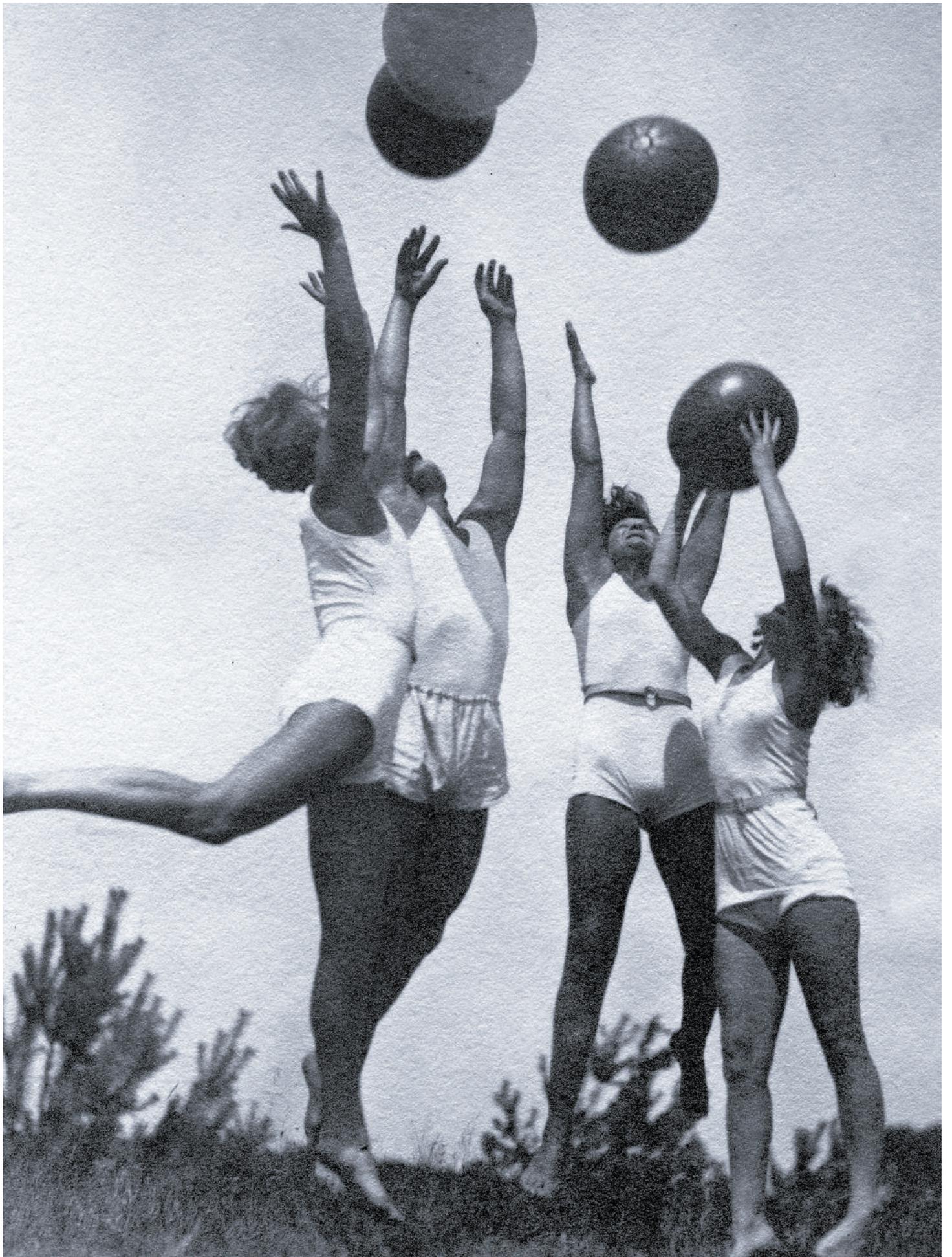
The following images are selected from *Yes Yes We're Magicians*, a book containing a series of anonymous vintage photographs organized by Jonah Samson around a passage from Samuel Beckett's absurdist play *Waiting for Godot*. The images, mostly sourced from eBay, reflect on life as tragicomic by focussing the viewer on sombre, disquieting and humorous moments from the past. Devoid of descriptive text, these photographs open their mysteries to modern interpretations. As in Beckett's plays, the melancholic, surreal and bizarre are often put into dialogue.

---

*Jonah Samson is an artist and avid collector of photographs who lives on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. His photographic works have been exhibited widely, and he has produced several artist books, including Another Happy Day, published by Presentation House Gallery. He is represented by Macaulay & Co. Fine Art in Vancouver. Yes Yes We're Magicians will be published by Figure 1 in May 2017. An exhibition by the same title will be mounted at Presentation House Gallery in North Vancouver, BC, in May 2017.*









# Harm Reduction

HENRY DOYLE

## HARM REDUCTION

It's 6 a.m. when the lights turn on  
in a white-washed drugstore,  
as if it were a little theatre  
shining out onto the sidewalk.

The regulars are there  
walking around in tight circles  
like chickens on hot plates  
waiting for their next government fix.

Just before work, I always get hit up  
for a smoke by Freddy Fridays.  
He's from Toronto like me  
but a few years older,  
remembering T.O. at its best  
when it comes to sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll.

He's 6'1" and looks like a tobacco farmer from Tillsonburg  
with his John Deere ball cap,  
worn-out jeans and Levi's jacket.  
A face wrapped in skin on bone,  
long black hair, coal eyes,  
teeth rotten and stained  
with twenty years on the crack pipe,  
arms full of the needle and the damage done,  
a voice like smoky wind  
spitting out dust about  
*the good ole days of Toronto.*

I give him a smoke. His nerves  
light it right away as he stares  
at that little lit stage, waiting  
for his Methadone juice  
and the next act.

I light another smoke myself and watch  
the store next door unload  
a dolly full of boxes  
with big blue letters spelling  
*LISTERINE.*

## SHOTGUNS IN THE SKY

*"The rotting of a heart..."*

*Charles Bukowski, from "Practice" in The Roominghouse Madrigals*

The bus from Montreal is late

I turn my pockets inside out in the rain  
dreaming of shotguns in the sky

My rotting heart sings in the downpour  
Alice's big white rabbit comes on by

and gives me a gram of magic mushrooms  
to rescue me from your world

**WELFARE WEDNESDAYS KILL MORE PEOPLE THAN BOMBS**

Hastings is closed off from Main Street  
all the way down to Pigeon Park.

Cops, fire trucks, floodlights  
making night into day.

The crowds grow, hoping  
for a show. People set up  
lawn chairs in the middle  
of Hastings as if at a drive-in.

Skateboarders fly down the emptiness  
like flies skimming a pond,  
zigzagging around everything.

It's like a street party  
or the gathering for a town hanging.

A twenty-year-old jumper in debt to his dealer  
has climbed over the railing  
on the roof across the street.

I sit at my window  
drinking a beer, thinking  
about wild horses running in the rain.

Cops roam around telling the shouters to shut up.  
The copper on the bullhorn bellows  
"Please stop telling the poor man to jump!"

Finally they talk the young dude down.  
We all cheer as if the Canucks  
have just scored the game-winning goal.

**UNDERGROUND ROOM**

I head out in steel-toed boots into the dark rains of January  
to the slave labour pool.

I walk into the stale air of the office to put my mark on the  
worksheet.

The place is as packed as a can of rotten sardines.  
An old man sleeping in his workboots has pissed himself.  
Moving seats, I watch the scrawny drug addicts get all the jobs.

I end up on a construction site making \$8 an hour  
working beside some kid half my age. Contempt in his eyes,  
he tells me he's making \$22.50 an hour.

Society has tried to stop me from becoming a loser,  
but my destiny hangs its heavy sign on me

as I march through rush hour heading to the DTES  
to pick up a cheque for \$52 minus the \$12 government fee.

---

*Henry Doyle has been working with the Thursdays Writing Collective in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver for eight years. His work has been published in four of the group's chapbooks, in Megaphone, at thetyee.ca and on his blog, wastelandjournalschapters.wordpress.com. Doyle grew up in Ontario and has lived in Vancouver since 2004.*

# The Munchies

JANIS THIESSEN

*A History of Canadian Snack Foods*



## THE CANADIAN CHEEZIE

The most popular product of the Confections Incorporated plant was the Cheezie, a uniquely Canadian snack. Cheezies, described on the company's stationery in 1955 as "Cheese Flavored Honeycomb Corn Puffs," are a cheese-coated snack made from extruded corn. The name Cheezie itself is trademarked by W.T. Hawkins Limited. While similar snacks are marketed by other companies, Cheezie fans and the Hawkins company themselves argue that the Cheezie is distinctive and superior. In the words of one blogger, "It's difficult to convey to the uninitiated the vastness of the gap that separates Hawkins Cheezies in their asymmetrical [sic], lumpy, orange-fingered grandeur, from the inferior sort that melts into grainy sludge in your mouth." It is an opinion that is not uncommon among Cheezie fans. A Canadian family living in Guatemala participates in an annual party that offers tastings of various cheese-flavoured extruded snacks. According to a blog post, "25 varieties of cheesies [sic] of all forms are venerated, discussed, tasted, judged. Oh, and eaten... Annually, it is Hawkins that takes pride of place among discerning revellers. True, there is the odd party-goer who insists on some other brand, like those Hostess puff balls that disintegrate in your mouth like sponge toffee. But dissenters are quickly and drunkenly shouted down by Hawkins loyalists." One customer suggests microwaving Cheezies for fifteen seconds: "they are delicious!!!" This fondness for warm Cheezies is shared by former Hawkins production manager Geraldine Fobert, who asserts that Cheezie developer Jim Marker preferred them that way, too.



I can honestly say that, if Mom packed lunch, or my sister, you always went to the end of the tumbler [in the production factory] with a plate and you got hot Cheezies. And when you come back, you ate the hot Cheezies with your sandwich or your hamburger or your hot dog or whatever you had. And when I was out there [in the plant] just now? I'm eating hot Cheezies. I am a person that eats hot Cheezies. And Mr. Marker said, "You want really good Cheezies, warm, put them on the dash of your car and the sun will heat them."

Cheezies are a "hard bite" snack (unlike the "soft bite" of the better known Cheetos by Frito-Lay), and are made with real Canadian cheddar cheese. They are manufactured at only one small factory, located in Belleville, 190 kilometres east of Toronto, on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. The original facility, however, was in Tweed, Ontario (a village of a few thousand people northeast of Toronto).

## THE CUBAN LUNCH

With the closure of the company in 1991, Paulins products have not been made for a quarter-century. Yet, the memory of their taste remains—and is memorialized in a public Facebook group called "Bring Back the Cuban Lunch." The Cuban Lunch was a slab of chocolate that contained peanuts, and that was formed and packaged in the shallow, rectangular equivalent of a cupcake liner, complete with fluted edges. The "Bring Back the Cuban Lunch" Facebook group describes their mandate as an effort to revive "the best chocolate/peanut combination ever invented," in much the same way that a consumer campaign led to the return of the discontinued Mexican Chili flavour of Old Dutch potato chips. The group also functions as a social community, as the invited membership extends beyond nostalgic former consumers. One post suggests, "Even if you don't remember them or have never had the pleasure of tasting one... just join the group, invite all your friends and see what happens!!!" As of 2016, the group's membership was 380. Members participate in the Facebook group by posting photos, debating the merits of various recipes and alternative products, and sharing their memories of eating Cuban Lunch.

As is evident from the group's name, the group discusses efforts to revive the brand. One member suggested that the group contact confectioners to ask them to include the Cuban Lunch in their product line: "We should all put a consumer request together and send it to any and all candy companies to see if they would undertake producing the Cuban lunch again." Trademark ownership was identified as a potential setback for such a plan, however. Member Daniel Gilchrist caused some brief excitement within the group when he posted that, after a two- or three-year effort, he had succeeded in tracking down the current owner of the Cuban Lunch trademark. The owner's lawyer, he asserts, responded that he should make a financial offer for it. Some group members have suggested crowdfunding to revive the product: one post asks, "Who wants to go in with me and start a company to re-make the Cuban Lunch again? Email me and I will set



up a Kickstarter plan.” Another asks, “Has anyone bought the rights and recipe yet? Surely someone wants to become Cuban Lunch King!” These efforts to revive the brand are not the main focus of the group, however, despite the group’s name.

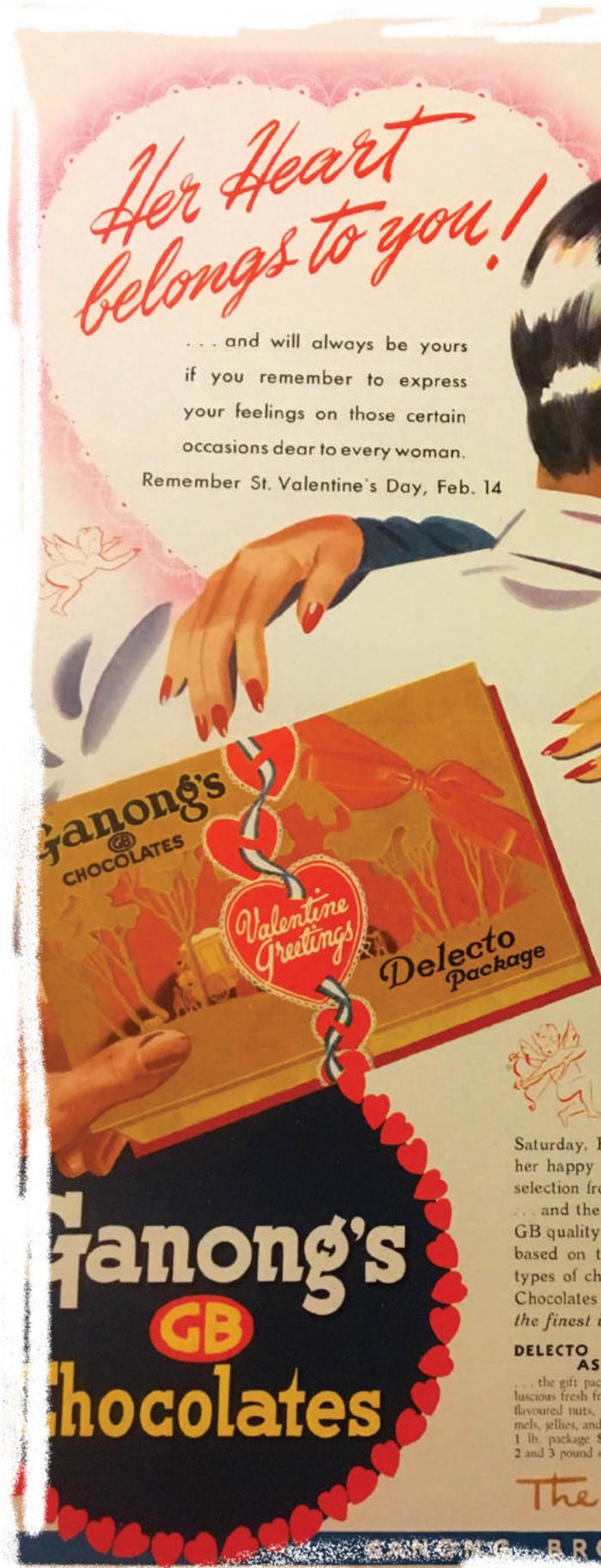
More of the group’s time is spent debating existing alternatives to the Cuban Lunch. Whittaker’s Peanut Slab is often promoted within the group as the closest currently available taste substitute for the Cuban Lunch (comments include: “close but not quite as it is a little bit sweeter and not quite the right consistency,” and “too thin and not enough crunch”). Members discuss how to arrange shipping of this product from New Zealand, its point of origin. Hershey’s Mr. Goodbar is sometimes also suggested as an inadequate alternative. Occasionally, a one-off suggestion is made:

David Dunster: The closest I can get to a Cuban lunch is the “Fruit & Nut” from Cadbury. [This despite the fact that the Cuban Lunch never contained fruit.]

Chris Neufeld: That is the opposite of “close.”

The taste of these alternative chocolate bars is seen as inferior to that of group members’ collective memory of the original Cuban Lunch. Some attribute this taste difference to the conditions of production or to nationalism: according to one post, “Hard to duplicate the original Winnipeg treat by mass producing in [the United States of] America.”

Since revival and alternatives are both disappointing, the majority of the discussion within the group is centred on replication. Despite group agreement that the Cuban Lunch consisted exclusively of chocolate and peanuts, a wide variety of potential recipes are proposed and debated, incorporating butterscotch, potato chips and other additives. This debate is assisted by the fact that the Internet does not contain any images of the original Paulins Cuban Lunch packaging (and thus its ingredient listing). Pronouncements are made on the degree to which these recipes reproduce the group members’ memories of the taste of Cuban Lunch. Thus, for example, Duff MacDonal posted a Cuban Lunch recipe sourced from Donna Peck-Harland of “Kirkfield Park United [Church], Winnipeg (She worked on the line making them every day!).” By naming the recipe’s author and her church affiliation, by asserting that she was a former Paulins worker who had made Cuban Lunches, and by not providing the original date or place of publication, MacDonal gives this recipe a timeless authority. The recipe is the duplicate of one printed in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 2002, but includes variations such as adding coconut. Peck-Harland’s Cuban Lunch recipe ingredients are peanut butter chips, butterscotch chips, chocolate chips, crushed ripple potato chips and unsalted peanuts. The recipe calls for the ingredients to be melted and poured into cupcake liners and then refrigerated. Further research reveals that this recipe was submitted originally by Ms. Peck-Harland to the Fort Qu’Appelle Prairie





Christian Training Centre's *A Cookbook of Memories*, first published in 2001. Nowhere does this cookbook claim that Peck-Harland was a Paulins worker.

"Bring Back the Cuban Lunch" group members who tried the Peck-Harland recipe deemed it inauthentic, despite not knowing its provenance. Some asserted that this recipe was "not the Cuban Lunch I remember" as they didn't "remember any potato products in it." Duff MacDonald, who had posted the recipe to the Facebook page, responded: "[Cuban Lunch didn't contain any potato products] that you know of... maybe the one I like did too." In other words, there may have been other ingredients in the Cuban Lunch, ones that were less identifiable to the average eater than chocolate and peanuts, but which nonetheless contributed to its distinctive taste. As sociologist Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson reminds us, "Taste is notoriously untrustworthy."

The taste of a Cuban Lunch, then, is about more than its acknowledged ingredients; there must be some additional component that made the product more than simply chocolate and peanuts. The inclusion of crushed Old Dutch ripple chips in purported Cuban Lunch recipes, for example, is an attempt to reproduce a historical and nostalgic taste that cannot be accessed through the acknowledged simple ingredients (chocolate and Spanish peanuts) of the no-longer-available original product. Some group members hint at the impossibility of reproducing the original taste. One post commented, "I'm not really sure if it was that they were that good or if it's more a childhood memory thing, taking me back to a simpler time. In any event I would love to try one again and find out." Others acknowledge that the point of the recipes is not to replicate the taste but to replicate memories through taste.

Alice Cristofoli: I found a recipe on the internet and made them a couple years ago. They were almost the same as the original Cuban lunch.

Dallas Patterson Jr.: I've tried one of the recipes too, but it's been so long since I've had the original it's hard to say if it's close. Was still very good though.

Patti Garner: If you taste a recipe that brings back the memories of the Cuban Lunch, that's all you need! LOL.

Some suggest that the taste was determined by not only the content but the form of the product: the thickness of the bar and its distinctive crimped edges. One member commented, "Sure, anyone can put peanuts in chocolate, that's child's play. For me, it was more about the shape/presentation." There are those, however, who persist in their quest for the "one true" recipe, despite seemingly knowing the Cuban Lunch's two-ingredient identity. Chris Neufeld commented, "Ok, look... is it SERIOUSLY that hard in this interconnected world, to find someone that worked at the damn place, and can give us the basic REAL recipe? I mean really, I'm not asking for the nuclear codes... it's chocolate and peanuts for sh\*t sake!"



## OLD DUTCH POTATO CHIPS

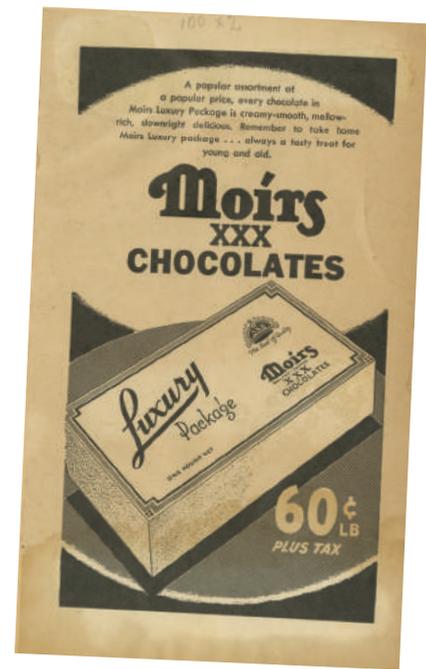
Potato chips, when first commercially produced in the early twentieth century, were unflavoured—just thin slices of potato, fried and salted. By the 1950s, flavoured potato chips had been introduced. In 1959, half the potato chips produced in the Old Dutch plant in Winnipeg were flavoured. Old Dutch made only six types of potato chips back then: barbecue, hickory smoked, pizza, onion and garlic, ripple, and plain (unflavoured). Seasoning was sprinkled on “in powder form after the chip has been fried”—a labour-intensive practice, according to a *Minneapolis Daily Star* article. The company claims to be the first to introduce the popular sour cream and onion flavour, which they developed with Minnesota’s North Star Dairy in 1968. Old Dutch also claims to be the first in Canada to offer the salt and vinegar flavour. By the 1970s, Old Dutch offered the additional flavours of barbecue and onion and garlic, as well as new cuts of potato chips such as shoestring. A decade later, new products included popcorn twists, “Cheez Corn” and sour cream and onion-flavoured rings. The onion and garlic flavour was discontinued in 1996, to be replaced by “all dressed” ripple chips and a new French onion flavour. Such experimentation with, and improvement upon, flavours was ongoing—not always to the satisfaction of all customers, some of whom had developed strong preferences for particular Old Dutch products.



The onion and garlic flavour was brought back into production, since its removal from the product line “caused such an uproar” among customers. An online petition was launched in 2009 to “bring back the original flavour of Old Dutch BBQ potato chips” after the flavour was changed to a “bold” barbecue by the company. Customer Al Basler asserted, “I have been buying Old Dutch BBQ chips since I was 7 years old. That is over 47 years. I will not buy any more Old Dutch chips until you bring back the original BBQ flavour. The new ‘bold’ is crap and is not a worthy substitute... How dare you get rid of a necessary lifelong favourite snack.”

Such replacements of flavours are necessary, however. “Dogs”—flavours that sell in low volume—must be removed from the product line, because Old Dutch has limited space on store shelves. In addition, flavour preferences tend to be region-specific: Canadians prefer stronger and more diverse flavours, as well as anything vinegar-based (such as ketchup, dill and barbecue), compared with Americans’ preferences. These differences may be the result of the British tradition in Canada of using vinegar on French fries, a practice not common in the United States. By contrast, Midwestern Americans tend to prefer sour cream and onion as well as cheese flavours, possibly as a result of the region’s Scandinavian heritage, though barbecue is also popular.

A long-standing feature of Old Dutch chips that some fans claim affects their flavour is in danger of disappearing as a result of improvements in technology. When stored or harvested below ten degrees



Celsius, potato starch turns into sugar; the result, when these potatoes are processed, is brown chips. There are those who have a preference for these darker chips: “Pale chips have no character. The brown versions have an extra caramelly almost-burnt-but-not-quite edge that gives their pale cousins a proper beatdown,” claims one blogger. Old Dutch themselves promote these “defects” as desirable qualities: their website explains, “Sometimes you will notice green edges or brown potato chips. These unique attributes are what makes our potatoes one-of-a-kind and hard to duplicate by any of our competitors.” But, with the introduction of optical scanners in the 1990s, most of the darker chips on the production line are detected and removed before being packaged. “That’s the industry standard—the whiter, the better... A little bit of brown has a lot more flavour, but it is the industry standard,” says an industry expert. Since the 1950s, other flaws in chip production have been avoided through a careful process of quality control. In the 1950s, bad chips could result from too much humidity, or from temperature changes that render the oil in which they are fried rancid. Old Dutch’s lab chemists test the oil multiple times daily, as well as perform checks for moisture and sugar content of potatoes.

Other consumer preferences include purchasing Old Dutch chips in boxes rather than bags. These “twin pack” boxes contain two bags of chips, so consumers do not have to open one large bag and chips stay fresher. With improvements in bag packaging, these boxes are no longer as necessary. Filling the bags with nitrogen prior to their being sealed delays oxidation of the chips. In earlier years, the bags were made from glassine (a type of grease-resistant paper); when the temperature dropped below minus thirty degrees Celsius (not uncommon in a Winnipeg winter!), the bags would break. Contemporary chip bags are of more stable construction. But consumer nostalgia means that Old Dutch continues to package chips in boxes as well as bags, despite boxes being more expensive to produce.

Other innovations in Old Dutch potato chips have been the result of consumer demand for healthier and more flavourful snacks. Old Dutch introduced baked (rather than fried) potato chips, reduced the sodium in their chips and introduced natural (rather than artificial) seasonings (including reduced sulfites and monosodium glutamate). Not all Old Dutch employees are fans of the baked chips, describing them as tasting “like cardboard.” And not all flavours have been improved in these ways: it has not been possible to adjust the sodium level or remove the artificial colouring in the ketchup flavour, in particular, without changing its taste significantly. New flavours and textures were introduced to appeal to generational and regional differences in taste. An article in the *National Post* stated, “Teenagers go for intense flavours like Doritos. Adults gravitate to sour cream and BBQ flavours. Canadians in general like salt and vinegar flavours, and ketchup flavour is particularly popular in Manitoba. Those two flavours nonetheless are duds south of the border.” Kettle-cooked chips (marketed as Dutch Crunch) and intensely flavoured chips (marketed as Rave) were designed to appeal to teenagers and to those who liked artisanal chips. Bob Shumka, Old Dutch general sales manager, explained: “In launching Rave, our teen-oriented potato chip line, we ensured that it had a high, high spice level... We heard that the kids were licking the flavors off first, then eating the chip. In our salt and vinegar variety, there’s so much extra salt that your eyes water when you open the bag. But the kids love it, because it’s their product.” Rave was eventually discontinued.




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*Janis Thiessen is an associate professor of history and associate director of the Oral History Centre at University of Winnipeg. Snacks: A Canadian Food History is forthcoming from University of Manitoba Press in 2017.*

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# Ethnic Babies

STEPHEN HENIGHAN

*Crude first steps to finding a new way to talk about racial reality*

**E**thnic baby! the nurse shouted. I thought I'd heard wrong. It was 3:30 a.m. After two failed inductions and hours of labour, my partner had given birth to our first child. I picked up my son, told him in his mother's language that I was his father, and posed for baggy-eyed photographs. Only then did I ask the nurse what she had meant by calling him an ethnic baby.

An increasing number of children born at the hospital, the nurse explained, had parents who came from different ethnic backgrounds. Many of the pairings consisted of one person who looked white and another who did not. These couples' babies, emerging with skin of a shade that the nurse described as "yellowish," were often incorrectly diagnosed with infant jaundice. The nurses used the "ethnic baby" call to remind each other not to make a hasty jaundice diagnosis on the basis of skin colour.

The term "ethnic baby" verges on the odious, yet the fact that the nurses who attended my son's birth found it useful testifies to changes in how we perceive race. The days when government documents were able to presume a clear division between "white" and that other odious term, "visible minority," are passing. We've known for a long time that race is a fiction invented to separate individuals between whom no species difference exists. "There are no races," the Cuban independence hero José Martí wrote in 1891. "Puny thinkers reheat races that exist in bookstores."

The deciphering of our DNA has proved Martí correct: everyone alive today descends from East Africans. Yet, though Martí's statue now looms over Havana's Revolution Square, I'm informed by those who know that Cuban government documents still offer individuals the opportunity to identify themselves as belonging to one of eleven different racial categories.

The Americas is the only large region of the globe where people who are a result of racial mixing that has occurred in the last five centuries may be a majority. This is less true in Canada than in the United States, Latin America or the Caribbean; but we are catching up fast. Like our neighbours, we struggle to express the mismatch between large mixed-race populations and a model of national unity, inherited from nineteenth-century Europe, which assumes that a country coheres around a single, or dominant, ethnicity. The French are Gallic and the Germans Teutonic; Americans, Mexicans, Brazilians and Canadians all respond in different ways to the challenge of matching race to nation.

The United States, where a mixed-race president was seen as "Black," has no language for this phenomenon. US definitions of race remain as rigid as they were in 1894, when Mark Twain satirized them in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Mexico, by contrast, enshrined the mestizo, a person of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage, as the quintessential representative of the nation in the 1920s. Yet Guatemala,

next door to Mexico, rarely uses the word *mestizo*, dividing people into ladino (implicitly "European") and indigenous American. The coat of arms of Jamaica uses the slogan "Out of many, one people" to capture its population's mixed heritage. In the 1970s, Brazil, where over fifty percent of the population is African-descended or of mixed race, promoted itself as a "racial democracy." No one believes this claim today: it is exceedingly difficult for Afro-Brazilians to become middle-class professionals; the current government consists almost entirely of white men.

**P**resenting mixing as a norm cements unity by re-creating the European ideal of the distinctive national phenotype, whether it is the Mexican mestizo or the multicultural Canadian. The more mixed a person is, the more they draw their sense of belonging from national identity rather than ethnic identity. A Canadian all of whose ancestors were Italian or Chinese or Ukrainian or Pakistani has an ethnic identity that competes with, and may supersede, their national identity; a Canadian who has some mixture of Italian, Chinese, Ukrainian and Pakistani heritage has little choice but to identify as Canadian. Making the mixed-race citizen exemplary, though, can obscure the status of people who are not seen as mixed. By defining Mexicans as mestizos, official discourse bypasses the country's ten million indigenous people and conceals the

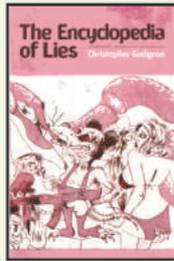
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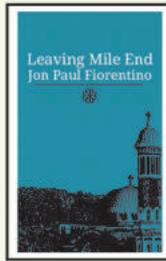
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fact that white people are over-represented among the elite. In Canada the debate over whether our ideology of multiculturalism is a form of benign acceptance, or a way of keeping newcomers at a distance, ignores the long-standing suppression of First Nations cultures.

**W**idespread racial mixing is not simply part of official discourse, but the central trait that distinguishes the Americas from Europe, Asia or much of Africa. Though the proportion of racially mixed marriages in Canada remains low—4.1 percent according to the 2011 census—it is rising fast. Since racial categories are unlikely to vanish—“post-racialism,” as recent strife in the United States makes clear, is a mirage—the meanings of traditional labels will be

obliged to blur as each band accommodates a wider spectrum of people. I don't know how my children—I have two now—will be categorized by their peers. All I am sure of is that racial categorization is not going away. Since my partner and I have had our DNA tested, we know that, in addition to various northern and southern European lineages, our children have inherited a block of indigenous American ancestry and have a small African genetic inheritance. If they are “white,” it is not in the way my English grandmother was white; many of the students I teach are similarly ambiguous. Front-line workers have a practical need to name these incremental changes. I was startled by the nurse's shout until I began to see it as a necessarily crude first step in developing a language to talk about

a society that is just beginning to take shape. In the future traditional racial categories will melt further, and Canada, aloof and European oriented, “America's attic,” as Patrick Anderson wrote, will become more like the rest of our mixed-race hemisphere. We will find our own way of describing our realities, as our hemispheric neighbours have done, and, like them, we will struggle to fit the bald divisions created by labels to the ever more intricate constitution of who we are.

---

*Stephen Henighan won First Prize in the 2016 McNally Robinson/Prairie Fire Short Fiction contest. His most recent novels are The Path of the Jaguar and Mr. Singh Among the Fugitives. Read more of his work at [geist.com](http://geist.com) and [stephenhenighan.com](http://stephenhenighan.com). Follow him on Twitter @StephenHenighan.*

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# Hoping Against Hope

ALBERTO MANGUEL

*Kafka's writing allows us intuitions and half-dreams but never total comprehension*

Yesterday morning, I woke up from troubled dreams and found myself thinking about Kafka and Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis. A question was ringing in my head: why does Gregor's metamorphosis occur? Why is it that Gregor wakes up one morning from troubled dreams and finds himself transformed into a giant insect?

"We read to ask questions," Kafka wrote to a friend. Indeed. Reading Kafka, we sense that these elicited questions are always just beyond our understanding, promising an answer but not now, perhaps next time. Something in his writing—something unfinished, carefully constructed, left open to the elements—allows us approximations, intuitions and half-dreams but never total comprehension. His are texts precise and severe, each page obtained "through anger," he says, "blow after blow." Kafka offers us absolute uncertainties. His style is summed up in his description of tree trunks in the snow. "In appearance they lie smoothly and a little push should be enough to send them rolling. No, it can't be done, for they are firmly wedded to the ground. But see, even that is only an appearance."

Reading Kafka allows us to discern in his work a kind of theological intuition, a slow and gradual ascent toward a terrible god that offers us at the same time happiness and the impossibility of enjoying it. For Kafka, the Garden of Eden still exists,

even though we no longer inhabit it. Like the law at whose doors waits the protagonist of the fable told in *The Trial*, the inaccessible Eden remains open for us until the moment of our death. Vladimir Nabokov, subtle reader of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, recognized in the fantastic tale a description of our daily fate. "The insect into which Gregor is transformed," Nabokov told his students at the university, "is a type of cockroach that has wings below its shell. And if Gregor found these wings, he would have been able to spread them and fly out of his prison." And Nabokov added: "Like Gregor, some Joes and Janes are not aware that they have wings under their shells, and can fly."

By means of this double game of salvation and guilt all Kafka's work is built. His human and animal heroes, who, like Gregor Samsa, pass from one condition to the other, are guilty without guilt, guilty simply because they exist. No one knows for what offence Josef K. in *The Trial* is condemned, nor for what fault K. will never reach the Castle. The crime committed by the prisoner in *The Penal Colony* cannot be known, not even by the prisoner himself, except by means of the needle that engraves, with infinite convolutions, the ineffable sin on his living flesh. Guilty without knowledge of their crime, saved but without means of salvation, we human beings are for Kafka modern

incarnations of Odysseus, whose forced return is constantly impeded by a capricious and persistent god. Kafka's answer to Max Brod, who, fed up with so much apparent pessimism, had exclaimed, "But if you say that, there's no hope!" is well-known. "Oh no," Kafka said with a smile. "There is hope, but not for us." Under such always alien hope we spend our laborious days and agonizing nights.

A year before his death, in the German spa of Müritz, Kafka met his sister Elli and her three small children. One of the children tripped and fell. The others were about to burst out laughing when Kafka, to prevent the child from feeling humiliated for his clumsiness, said to him in an admiring tone: "How well you performed that fall! And how admirably you stood up!" We can suppose that throughout his life, fall after fall, knowing all the while that he was hoping in vain, Kafka hoped that someone would speak to him these few words.

---

*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](http://alberto.manguel.com) and [geist.com](http://geist.com).*

# The Big Bang Theory of Canadian History

DANIEL FRANCIS

*One hundred years after it ended, the meaning of World War I remains unresolved.  
Was it the birth of a nation, or a tragic debacle?*



For What? by Frederick Varley, 1917–1919. Oil on canvas. 58" x 71.1".

**B**ack in November, just before Remembrance Day, my local newspaper published a full-page advertisement from the Vimy Foundation offering schoolteachers an opportunity to commemorate with their students the centennial of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. That World War I battle, which took place in April 1917, has long been considered a foundational event in Canadian history. For the first time all four Canadian infantry divisions fought together, 15,000 men leaving their trenches to attack the ridge,

a strongly defended high point on the front lines in northern France. French and British forces both had failed in previous attempts to take the ridge, considered one of the most impregnable German positions along the entire front, but the Canadians succeeded. It was a stunning victory and despite the cost—3,598 Canadians dead, 7,000 wounded—it has been memorialized over the years as a place and a moment when Canada “came of age.” Because of the valiant showing by Canadian soldiers at Vimy, and in other battles, World War I itself came

to be celebrated as an experience in which the country found its legs as an independent nation. The Vimy Foundation, whose work is aimed at promoting the legacy of Canada’s role in the war, and at Vimy Ridge in particular, promotes both these notions. “The message of Vimy,” declares the foundation’s website, “is one of bravery and sacrifice.” The battle “paved the way to an Allied victory and solidified Canada as a sovereign nation.” Canada “came of age” at Vimy.

As the 100th anniversary of Vimy approaches we can expect to hear more

of what the historians Ian McKay and Jamie Swift characterize as the High Diction of war: lofty rhetoric that seeks to romanticize or spiritualize the experience of conflict. In an earlier book, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (2012), McKay and Swift, both professors at Queen's University, criticized attempts by Stephen Harper's Conservative government to militarize Canadian society. Their new book, *The Vimy Trap: Or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War* (Between the Lines), narrows the focus to World War I and examines how attitudes toward that conflict have changed over the years. It is also a critique of what they call Vimyism, "a network of ideas and symbols that centre on how Canada's Great War experience somehow represents the country's supreme triumph... and affirm that the war itself and anyone who fought and died in it should be unconditionally revered and commemorated—and not least because it marked the country's birth." Central to Vimyism is the notion that by carrying the day on the battlefield our soldiers fostered a new awareness of Canadian nationality, what McKay and Swift call the "big bang theory of Canadian history." Just as the universe begins in an instant, the product of a cosmic explosion, so Canada begins at a moment in time when "our boys" proved themselves in battle and allowed the country to take its independent place alongside the heavyweights of the world. From colony to nation in the explosion of a mortar shell.

**D**uring and soon after the war, many veterans recognized that the High Diction so often used to describe their experience was contradicted by the Low Reality of life in the trenches, though for the most part the conviction that the war was a noble crusade held firm. McKay and Swift show that by the late 1920s,

however, disillusionment was setting in. Books like *Generals Die in Bed* (1928) by Charles Yale Harrison and *We Go On* (1930) by Will Bird articulated a less heroic vision of the war, told by men who had seen action on the front lines. For the two historians, this attitude is prefigured in the classic war painting by Frederick Varley, *For What?*, completed in 1918 and shown at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto the next year. Varley's canvas depicts gravediggers in a shattered, war-torn landscape, preparing the ground to receive a cartload of corpses, a sombre expression of the pointlessness of war. The artist wrote to his wife: "You in Canada ... cannot realize at all what war is like. You must see it and live it. You must see the barren deserts war has made of once fertile country... see the turned up graves, see the dead on the field, freakishly mutilated."

Another anti-romantic view of the war was embodied in the great Vimy Memorial that now commemorates the battle. McKay and Swift remind us that the monument was conceived, in the words of its designer, the sculptor Walter Allward, to be a "sermon against the futility of war." Unveiled at the site of the battle in 1936, it is inscribed with the names of 11,285 Canadians killed on French soil but without known graves. Allward eschewed the heroic motifs of conventional memorials—angels ascending with dead soldiers in their arms, that sort of thing—in favour of a series of mourning figures expressing grief and suffering. In fact McKay and Swift wonder whether the monument is a war memorial at all. "Allward himself," they write, "thought his monumental sermon against war had little to do with celebrating Canadian martial valour."

According to McKay and Swift the view that the war was a tragic mistake remained the dominant narrative until the 1980s, when the popular historian Pierre Berton published his history of

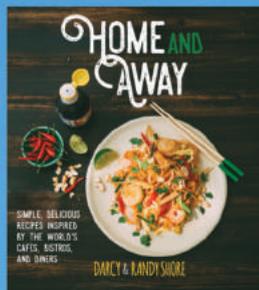
the battle in a book titled, simply, *Vimy* (1986). No one, they claim, did more than Berton to reinvigorate the "big bang" theory, the idea that Vimy was "the country's real birthday." McKay and Swift point out that Berton got many things wrong about the battle, but thanks to his stirring account it reclaimed its role as our "national fable." Whereas just a few years earlier battles such as Vimy Ridge were seen as pointless bloodbaths, after Berton and right down to the present day they are venerated as important milestones in national development. Even the hockey commentator Don Cherry says so. (McKay and Swift describe Cherry as "a flamboyant clown"; nonetheless he once topped a newspaper poll asking readers to name Canada's leading public intellectual!) Ignoring the fact that the battle did not actually accomplish much and that World War I was a deeply divisive event back in Canada, Vimyism nonetheless finds in military valour an origin story that supposedly unites all Canadians.

McKay and Swift argue that Vimyism encourages us to lose sight of the fact that there were/are two wars, the actual one and the imaginary one. The actual one was a disaster and a tragedy, hugely costly in terms of lives, money, national unity and long-term world peace. The imaginary one is a heroic crusade against a corrupt and vicious enemy. *The Vimy Trap* warns us not to confuse the two, not to allow our natural respect for and gratitude toward the veterans to blind us to the fact that war is about sacrifice and loss, not fables of identity.

---

*Daniel Francis is a writer and historian who lives in North Vancouver. He is the author of two dozen books including, most recently, Where Mountains Meet the Sea: An Illustrated History of the District of North Vancouver (Harbour Publishing). Read more of his work at [geist.com](http://geist.com) and [danielfrancis.ca](http://danielfrancis.ca).*

# SPRING AWAKENINGS



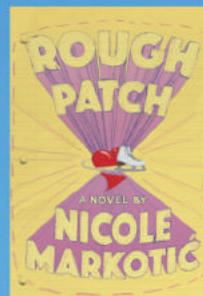
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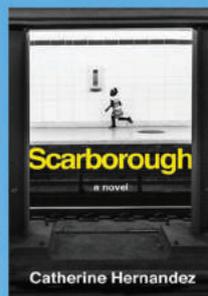
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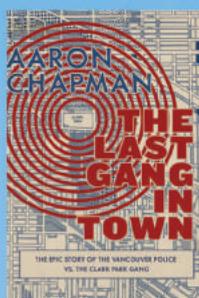
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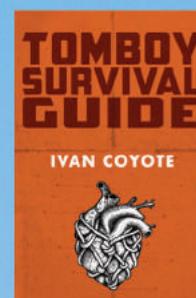
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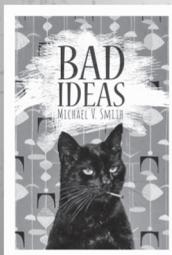
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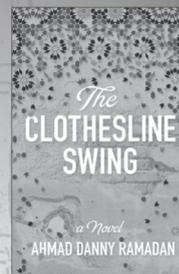
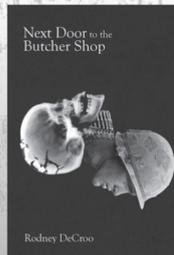
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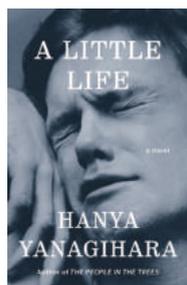
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# ENDNOTES

REVIEWS, COMMENTS, CURIOSA

## I'M SORRY

In Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* (Doubleday) the main character Jude says "I'm sorry" over 100 times. And he adds in "I'm so sorry" 30 times. You can't help thinking that other people should rather be apologizing to Jude, including the mother who abandoned him on a door stoop; the multiple priests who abused him physically and sexually in the monastery where he



lands; the priest who becomes his pimp; the doctor who runs him over on purpose; and his first boyfriend, who throws them down the stairs, in his wheelchair. All

of this leads Jude to regularly cut himself on the arms and legs with razor blades he keeps stashed under the bathroom sink. This is described with great gusto by Yanagihara, as in this passage: "He had begun a new method of balancing the edge of the blade on his skin and then pressing down, as deep as he could, so that when he withdrew the razor—stuck like an ax head into a tree stump—there was half a second in which he could pull apart the two sides of flesh and see only a clean white gouge, like a side of fat-ted bacon, before the blood began rushing in to pool within the cut." Despite all of the horror, Jude somehow becomes one of the most powerful, well-paid lawyers in Manhattan, lands a gorgeous boyfriend who is one of Hollywood's leading stars, and in a gesture of love is adopted as an adult by his saintly law professor. Still, Jude can't stop apologizing. *A Little Life* is a painful, pain-filled book. By the end

of it you'll feel that you have suffered a lifetime of abuse as well, or at least for the twenty or so hours it takes you to struggle through its 720 pages. The book became a bestseller in late 2015, receiving rapturous reviews from the *New Yorker* and many others. It was also described as "tedious" by the *New York Review of Books*, the writing "atrocious." The *Millions* calls it "bungling," "overwrought" and "sterile." I just can't recommend this book. I'm sorry.

—Thad McLroy

## GRAPHIC HEROISM

*The One Hundred Nights of Hero* by Isabel Greenberg (Doubleday Canada) is a beautifully illustrated graphic novel offering feminist adaptations of folk tales wrapped in an epic-feeling love story. Greenberg's newest book uses the same mythology presented in her earlier graphic novel, *The Encyclopaedia of Early Earth*, and explores storytelling as an essential element of what makes us human. The unwilling subject of a bet between her thick-wit-



ted husband and his friend, Cherry and her girlfriend Hero find themselves in hot water as the friend vows to seduce the seemingly chaste and loyal Cherry.

Scheherazade-style, Hero devises a plan to keep the foolish suitor at bay, telling nightly stories of strong women who defied cultural norms for (often female) love. Retelling fairy tales like the "Twelve Dancing Princesses" and the "Two Sisters," in addition to original narratives, Hero gives the

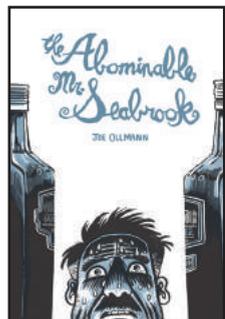
women in the stories fresh agency to choose their lives and lovers. I particularly enjoyed the stories framed by the League of Secret Storytellers, a matriarchal group of women who live outside the authority of men. Layered storytelling cautioning the evils of men give this book a satisfying feminist twist on familiar fairy tales, and provides a sharp commentary on misogyny and the women who must bloom under its confines. Female relationships, literacy and oral history are portrayed as the antidote to the poison of a patriarchal society. Greenberg's simple lines and stark colouring add to the tension and moody beauty of the stories; I especially loved the use of colour in her many moonlit scenes. There are many things to love about this collection, but my favourite is how Greenberg skillfully interweaves her stories and characters to create a rich apotheosis to female relationships.

—Kelsea O'Connor

## SEABROOK ADVENTURE

In *The Abominable Mr. Seabrook* (Drawn & Quarterly), Joe Ollmann begins with a reflective preamble called "Me and Mr. Seabrook," part of which reads, "I realized that no one knew about Seabrook's work—all his books were out of print at the time..." I imagine no one is familiar with Seabrook's work now, but many of us Baby Boomers would have come across his bestsellers on our parents' bookshelves. That's certainly how I discovered him—I pulled *Adventures in Arabia* from Mom & Pop's cabinet, and then avidly sought out Seabrook's other work, some of which was still available in used bookshops. William

Seabrook wrote with gripping veracity about other cultures, mysterious individuals and altered states of mind. It is said that Seabrook popularized the term “zombie” in the west, with the 1929 book *The Magic Island*. I

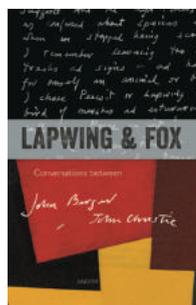


used to wonder if he also introduced the remote region of Timbuktu into the Western vernacular, with 1934's *The White Monk of Timbuctoo*. He wrote about his own life, *No Hiding Place*, with the same adventurous spirit. Curiously, Seabrook's second wife, Marjorie Worthington, wrote a biography called *The Strange World of Willie Seabrook*, which varies considerably from Seabrook's account. At one point she concluded, “Willie [...] always told the truth. His truth.” It reminds me of the one-liner: “There are always two sides to a story and they're both true.” A touching foreword from Ollmann reads, “The biggest thing I realized is the heavy responsibility of biography [...] I really didn't want to make a mess of Willie's life, messy as it was.” I feel compelled to assure him he's made no mess at all. His tribute to William Seabrook couldn't be more thorough, or more respectful. Two of Seabrook's books have recently been reprinted: *The Magic Island* (his adventures in Haiti) and *Asylum* (his adventures in a psychiatric hospital). So far, they've been slow to regain popularity. Ollmann's biography, on the other hand, is snowballing; there are already a dozen holds on *The Abominable Mr. Seabrook* at my local library.  
—*Fill Mandrake*

#### ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING GOODBYE

Those who were close to the late John Berger have spoken of his generosity, praising Berger's collaborative nature

and his ability to establish and sustain creative friendships throughout a long and productive life. Photographer Jean Mohr worked with Berger on a number of books, including *A Seventh Man*, a prescient and influential examination of the lives of migrant workers in Europe, a subject that is even more relevant today than when the book was first published in 1975. Mohr pays tribute to his fifty years of friendship with Berger in **John by Jean**, a book of photographs published last year by Occasional Press. As you leaf through the book you see Berger at work and at play; you see a lifetime compressed into 168 pages, Berger's hair colour changing from dark brown to snow white, his face gradually settling into its final landscape, the deep lines expressing (in Mohr's words) “a balance between the intellectual and the farmer.” The artist John Christie first



met Berger when he directed the BBC series *Another Way of Telling* (based on the 1982 book of the same name by Berger and Mohr), which attempted to lay the groundwork for a new theory of photography. Christie became a regular collaborator with Berger, their work together including *I Send You This Cadmium Red* (2001), an illustrated volume of their correspondence (now out of print, with copies commanding exorbitant prices on the Internet). This fascinating and beautiful volume now has an equally beautiful sequel: **Lapwing & Fox**, published last year by Christie's own imprint, Objectif Press ([objectifpress.co.uk](http://objectifpress.co.uk)). The letters in *Lapwing & Fox* are presented in two forms, the original letters in facsimile, followed by transcriptions. There is a distinct pleasure in slowly deciphering Berger's handwriting in the originals, puzzling out his annotations and corrections, single words inserted above a caret or elided

with a stroke, the emendations offering evidence of his thought processes. The conversations recorded in these letters range widely, the connecting thread being the creative act, and the varied means by which artists attempt to communicate their understanding of the visible and invisible aspects of the world. **A Jar of Wild Flowers** (Zed Books), a collection of short “essays in celebration of John Berger,” was originally published to mark Berger's 90th birthday in November of 2016. Berger died in January of this year, and the essays now serve as eulogies from some of the many who were influenced by his life and work.  
—*Michael Hayward*

#### MIDDLE-AGED SOFT ROCK BAND

The first thing John K. Samson (formerly of the band the Weakerthans) said when he and his band stepped onstage at the Commodore Ballroom on February 2 was, “Hi, we're a middle-aged soft rock band from Winnipeg, Manitoba.” Samson, a small, scruffy man with boyish charm and an impish stage presence, smiled as he sang. In the lull between two songs, he took a swig from a paper cup at his feet and said to someone in the crowd, barely audible in the mic, “It is peppermint tea, good nose.” He told the crowd that he'd never done karaoke because he didn't know what to do with his hands when he sang if he wasn't holding a guitar. He then passed his guitar to someone standing in the front row and said, “Hold onto this for me. Wow, this is scary. See you on the other side,” and sang “The Last And” with his hands free while he wandered around the stage and wagged the microphone cord back and forth. The crowd cheered and shouted, “You're doing so great!” A guy in a Jets jersey knocked back shots of whiskey at the bar. Pairs of middle-aged women wearing hoodies danced with gusto and groups of dowdy folks in sweaters and glasses nursed craft

beer in plastic cups along with gawky bearded men who swayed awkwardly to the music. When the band played “One Great City!”—the Weakerthans’ snarky ode to their love-hate relationship with Winnipeg—a lady in front of me leaned toward her friend and yelled, “He’s being ironic! He loves Winnipeg!”—*Roni Simunovic*

### FLYING CANOE

When I tried to describe the weird and wonderful book *Accordéon* by Kaie Kellough (ARP) to two Québécoise friends, I had to resort to reading a few excerpts because my own words failed me. How do you describe a book whose narrator may or may not be a man who rants outside a Jean Coutu drugstore in Montreal and/or an informer for the Quebec Ministry of Culture who is writing his “confession” in the form of a book that



claims to contain “the most detailed known accounts of the flying canoe”? My Québécoise friends told me that the Flying Canoe (or *Chasse-Galerie*)

comes from a Québécois folk tale about some loggers who wanted to get home to their wives for New Year’s Eve but they were snowed in, so they made a deal with the devil who agreed to fly them home in a canoe if they agreed not to fly over any church steeples or mention God’s name. From there the tale veers off in several directions, depending on which version you read or which movie you watch, much the way *Accordéon* wanders around Montreal (“a great North American hub of disorder”) and moves back and forth in history from Louis Riel to Marc Lépine to the Plains of Abraham and from a box of books abandoned on the sidewalk (which is likened to the canoe), to the Eaton Centre, yoga

pants, the “mobilization of the global working class,” things that get lost in translation and the “restless ancestry” of Quebecers. Sidebars contain comments from the mysterious “MC” and “MC2”, the identities of whom may have become clear to me by the end of the book. *Accordéon* is a hilarious, mind-boggling romp of a book about Montreal and the ever-changing and unmanageable Quebec culture. Read it to your friends!—*Patty Osborne*

### THE OVE WITHIN

For *Ove*, the central character in the film *A Man Called Ove* there is nothing ahead but frustration, disappointment and sadness. “It’s just chaos when you’re not here,” he says to his newly departed wife as he lays flowers on her grave. Tragedy has remade him and he is unrecognizable to himself; to his neighbours and friends, Ove has become an irritable, isolated old man. Ove looks for ways to join his wife in

death and has conversations with the pregnant woman who has just moved in next door with her family. The noise and happy chaos of her life makes her resistant to his anger and hopelessness as he keeps failing at his attempts to reach the afterlife. *A Man Called Ove* isn’t dark (it was released on Christmas Day in Sweden in 2015). The combina-

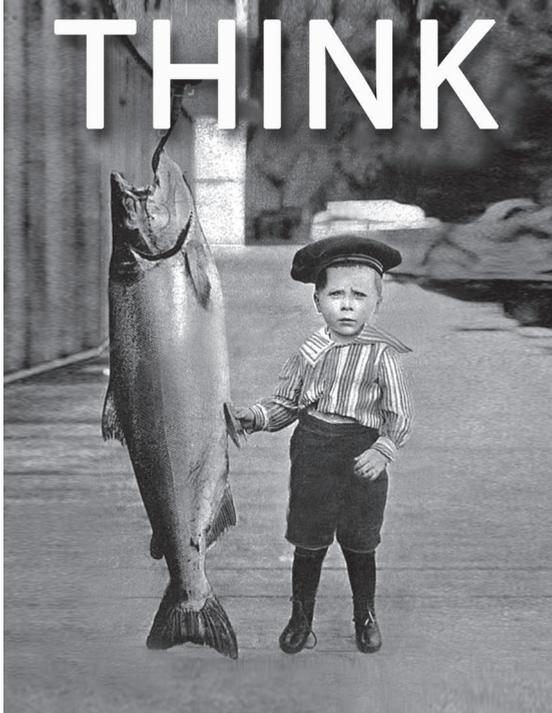


tion of pathos, humour and good will makes this a deeply universal film and so much more than a simple all-you-need-is-love story. Lucky or unlucky, life happens.

We either know a man like Ove, or he’s hiding inside us. We observe a man’s behaviour, but what do we know until we ask? This film is worth every cinematic minute.

—*Connie Kubns*

# THINK BIG!



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## OFF THE SHELF

The Winnipeg Humane Society insists that the greasy pig chase be removed from Dominion Day programming in *A Tale of Two Divas: The Curious Adventures of Jean Forsyth and Edith J. Miller in Canada's Edwardian West* by **Elspeth Cameron** with **Gail Kreutzer** (J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing). Rudley has no time for Norman and Geraldine's infernal birdwatching in *Almost Unpleasant Picture* by **Judith Alguire** (Signature Editions). An old man decapitates eel after eel at a Hong Kong fish market in *Bleaker House* by **Nell Stevens** (Knopf Canada). In *Dazzle Ships* (ECW Press), **Jamie Sharpe** is falling in love with himself, but he wants to see other people. In *Stray* (icehouse poetry), **Allison LaSorda** decides that she has never wanted anything badly enough to melt her face off for it. A juror in a hick town witnesses the execution of a chambermaid in *Nights as Day, Days as Night* by **Michel Leiris**, translated by **Richard Sieburth** (Spurl Editions). Adam licks two thousand kilometres' worth of dead bugs off the front of a tour van in *Dirty Windshields* by **Grant Lawrence** (Douglas & McIntyre). The Lover's car catches on fire and she passes out drunk in a churchyard in *The Supine Cobbler*, a play by **Jill Connell** (Coach House Books). David Byrne serenades a lamp in *The Sweets of Home* by **Rob Kovitz** (Treyf Books). A gaggle of drunks stumble down the path that Dickens once walked in *Be My Wölff* by **Emma Richler** (Knopf Canada). Rainbreathing peach trees thicken the mist around them in *Hoarfrost & Solace* by **Fan Wu** (espresso chapbooks). In *Fail Better: Why Baseball Matters* (Biblioasis), **Mark Kingwell** says that New Haven is a blue-collar sports town that tolerates the denizens of Yale as long as they don't get too cocky. In *Bad Endings* (Anvil Press), **Carleigh Baker** says you should wear a suit when you fly in case you get upgraded to business class. **Sarah de Leeuw** packs a hitchhiker

into her car and doesn't argue about the can of beer she keeps in her hand in *Where It Hurts* (NeWest Press). Booze, drugs, academia and sex are a few of the ways one can stave off the pressure of unrequited love, according to **Leanne Dunic** in *To Love the Coming End* (BookThug). Jyoti assumes that Dr. Asli has prints of muscular Greek men in his living room because he's interested in the human body in *An Extraordinary Destiny* by **Shekhar Paleja** (Brindle & Glass). Jake launches a campaign to clean up gassy effusions from the Insatiable Maw of the Copper Cliff smelter in *Wintersong* by **Mick Lowe** (Bakara Books). A Senegalese family takes their pet sheep to the beach for a bath and everyone makes a fuss over it in *Sun of a Distant Land* by **David Bouchet**, translated by **Claire Holden Rothman** (Véhicule Press). Two babysitters toss back Jell-O shots after the kids have gone to bed in *Blue Field* by **Elise Levine** (Biblioasis). In *The Analyst* (Biblioasis), **Molly Peacock** asks: don't we all deserve a good slump? Bootleg margarine gets smuggled into Newfoundland and dyed yellow in *The Bosun Chair* by **Jennifer Delisle** (NeWest Press). **Harvey Amani Whitfield** tells the history of Loyalist families settling in British North America in *North to Bondage* (UBC Press), the first ever book on slavery in the Maritimes. Charlotte's father keeps a loaded gun next to his bed and discharges it out the window every morning in *Mad Richard* by **Lesley Krueger** (ECW Press). **Michael M. Nybrandt** has a vivid dream in which he coaches Tibet's national football team in *Dreams in Thin Air*, illustrated by **Thomas E. Mikkelsen** and translated by **Steffen Rayburn-Maarup** (Conundrum Press). A droopy-eyed klutz falls drunk into the gold, wind-whispered foothills in *Otolith* by **Emily Nilsen** (icehouse poetry). In *All Saints* by **K.D. Miller** (Biblioasis), Kelly says that Anglicans don't really forbid anything, they just decide they're above it.

## NOTED ELSEWHERE

Jen Sookfong Lee says that the stories in *Everything Is Awful and You're a Terrible Person* by **Daniel Zomparelli** (Arsenal Pulp Press) "will take up residence in your head"; Zoe Whittall calls it a "weird, perfect gem of a book"; Vivek Shraya calls it "quipping prose that fuses poetry and digital communication"; the comedian John Early says, "This is admittedly the first book I've read since Grindr was invented." *NPR Books* says that *The Little Washer of Sorrows* by **Katherine Fawcett** (ThistleDown Press) "injects the weird into the mundane"; Rebecca on Amazon.ca says that after reading each story, she felt like she just ate at the fanciest, wildest, most risky restaurant in town; Penny on Goodreads says she enjoyed the book but by the time she got to the end, she'd had enough. Sonnet L'Abbé calls *The Bosun Chair* by **Jennifer Delisle** (NeWest Press) "a treasure-box of Newfoundland lore." The *Winnipeg Free Press* says that the poems in *A perimeter* by **rob mcLennan** (New Star Books) "crash fragment against fragment in an elegy for "u((n)in)t(e)rr((u)pte)d s(l)ee)p." Jennifer Nelson calls *Common Place* by **Sarah Pinder** (Coach House Books) "generous, beautiful and difficult," and Sue Sinclair says it's "a friend of the abject landscape." Katherena Vermette says that *This Accident of Being Lost* by **Leanne Betasamosake Simpson** (House of Anansi) "blends song and story, humour and truth"; Naomi Klein calls it "playful, pissed off and ferociously funny"; Thomas King calls Simpson "one of the more articulate and engaged voices of her generation."

## CONGRATULATIONS

To **Katherine Fawcett** for being shortlisted for the 2016 Sunburst Award for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic and nominated for the 2017 ReLit Award for Short Fiction for her collection *The Little Washer of Sorrows* (ThistleDown Press).

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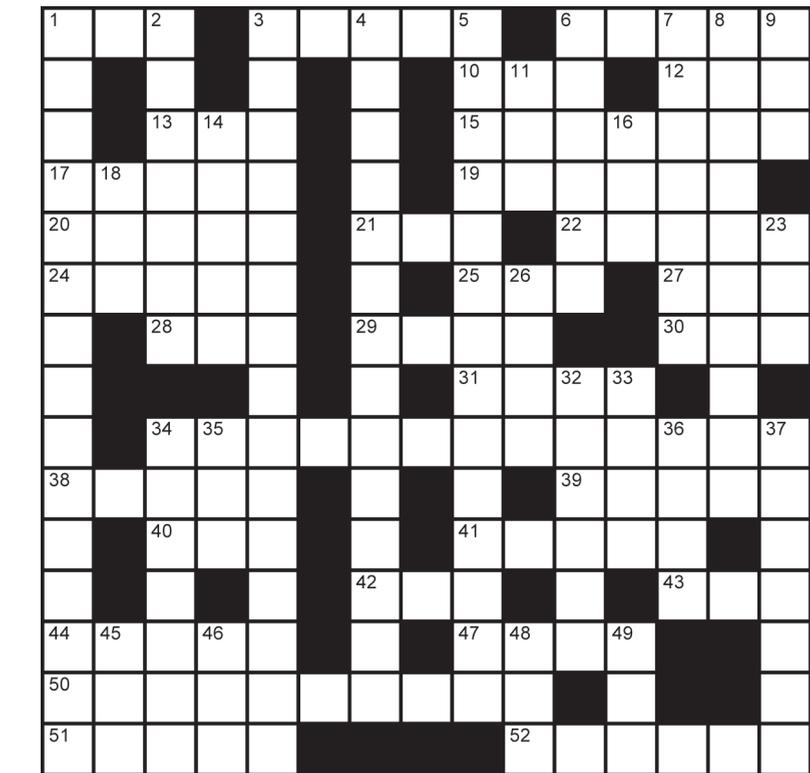
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The winner will be selected at random from correct solutions received and will be awarded a one-year subscription to *Geist* or—if already a subscriber—a *Geist* magnet. Good luck!

## ACROSS

- 1 The French said there's nothing fake about that decolonized soup
- 3 When Stan was one he understood a lot of what he received
- 6 The emergent plan is to cross the street
- 10 A while back all those paintings had a home on the grange
- 12 Frank loved to go down the river in January to see a girl
- 13 Would the shady Dutch one work?
- 15 I gather that immigrants are always doing this, when they're not grinning
- 17 Are you available to drink some beer? (2)
- 19 Sounds like Tom didn't mean to be mean, it wasn't on his mind
- 20 My true heart says it's petty but it's just wrong!
- 21 It was a windy day when he and Sylvia said goodbye to the east
- 22 That sandy ridge reeks of ice
- 24 That even-toed ungulate is smokin' hot
- 25 This comes last, but not in the US
- 27 This time don't walk or you won't make any unexceptional money
- 28 Around here some of the wordsmiths could belong to the horse talker (abbrev)
- 29 Things are really heating up in Amsterdam. Hope they can keep the lid on.
- 30 Theo sure talks a lot
- 31 She records everything she saw
- 34 If things get hectic, tell Ken so he doesn't look up and panic! (2)
- 38 Right, let's pay her the same!
- 39 Little beagle always follows the rules
- 40 Get twenty of them to haul that borax over there (abbrev)
- 41 Sounds like Polly has many talents
- 42 Is he still going around giving people the hairy eyeball?
- 43 Let's give the kids some food before we talk about the competition (abbrev)
- 44 That story certainly kindles some nookie!
- 47 Send me what's left before she puts a stop to it
- 50 Give me that beer can, sir, and then



- mount your horse with the others
- 51 She was attracted before being hoodwinked by Ken
  - 52 Those animal stories seem like false news to me
- ## DOWN
- 1 To tell you the truth, when he gets nosy and starts blushing, I like pulling his strings (2)
  - 2 If you see a good omen, tie it once before
  - 3 Don't let that little guy spin around or get away because I'm sure that once we name him we'll have power over him
  - 4 The first monk thinks that once she is familiar with the new system, she'll find the region just right (2)
  - 5 Even though she's unlisted, her ponytail has a nice shape and she always gets her ratios right (2)
  - 6 What the heck do you have for currency?
  - 7 A knitter loves a bauble to mark the row
  - 8 That girl in the ashes thinks chemistry is filled with evil concoctions
  - 9 Even though she had a sore eye, she rode a big one in the pen
  - 11 Drink this tonic and then put some cotton on it before it gets rummy
  - 14 He got a medal but couldn't use his leg
  - 16 In principle, let's not let it get complicated (abbrev)
  - 18 Moses was at the club and he was packing some pieces for the firing (abbrev)
  - 23 That is so hot it's extremely cool

- 26 Is that lone substance organic?
- 32 Sounds like she needs to take a breath before joining that group of gold diggers
- 33 Let's change that. Oh, wait, let's not.
- 34 Holy cow, that's fancy stitching!
- 35 Sounds like John was mad that dinner wasn't kosher
- 36 On the 5th we get a sacred gift (abbrev)
- 37 Her pixie just wanted to borrow some sugar to put on the mushrooms
- 45 Talk to me about common hitting as opposed to following the herd
- 46 Paul and his mates asked for an award-winning English apple (abbrev)
- 48 We're too low on assets (abbrev)
- 49 Are you crying because your mom was mean?

There was no winner for Puzzle 103.

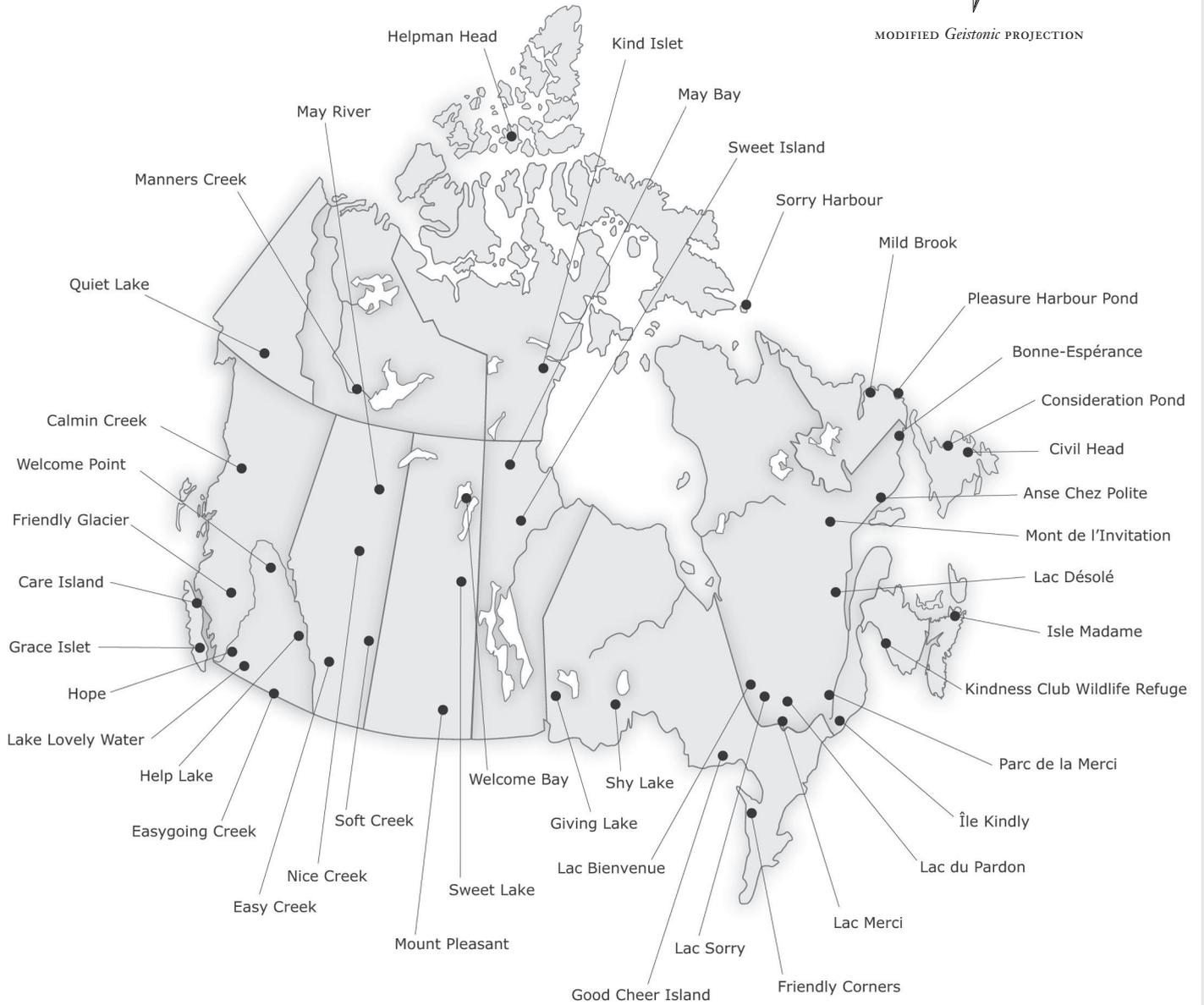


# Born to be Mild

*The Inoffensive Map of Canada*



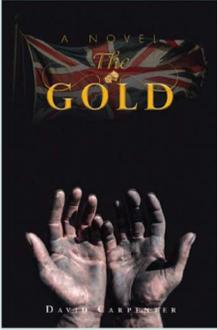
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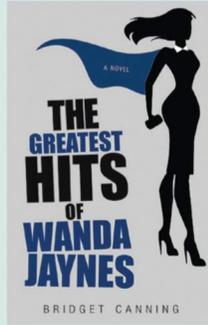


COMING THIS SPRING!



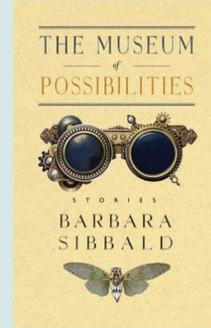
As Joseph Burbidge discovers, finding gold is half the battle.

COTEAU BOOKS | HISTORICAL FICTION



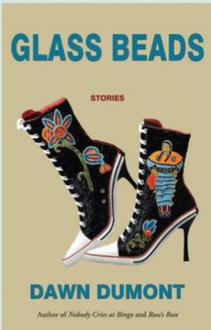
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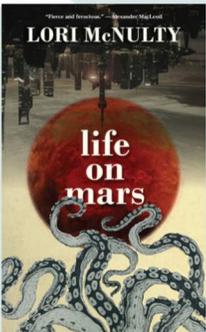
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BOOKTHUG | NON-FICTION



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INANNA PUBLICATIONS | FICTION



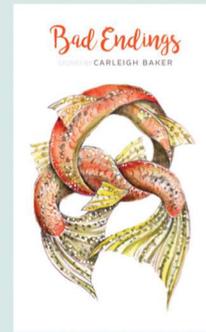
The debut from two-time Journey Prize nominee Lori McNulty.

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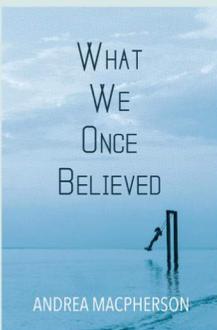
What's worse? Touching strangers or touching no one?

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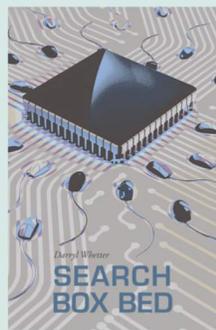
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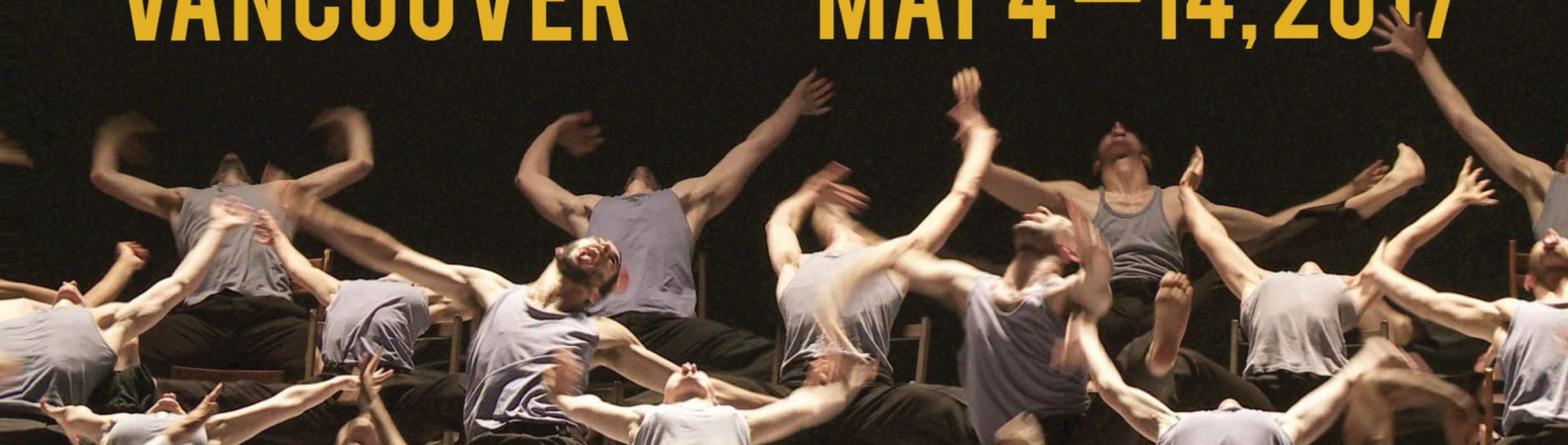
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