



The Trinity Review





THE TRINITY REVIEW 131
Winter Journal



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Foreword from the Editors

It is 2019 and we are quickly running out of time to make *Blade Runner* into reality. The future has come and it is not exciting or apocalyptic or terminal- it is boring and even the cruelty that would normally mask itself with dramatic purpose is frustratingly, depressingly banal. If there is any profound, universal feeling that can be wrung out of our times, it is disappointment. The following collection of art and text, then, is an artifact of that boredom. But far from being boring the works collected here are among the best amateur writing and visual art in the country today. Alternately funny, sad, surreal and angry but always engaging, this Winter Journal is undeniably a triumph. Reader, it has been an honour to compile this collection, we hope you take equal pleasure in reading it.

The Artist is Dead,
long live the artist.

- U.M, D.M, G.M

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Performance 1

harrison wade

Everyone gets home safe
in the snow. Seasons change.
The stage is swept. A spring
storm wanders in, then out. The garden
you planted has bloomed by August.

And with those tomatoes
you make salads
for all the friends you can fit
into your third floor
home. You eat. In silence,
a beginning stretches between
two mouths. Next

year you decide you will plant green beans and hope
they grow. Without AC, you sweat.
When your friends leave,
you gather up their crumbs, their hair,
their lint like seeds.

Dino Bones

harrison wade

Was it a book or the backyard
where we found that half-earthed
skeleton? It stuck out of the wet ground, clung
to the dirt that hugged the curve
of its spine. We brushed it with tooth-
brushes or stared at the print. Imagine it
The white brown bones—too small for us—but
maybe a neighbour we knew. An animal,
maybe. Maybe already extinct. With pedicles
and laminae and posterior tubercles, coccyx
and vertebrae lumbales and every graceful shape:

someone unearthed them all (was it us? or
the archaeologist who stood back, proud and jealous,
while the photographer took back what would be fixed,
a few images, already—

oh! how quick the afternoon
passes us by.

A Grim House in Heaven

ben ghan

Ash tree in the yard frozen
Icicles hang doomed men, in shapes of black

I am one-eyed//back stooped//hat tucked low
I'm there, noose round neck, spear in side.

I close one eye: for knowledge and
give myself to myself, for myself

Walls are cracked and hollow, wires like roots
where there should be nothing,

Two birds, fly through my universe.
thought and memory in my ear

Thought says *There are fountains there,*
it is speaking of my injured side

When Memory caws *I've seen them run*
it is speaking of the end of the universe.

I who cut the heads of fathers
to make the bones of my house

and the Giants house
and every house

And Hel

the book falls from my hands
as I see the frost-bite tree

World-tree painted on its pages
she is painted on me.

and there I am, I am.
I am. In Sap, in blood.

I know when I say *There are fountains there*
I am speaking about ourselves

when she answers *I've seen them run*
she is speaking of the Wolf.

The Astronomers

bruce meyer

The tall wet grass,
crickets in mad love,

the moon on the water
where shoreline reeds

broke the thin light
into ribbons of joy –

everything stays up late
on a summer night

the way my daughter and I
used to lie on the dock

and stare at the stars
when she was little.

She has grown now,
taller and more lovely,

but neither of us
is big enough to say

we touched the stars
they way they touch us,

or how their light
sank in the dark bay

and rocked the footings
until we fell asleep.

human
& human

ingrid cui

I.

The acrylic paints you opened
in that air-conditioned midnight
seared my body in diluted desire,
burned phosphorescence into
my skin; I could not speak –
only the pain
of flowered sheets
was real,
and that I clenched until morning.

ii.

When it is not dawn yet
I think about the apathy
with which
you moved your hands over me
with which
you loved me;
and how I crave it dearly.

iii.

I like your eyes
when they don't care
because then it means you won't leave.

IV.

It makes me forget
those eyes I saw then;
canvassing their path, sweeping
away possibilities of us, digging
rigs of oil out of my chest;
opening
a hole that has not closed –
an ache that has not cleared.
My body spread-eagled

over the empire state building
has not sunk,
but slides further down the spire
piercing me
every day.
Those eyes I do not see anymore.

V.

Metal fills the void
made by bristling brushes
better than any wood glue can,
so I do not complain the barren excuses,
the pill bottles
of uncurable diseases;
or the scars in lamplight under long brown hair
that will never be enough
to satisfy that ache

or bring back that high.

vi.

So when I am lonely
and when you try to love me
(for you will, eventually)
it shall be time to destroy again
kill each other
and start anew
in the land of no tomorrow

vii_o.

even though we know
that the missing will start soon; even
as

I.

we cry ourselves to sleep
because that was the best we've ever had.

Nerve Bouquet

MA|DE

mark laliberte and jade wallace

And then there was the outbreak;
milk blue marble in an empty hallway.
A spiral staircase rings ouroboros.
Under threat, the body eats its unshed cells,
Moebius stripping itself to death.

Upsy-daisy, glitching in a hoopla cry.
The system, having quarantined a virus,
resets. Chrome spiderwebs on the windows
in the fiction of grey matter; if this
circulatory system were more of a circuit board,
medicine might work. If this ambit were an
abyss, it could never be mined.

One day, even this loop of fingers
will be impossible, but I will still
slither into the gyre of your hand, or turn
to honeysuckle, twining around
your slack knuckles.

The Oval Window

MA|DE

mark laliberte and jade wallace

An eroded night in black vinyl
Cocteau, Ravel, Walt Disney
cock-eared, revel, all whimsy.
Say oui, Simone. Say,

Scott's not the only Fitzgerald.
Wish, starry-eyed, to get
Hurt on Holiday in Mississippi.
Needle digs sound from a spiral:

pressure of air, amplified by bones
Malleus, Incus, Stapes
a taste of honey. *Say au revoir,*
Simone.

Tea Time

sana mohtadi

I tip the tin lid, I crack and crunch
A nip and nug of moon and milk
I cram jam between the bun and dip
It into sweet muck, mocking mom
Who sits, sorting spools in a smock,
Looking at her zoo, little ones zap
And zoom across the room
To the tick of a crystal clock, waiting
To munch on moon and jam and bun
Until the noon sun peeks and ducks.

Team

katrina abgayani

I sit in the theatre and watch the backs of
our glowing heads, unholy. Neon green.
I think love should have
a more graceful exit.
We shuffle out of dark rooms, hands shielding eyes from afternoon sun
and real life, again.
The corona stays, but we split.

I slip between evenings now.
I follow their seams. Sometimes, in the
one-way glass of the subway window,
your face floats towards me.
There is no room for fear or desire,
just the implication of teeth:
shiny mouths promising nothing.

We said again and again, stumbling:
*next Thursday? Next, next,
again?*
We wake in April
with no recollection.
I shake my own thawed and empty hands.

The way I am, generally,
is parallel to you:
the same accident on different highways.
We fled the scene.

The skins of trains grazing past each other in the tunnel: it's as close as we get
now. We collapse against the afternoon, more
fragile than intended,
or planned.

Say it to my face. That we stay
like this, like
this.

There is so Much Room

chad norman

A piece of fluff
comes on a breeze
to tell me something,
what it is I leave up to
the health of my imagination
I continue to consider a wealth,
something I will figure out.
A journey started at a tree
up on a branch where
Alarm sends messages from,
where the results of Wars
avoid the tales told by
news programs, social medias,
the smiling liars enslaved by ratings.

A piece of fluff on a breeze
comes to tell me
I must learn what I can
about fears only those
the War Mongers love to cause,
I must rise above so many
and understand Inclusion
before any acceptance of what
others around me believe
to be a useful stance,
a stance the future will reveal
as simply a form of what
the past suffered, a form of
knowing but not knowing.

નિષ્ફળતા (/ Failure)

nisarg patel

This is a poem which will not be written in its true form. This is a poem which will die within the cracks of its own translation. My grandmother, who cannot read-speak-write English, will not appear. She will not come to say આકાશમાં ચંદ્ર જેવા તેજસ્વી થાઓ. And what I will end up saying will never be as poetic as those words of my grandmother. And neither will my grandmother's memory of the *British Raj* will be offered. This poem will not allow it. And neither will my grandmother. ~~The subjugated bodies of the subaltern have been struggling to find a language to speak to represent themselves from the year 1947; and, the only way they have found yet is to speak the words fed by the colonizers: you are reading one now. I must take this opportunity to tell you that we have been satisfactorily successful~~ My grandmother and her cows prefer different pastures than the one of 'Sir' Philip Sydney or William Wordsworth. There are no Aeolian harps on the hills where she took her cows everyday. And neither is there a romanico-exhultation during her walk towards the top of the hill—if anything there is fatigue and anxieties of failing crop and her son who is falling sick.

બા મારી નાતો Strand,

નલ Eliot,

નલ Gluck,

નલ Simic વાંચશે.

કેવો Yetas, ને કેવો Shakesepare

[Shame unto death, which we as a successful colonial-imperial state induced in the colonized subjects, was reported in majority of the population. I must take the opportunity to tell you that we have been satisfactorily successful]

ગેલફાડીયા અંગ્રેજો એ દેશ ની પત્તર ફાડી નાખી.

Mulling Devotional Poem

alessia oliva

1. You burned all your diaries when you were 13 and now you can't forgive yourself.

I know you are walking through elephant concrete head down;
contemplating scenes

You want to see something change and you feel it I know you do, in your chest it pulses; feel it deeper. There is a manifesto in there.

2. Admit it to yourself: you are dreaming of a man(ugh)'s chest barreled beneath you like an air mattress, you want to ride his cascading breaths like immaculate waves (UGH).

3. You remember many bikinis ago in a perfect lake. Emerald peaks, sparkling cracks more perfect than shattered car windows. Chest down on boogie board tugging and grunting upwards striving for illumination. Huff and respire; a sweet rocking on cold water's surface.

4. Remember other instances of touch- deeper still: gripping your baby sister in a California ocean and her tiny knuckles white from clawing your neck as you cling and bob at earth's mercy. A massive swell pushes you and other bobbing heads towards the ruthless sand, and in this neutral smothering you hold her tiny body above the surface, keeping her lungs open. You drench, resurface. Clamp her tadpole body in your sentinel arms and breathe air again.

5. Your name is perfect and righteous language. Nothing more holy lies between chest rise-and-falls than lips on your forehead; perfect syntax. Exalting swelling heart heat with the running of palms. The roughness and coarseness of Hair; holy scripture. The richest understanding of crevices. You do not want to leave this Holding. You are thinking that this is the only time you will feel *this present*.

6. You forget that you, too, are a sublime gift. You entertain notions of ancient grace in the charged midst of these entanglements.

7. These days you spend your time re-wiring enlightenment and being more realistic about holiness. Sister Mary never told you that you would crave sharp pain. Digging through moments with the same restlessness you had as a child, searching for rocks that sparkled in a vast beach of dull sand, wanting to feel clairvoyant.

8. Leave me alone in rapture please. I feel cursed by every inch of distance on your mattress. I know it is hubris to sweat-cement my skin to yours. I know I will never save you from drowning like I saved my sister, but maybe the tightness is the same; maybe I can hold your body like I held hers, in a different version of the sea.

The Gift

katie schmidt

The dog came again that morning. Mary saw him through the screen door, snuffling around in the rosebushes. He barked when he saw her and climbed up the sun-worn wooden steps, standing expectantly with his nose pressed to the screen.

“Go away,” she said, waving her hands to shoo him. The dog lifted his head in response, looking only more eager at the attention. Mary sighed and turned stiffly back into her kitchen. She slowly lowered herself onto one of the crooked chairs, her joints straining. Around her, the farmhouse creaked. The old frame used to start talking only when there was a storm but outside there was just a soft summer breeze. Mary looked past the curling wallpaper and out the open window. There was the dog, digging around in the vegetable garden, the sun glinting off his brown fur. With another sigh, she painstakingly got back up and pulled the linen curtains tightly closed, leaning against the wall to rest a moment. She felt particularly old today.

* * *

The walls of the store burned a sharp, electric pink. Intent on her task, Angela tore through the rack of silky lingerie: red, red, deep purple, crimson, black, hot pink, red. A thought crossed her mind that the store could really benefit from a splash of green, but she ignored it and pulled a black bustier from the rack. It looked far too sexy. It would do.

Checking the time, she veered past the changeroom line and went right to the cashier, a peppy blond woman who looked unreasonably cheery for 5:30 pm on a Wednesday. Even before Angela reached her, the woman made eye contact and smiled. She reached her hands out to grab the bustier from Angela, smiling knowingly as she identified it.

“Must be a special occasion for someone,” the cashier chirped, her eyebrows raised as if they were in on the same joke. Angela tried to affect the same level of enthusiasm:

“It sure will be!” She inwardly cringed. *Why did her voice sound so loud?* The cashier laughed a high-pitched giggle, scanning the bustier through and folding it up into tissue paper that was even more pink

than the store’s walls. Angela paid, grabbed the bag she was offered and quickly headed for the door, ignoring the “enjoy!” that was thrown at her back.

* * *

Mary pushed open the screen door. Within a second of it slamming shut, the dog appeared, bounding from behind the garage. She started to back up but stopped when she thought of how foolish she was being.

“Go home,” she said sternly to the dog, as she marched down the steps; her knees aching with each impact. The dog trotted happily at her side as she continued as briskly as her body would let her down the long driveway. She stopped next to the road and the dog stopped with her. Mary pulled a small stack of colourful envelopes out of metal mailbox and decisively shut it. She turned around and the dog waited behind her with his tongue out.

“Surely you must belong to someone,” she said. When she heard the softness in her voice, she pulled herself up straighter and commanded, “Go back to them!”

The dog wagged his tail.

Inside again, Mary returned to the kitchen table, but before sitting down she pulled the curtain aside and saw the dog was back to sniffing around in the rosebushes. She left the curtain open to keep an eye on him.

* * *

Angela pulled into the gas station parking lot. She grabbed the paper bag from the back seat and headed into the store. The bell dinged as she entered, and she stepped quickly into one of the overstuffed aisles feeling distinctly self-conscious. She stopped for a second in front of the sparse display of cards. *Shit*, she thought, but her attention was grabbed by a sign indicating the location of the bathroom and she made a bee-line to it.

Once the door was locked behind her, she stripped off her clothes, careful to not let anything touch the filthy tiled floor. She fished out some black stockings she’d stuffed into her purse that morning, pulled them on and then squeezed into the new lacy garment. Struggling slightly with the ties, she finally got it on and turned to the mirror. Angela’s shoulders sagged when she caught sight of herself. In the store, amidst the huge blown-up photos of lounging buxom women, her purchase had seemed to make sense, but here in the unforgivingly bright light of the

bathroom, she looked painfully as if she was trying too hard. Angela stared at her skin, pale and wan under all the tight black lace. Her hair, which was pulled back in a bun as per her usual fashion, looked ridiculously prim. She wrenched it out of the hair tie, but it only hung limply, still bearing awkward crimps where the elastic had been. Unable to turn away from the image, Angela stood staring, unsure if she was mocking or being mocked.

* * *

The cards were the usual sort of thing: pastel coloured and covered with paper flowers, smiling birthday cakes and the odd cute animal. They all were scratched with a different version of the same message. *We miss you. We miss the old place. The kids are doing great. We're going to come visit just as soon as things calm down here.* Mary re-folded each of them wearily and tucked them back into their envelopes. She looked out the window to check on the dog but all she saw were the fields outside, and the grass blowing gently in the wind. She leaned forward to see if he'd gotten into the roses again or slipped behind the garage. Mary was so absorbed in peering out the window that she didn't notice her phone had been ringing until the house once again grew quiet.

She sighed, stood up from the table again and picked up the cordless phone. She settled into her overstuffed green couch in the next room. It had surely been her niece, Mary decided, dialing her number and waiting as it rang.

* * *

The ringing jolted Angela from the sight in the mirror. Checking the name on the screen she went to reject the call but changed her mind and picked up.

"Hey Aunt M", she said, "happy birthday." The voice of her aunt on the other end was quiet and wavered slightly. "No, I didn't call you," she assured her, "must have been another one of the kids."

"Oh dear," muttered Aunt Mary. She was silent for a moment. "While I have you Angela, I meant to ask...are you working late tonight? I have some stew leftover and I thought maybe we could watch one of those musicals—" she trailed off. Angela lifted her eyes back to her glaring reflection. She shivered despite the summer heat and looked pointedly at the wall.

"Not tonight, Aunt M. Sorry. I'm working late, and I got to pick up some groceries for John and me. Soon, though." Her aunt mumbled a bit more, but the phone connection was too poor to make it out. Angela

didn't bother asking her to repeat it. "I've got to go now, okay? Enjoy the night, though. Do something nice for yourself, you hear." She hung up and determined to see the situation with a new resolve, pulled her dress pants back on and buttoned her shirt over top of the bustier. *I picked up a little present for after work,* she practiced on the way out of the gas station.

* * *

The phone rang again. Mary picked it up quickly, hoping her niece had changed her mind.

"Angela," she greeted her caller.

"Sorry ma'am," a man's voice answered, "this is Randy from a couple doors down from you. I think your dog found his way into my yard. You want me to bring him over?"

"He's not my dog," she answered curtly, promptly hanging up.

* * *

Back in the car, Angela called John's work phone. His assistant Amy picked up.

"You just missed him," she said, "he rushed right out of the office like always."

Angela took her exit off the highway. The clouds were beginning to gather overhead, and the sky was darkening. "Thanks Amy," Angela said, and hung up.

She called John, staring up at the dark clouds as she listened to the ringing over the car's speakers. Just before she thought it would go to voicemail, he picked up.

"Angie. Hey. I should have called, but I'll be stuck at the office tonight."

"But—"

"I know babe. I'm sorry. Look I can't talk right now but I'll make it up to you." He hung up before she had time for further protests.

Angela held perfectly still for a moment. She knew she should feel angry, she knew she should call him back, but all she felt was tired. A deep kind of tired buried in her bones and woven into the fabric of her clothes. It had started to rain outside and Angela veered sharply to the left, almost missing the turn.

Angela felt the lace beneath her clothes chafe against her skin and the thick material press uncomfortably against her rib cage. It took her a while to notice she was crying. The road ahead blurred in front of her. She reached to wipe her eyes, but as her arm was in the air something thudded against the car.

Angela jolted forward, slammed on the brakes. She got out of the car, not bothering to pull off to the side. In the middle of the road, a few feet away, a dog lay motionless. His fur was brown and matted from the rain and something darker. Angela let out a single choked sob, got back in the car as quickly as she could and sped off.

The visibility was diminishing sharply as she drove, and her apartment suddenly seemed very far away. With a racing heart she turned off the main road and took the familiar gravel sideroad to her aunt's house.

She pulled into the driveway. Even through the rain, she could see one of the lights on in the living room. It shone almost merrily on that stormy evening. Angela got out, ignoring the water as it drenched her hair and slowly seeped through her clothes and into the heavy material of the bustier.

The rose bushes that lined the walk were looking bedraggled from the rain, their petals scattered on the wooden steps. Angela slowly climbed the steps, took a deep breath and knocked on the door.

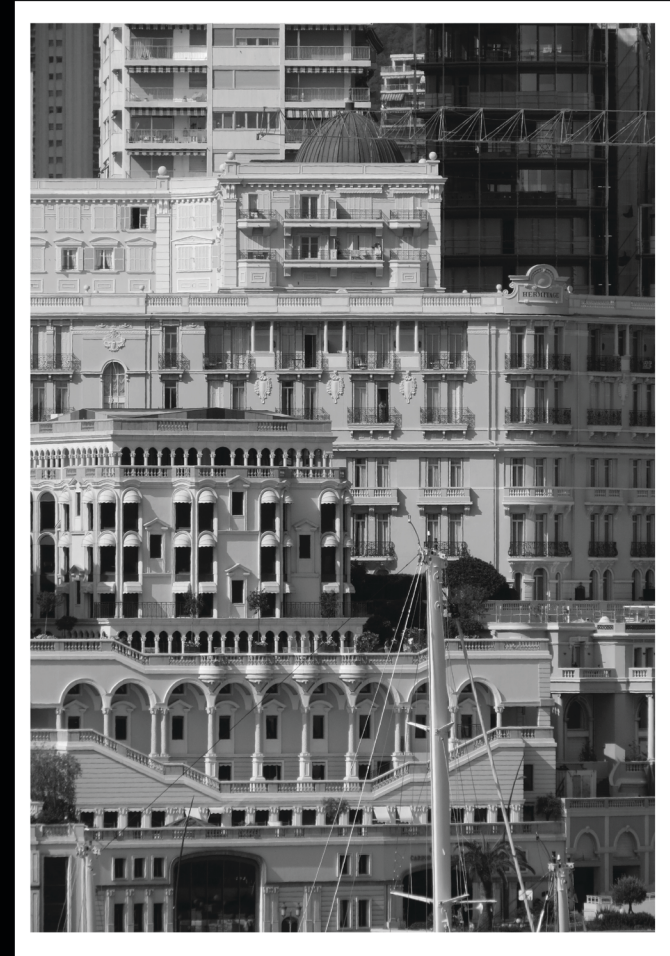
postmodern atheist

adam zivo

this city is not aglow. there are no fields of neon, no bouquets of poisonous colours. as you walk late at night its streets encapsulate you in a galactic feeling of emptiness. it's a city of ghosts, of coats floating over sidewalks. cars and buses rocket through it, tires ablaze on grey. walls of black mirror loom above them. grime-filled crevices yawn below. it's a kaleidoscope inside which you fracture. occasionally your face is a funeral mask cast in phosphorous, and at least once you'll pass by a cigarette that terminates in bad lipstick and disease. paper spiders skitter in the wind, catching on loose tiles, filing past a wall of rusty storefronts that imprison plastic so viciously saccharine it seems ready to pounce. sometimes the pavement is wet and greasy, spotted with portals of melted traffic lights that allude to the unkept promise of your home. why is the future so haggard and exhausted? in the alleyways graffitied hieroglyphs get painted over one another until they form a single sign. it testifies to its own blankness, to the accidental avant garde spread over neighbourhood after neighbourhood like a thin film, renewed each night before the prior layer has been boiled off. you try to run, but find either that the natural world is shapeless in its own way, or that the ground has curved and guided you back to the centre of the street to be prostrated before a monolith of concrete: crumbling, ageless, anonymous.

Monaco Triptych

max baevsky



William

rinna diamantakos

I saw him today, as I walked to the subway,

A bright blue jacket on the damp pavement,
covering his enormous body,
white clumps of hair peeking out of the top.

I felt the bones of my skull through my eye sockets,
ran my fingers along the curve, pressing hard,
feeling what my face would look like when it was gone and just a mass of
white fossil.

I thought about bed bugs crawling along my skin,
feasting on me, biting me as I slept,
faithful in the safety of it all,
and I thought of the stove that I had turned on earlier,
And I could have sworn then that the outside moved while I stayed still.

They were all rather grotesque things that can't and shouldn't be repeated,
shouldn't have existed at all in our perfect conception.
Grotesque and too real, too dirty and bold and too much to talk about,
too grotesque,
thank you.

You told me that the water was poisoned, had been contaminated,
the only clean thing left was Coca Cola,
and so we drank it and orange juice,
all natural, never concentrate because sugar wasn't good for you
and we sat
and you spoke and I thought about the fat ducks I had seen earlier,
eating rotten apples that had fallen,
and the transport truck that drove past me on the highway this morning
that had a bag of brown bread sitting on its flat bed,
and the crumb I saw fly by in the wind,
past my window and
I thought that maybe again the outside was moving and I wasn't.

Would the bodies of house centipedes melt under the heat of my desk lamp?
When I was younger I would melt erasers with that lamp,

smash them against the glass that covered the bulb until it started smoking
leaving a white stain and the harsh smell of burning plastic.
When my mother would read to me at night, she would use that lamp,
And slowly, as she turned the page,
would smell the burning and shut the light and close the book.

You were there even though you should have known that I didn't want you to
be there,
but you don't listen and the grotesque things,
the bad things, they don't listen
But *they*, and *I* want you to listen.
Your face is too red for me to look at,
hair too white, jacket too blue.
I don't want the grotesque any longer,
the sky pressing in on us,
smelling like spilled honey on hot pavement that had been boiled by the sun,
residue sticky and smelling sweet, but
drowning the ants and everything else in it and it was too much
and the sweetness of it all made me sick,
and to think about your face,
and hair,
and the jacket,
mixed with the honey and the ants.

The bodies of the house centipedes, clinging the moisture on the floor,
Disintegrating in the heat, laying as pools of
Bone and mush and cartilage.

Bart Simpson sat across from me on the subway,
Imprinted in the seat, long headed and square,
Or maybe it was Frankenstein,
Or a rhino looking at me head on?
(I've never seen a rhino looking head on,
but I imagine that it would look like Bart Simpson or Frankenstein in
the red felt seat of the subway, its fabric matted and worn from over use.)

No more, we shouldn't do that anymore
I,
we,
shouldn't do that anymore.

We stand shoulder to shoulder and we wait and I stand there waiting too
and I wonder now when I see you, blue jacket, red face, white hair,
laying atop of the subway vent, if stopping is possible,
or if I would have to leap and fall and run into the traffic

which wouldn't be safe,
and the cyclists and the other people walking,
it wouldn't be right,
and I really shouldn't.

Is this my judgement?
Because I left the moment I saw the jacket because I knew
and I didn't want to hear the dirty any longer, no more.

Please,
Bart Simpson was there and Frankenstein and the Rhino
and my house centipedes and the beg bugs and the stove that may be on,
carbon monoxide to greet me,
My guests to greet me with great happiness,
sat round the table waiting for my arrival,
to scream in unison,
house centipede, bodies melted from the heat of my lamp,
bed bugs
stove on, house heated so that I can't breathe
and Bart and Frank and Rhino
to say, Welcome!
Have a seat and forget the grotesque and sit and forget the blue,
red,
white,
subway, train,
bag of bread and fat ducks
and rotted apples,
house bed centipede stove.
Come, sit and join our feast!

Brandishings

sanna wani

Hi! How are you? I'm fine. Thanks. I haven't seen you in a while. No. Not a while then. Thanks. Me too. Have you changed? How many. What? Do you wear that often? In blue. In red? Out. About what? When? What do you want me to call you now? Where? Under what kind of light? I'm asking you, aren't I. What smoke. Which herald. I know you like that word. I don't know. The *ehch* of it. The ache. I know— I haven't heard from her either. It's been so long. Yeah, it's been nice catching up. Wisps of smoke, huh. Catching up. Catching up to us.

Raspberry Cane

michelle speyer

On the last confirmed day
of summer rain
blew through the garden and wind
thrashed in the boughs
of the Japanese maple and the quince
bush scattering leaves. Hush
I said and be still a fit
won't end the febrile
heat. Solemnly I walked

among the soft drooping sages
perennially hoary, hardy
and erect stands of mint.
I came before the raspberry bush
bejewelled with its second crop.
The canes reached out to me
oval leaves coyly
clothing bright fruit
and beating like butterfly
wings. Before the storm before the bowing

stems and thorns the leaves
steeped in boiling water blessed
me with calm like a zero-
force on the Beaufort scale
my heart beating bare
ripples in my blood. Keep your gems
I said the plant nodding

proffering them anew.
The rain struck my hand
like a judgement
and as I grasped
and plucked a raspberry
the cane snapped
the leaves beat against the raw
frenzy of sudden death
and the bough lay prostrate
upon the congregation of grasses
and was washed and buried
by the rain.

A God of Rabbits

ethan strathdee

He was treed by coyotes in a saguaro cactus nine miles east of Pima, Arizona,
And as they laughed clung there, then fell needled to be eaten.

Lamed he fought the dog-pack and was left as scraps in the leaf-mould
His hide too torn to string up on the gibbet.

He gulped the bait first and died twitching and foaming in the autumn grass
And left his poison-reeking arch-backed carcass as warning.

Starved by a spring snowfall, he frolicked ragged among the willows
Until a hawk smashed him into ruin on the streambank.

On the steaming August asphalt he leapt like a bull against the headlights
And kicked to the last in the coils of the rattlesnake
And dashed madly between the encircling wolves.
For this was he worshipped: not promised relief
For shared empty deaths on chill afternoons.

Short Distance by Stroke

lorraine caputo

Three naked boys
swim out
to a submerged trunk

Two swim back to shore
Their friend clings
to the old tree
crying
They laugh at his fear
& climb onto the sere land
Their skins gleam dark brown
in the burning sun

The boy goes down once
twice a third time

& he emerges
a bit closer
to the shore
Short distance by stroke
he nears his friends

Excerpt from "The Diner."

joyce zhu

The air-conditioned shopping complex was eleven floors in total, with a skywalk that led to a second complex across the street, which was wholesale and cheap, less air-conditioned. Here were often installed plastic shutters, usually plastered with hair and combed with grease from the heads of travellers — to sequester the precious air-conditioning. The duality of the place never failed to disorient him. Out the door, the world reverted to its decrepit chaos, young men and women on electric scooters, in packs like wildebeest, in flesh-searing stampedes, flanking both sides, with cars sequestered in between. The expression on their faces was what caught Jordan off track. They were a hard-lined resolution. Jordan jay-walked the road and stopped a bus with his palm. The bus driver honked, and Jordan glared at the softening pavement.

His reasons for moving once again were dishonest. There were no true rivers here. A block from his house was a dried-out canal of green sludge. Jordan strolled its edge one day, and he was with Atlas again, where the man was being fished out of the water. Atlas spoke about his own travels without having noticed his reappearance. Jordan spaced out, set his frames around a ripple down the river past the tourist boat.

Jordan was eating with his extended family in a booked room on the second floor of a restaurant. His aunt's children were shrieking, and the younger one force-fed the guests mango-flavoured candy. Jordan was sipping his watermelon juice when his cousin probed his arm and asked him about his skin colour, why it resembled bark.

You know, Jordan said, Yukio Mishima once wrote about how a girl's face resembled a tree stump recently cut down; youthful and fresh, but nonetheless suspended in the time of its demise, exposed when it should have been contained, and as a result, removed from existence. Jordan said that his skin was like bark must mean his face was the jagged exposure. His cousin returned to his game console. Jordan was not where he should be. He was at the diner, meeting Atlas once again. Atlas

recounted to him his life marionnetted by time's weblike strings — and Jordan wanted shake him hard and tell him that he was the pushpins in the tapestry, he was the milestones in his journey, the scratch cards collection, the footsteps on a mountainous terrain. That he understood precisely what was being asked of him.

On the streets of his childhood home, the one in which he resided the longest, he sprinted in the rain. He felt the petals of spring and the creeping shadow line up his forearm as he read in a foreign language. The simultaneity made him spin. He was once again walking towards a vermicelli booth, having been near-missed by the bus. The driver had honked at him. There was no way he could return to anything else — all that he could return to, all *that* that exposed face could bear was one such, singular weight.

Jordan ladled a large portion of mutton meatball soup into his aunt's bowl and enquired whether she had recently spoken to her husband to whom she was still married. She responded, not since last week when he left for his business trip to the south where the weather is humid and the ladies are naturally small-boned. Her children smashed ceramic spoons against the backs of chairs. Her alienation from the family had been a result of the marriage. The man was wealthy but aloof towards all matters involving familial relations. Now that she was re-inaugurated, the family brought it upon itself to persuade her towards divorce.

Atlas pulled him into the river; the water was rank; Jordan flew and felt the windshield break against his neck.

Contributor Biographies

Harrison Wade is a poet, critic, and fourth year student at the University of Toronto. His poetry is forthcoming in *Hart House Review* and has appeared in *Acta Victoriana* and *Half a Grapefruit Magazine*.

Ben Berman Ghan is a writer, editor, and student finishing his undergraduate degree from UofT this year. His fix-up novel *What We See in the Smoke* is slated to be published by Crowsnest Books in mid 2019

Bruce Meyer has published 63 books of poetry, short fiction, non-fiction, literary journalism, criticism, and portrait photographs. He teaches at Georgian College and at Victoria College and taught at Trinity College for three years in the early 1990s.

Ingrid Cui is a first-year student at the University of Toronto and spends her free time showing off her rather lackluster knowledge of postmodernism.

MA|DE is a collaborative writing partnership comprised of interdisciplinary artist Mark Laliberte, author of *asemanticasymmetry* (Anstruther 2017) and writer Jade Wallace, author of *Rituals of Parsing* (Anstruther 2018). MA|DE's writing has appeared in *Poetry is Dead*, *Prism*, and *Rat's Ass Review* and their debut chapbook, *Test Centre* is forthcoming with ZED Press in Spring 2019.

Sana Mohtadi grew up outside of Boston. She is pursuing a Specialist in English Literature and a Minor in Literature and Critical Theory. Sana likes to write poetry about God, her mom, and the city.

Katrina Agbayani is an Undergraduate Humanities student studying at Victoria College. In between classes, she can be found writing poetry and short fiction pieces.

Chad Norman recently toured Ireland, Wales, and Scotland celebrating Canadian Poetry, and reading from his own collections. His most recent title is *Selected & New Poems*, Mosaic Press. He is working on a new manuscript, *A Small Matter Of Inclusion*.

Nisarg:: poetry | cinema. English | ગુજરાતી

Alessia Oliva is a writer, curator and photo-based artist. She lives in close loving kinship with a golden doodle named Lola. Today she wrote a poem about Don Van Vliet.

Katie Schmidt is a third year student studying English, German, and Writing & Rhetoric. When not hanging out with the folks at the German Studies Students' Union and *The Spectatorial*, she's probably drinking coffee and drawing on things she shouldn't be.

Adam Zivo was once called by some guy, "the worst thing to ever happen to Canadian society". He wasn't wrong.

Max Baevsky's started his studies in Rotman Commerce just last September, though this hasn't stopped Max from exploring his lifelong passion for drawing, creative design, and the occasional photoshoot. Max's work largely draws inspiration from the distinctive character of soaring landscapes and the elusive urban scene.

Rinna Diamantakos is a third year student at the University of Toronto who is pursuing a double major in English and Ethics, Society and Law. She has had a life-long passion for creative writing, specifically in the form of poetry and hopes to transfer her passion for writing into a career in journalism.

Sanna Wani is an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto. She is editor-in-chief of *Acta Victoriana* and her work is featured in *The Puritan* and *Cosmonauts Avenue*. She loves daisies.

Michelle Speyer is a U of T student and writer living in Toronto. Her poetry and fiction can be found in journals around Ontario, including *Acta Victoriana*, *Echolocation*, and *The Northern Appeal*, among others. She thinks the most beautiful part of the province is Lake Ontario, especially in August when the water sparkles in the sun.

Ethan Strathdee is a second-year undergraduate student at the University of Toronto, studying international relations.

Lorraine Caputo is a documentary poet, translator and travel writer whose works have been published in over 150 journals on six continents; and 12 chapbooks, including *Notes from the Patagonia* (dancing girl press, 2017) and the up-coming *On Galápagos Shores* (dancing girl press, 2019). For several decades, she has been traveling throughout the Americas, doing literary readings, and listening to the voices of the *pueblos* and Earth.

Joyce Zhu is a first year undergraduate at the University of Toronto studying Life Sciences.

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