



THE TRINITY REVIEW | WINTER JOURNAL





THE TRINITY REVIEW 132
WINTER JOURNAL

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It is a new decade and you are surely in this moment, possibly keen to be attentive to this time, and may soon find yourself settling into the palms of these pages, drawn to life by authors and artists from here and far away.

If you do settle (or wrestle), you will find rural and urban atmospheres, perversity and gentleness, dreaming and waking. You will find anything you want, really. Because the essence that art reveals is not only universal, but also deeply distinctive. This intangible essence comes as much from what speaks within you, as what speaks around you.

Thus, in a way that we've always known, books are wonderful vessels for exploring ourselves. And whether that means affirming a new idea, or simply acknowledging a newly drawn breath, the life on the page is now your moment, and yours to be.

Grace Ma

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Oncoming

Tahmeed Shafiq

Last night I dreamt of my father again.
I was maybe seven, and sitting on our farmhouse porch
watching the slow coming of a storm.
Long grass whipped near my feet in roving winds; further out
you could see the dark perimeter of clouds where they were flattened, quivering.
My mother wrestling with a sheet as if dancing with a ghost,
tipped-over basket of damp linens by her feet.

Hearing the creak of the loose step, I turned
to see my father come and stand beside me.
He set his shoulders back and crossed his arms
as if facing an enemy.
“Can you see what’s out there?” he says to me,
looks at me, and there are drowned cities in his eyes.
His skin is a morass of cracked dried gullies;
I can see coal pits too, and the white bones of coral,
and there are men with guns in his eyes.

We watch the storm together,
watch it anchor itself in the dark horizon’s centre,
and there is no tension in me because it is far.
The light grows sparse, my mother is dancing faster,
and bright though the lightning’s flicker, quiet comes the thunder.

I woke in the dark and realised he had been dead nineteen years that night.
The moonlight lay flat on the blankets, shivered through some unseen cloud.

The Argument

Clayton Krollman

Like two bullets, the hummingbirds collide midair
and plummet intertwined. There is very little blood

at first. It is the geometry of a kiss
when the victor drives its beak through the other's brain.

Impossible to tell them apart, vermillion
throats incandescent, each having won gamble

after gamble so far, each with its lifetime
spent locating that high octave of animal pleasure—

but one flies away, and one doesn't.

[excerpts from diary]

Hannah Kirijian

{Instead it came like billboards
on the high
way. The way,
they intercept the eyes of a driver only

to [dissipate]
into concrete and sky}

Notes from the Self (in the past tense)
Scribed by the Ego (in the present tense)

And she came out of the floorboards. And [...] she was eating me and she went about it through my belly button and all my guts were on the floor and spilling on the bed. But I wasn't screaming. No I was very calm.

To be still & silent in a room full of noise. But I would be left alone
and I would be fine.

She was wearing a white t-shirt. But she was Blue.

I feel very nauseous and close my eyes

And her double was on the edge of my bed

The thought of being touched appeals to me only in the abstract
sense.

I feel so much love for her, it grabs me in ways I can't be near [...].

I would like to write this in the past tense because there I remain elegant.
[...] I seem to crumble [...] even tonight, in a free state. I couldn't feel that I
would be. Like in a taste of a tree. Yes, a tree, I think that's it.

- I masturbated and now I feel worse.

excerpts from diary (2017-2018).
ed. aide S. Sokolov.

Fingered

Gale Acuff

In the pond behind the church the steeple's
in the water. It's its reflection. That
means that God's in the water, too, as well
as the land and air, maybe. If I drown
myself I'll go to God, therefore, and show
up in Heaven wet, I guess, and He'll say,
maybe, Don't worry, kid, you'll dry out in
Hell. Which is where He'll send me for killing

myself, not to mention having sinned in
other ways while I was still alive. Still
it will be worth it, I think, whether I
go to see God right away or just hang
in my grave until the Day of Judgement
—my Sunday School teacher's getting married,
Miss Hooker, and I love her and want her

to be my wife but now it's too damn late
and maybe always was, she's 25
to my 10 and even when I'm 16
she'll be 31 and I'll never match
her, unless she gets divorced when I'm old
enough to court. She may be old but she's
still good enough for me. I'm laying out
of Sunday School, watching the water striders
and minnows and tadpoles and mosquitos
and dragonflies, all the small citizens
of this wet world. I dare Jesus to come
back now and walk on the water—I'd pay

to see that. Maybe He'd walk toward me.
By the time He's on my side I'm up on
my feet, ready to take His hand, shake it
man to man, maybe, like Father taught me.
Or maybe He'll fool me and pull me in,
not to drown but be baptized, another

kind of drowning. I'd come back up, water
in my mouth and dripping all over me.
Then when He's done the deed, maybe He'll be

gone. Then I'll realize I fell asleep
and plunked in by myself, in my Sunday
clothes and only good pair of shoes, to boot.
At the window of our Sunday School class
the other children point and laugh and laugh
as I slog my way to the shore—Miss Hooker
calls them away and then it's only she
looking at me. Looking concerned. Looking
worried. Gale, come in and dry out your clothes
—did you slip on the bank and fall in? What
can I say? "I'll just walk home, I guess, ma'am."
We'll see you next Sunday, she says. Maybe,
but it won't be the same, she's not the same
now, she's getting married, she's got a ring
pregnant with her finger. It stands for me.

Deleted

Alex McKeever

Every voice has been exhausted
or filled with cement

After a youth spent yearning for myself,
I've got a leather prick

Happiness is dog shit, I want
something new in the bloodstream

Didn't you know?
Beauty is a bottomless pit

Foiling the grander scheme of things,
jamming its gears with spunk

I'm not drowning in waste if
you can taste it on my breath

My enemy was sentenced to death
I have the splatter on dream-video

Now I have a new way to be deleted;
you'll have to find your own.

A Goodtime in Storyville

John Grey

Storyville is public housing now,
its whorehouse overlaid
with crucifixes, prayer
and gospel singing on Sunday.

Once, the famous Blue Book
listed all the names and addresses
of the neighborhood prostitutes,
sold for a quarter.

Now telephone directories
are issued for free,
sit on side tables,
offer everything but sex.

Some jazz still lingers
but mostly in the consciousness.
The tenor's hip-hop
or old school soul.

Storyville was wicked once,
a cornucopia of flesh.
Now it's just what you'd expect.
But it's no longer expecting you.

In a Yard in Mississippi

Mary Christine Delea

Paint kisses the soft wood of old furniture
left outside to return to raw, combine with leaves,
open itself to sun and rain and dust, depending on
the season. The wind claims it, as if marking
with a pencil, this rebellious skyscraper of refuse.
Festering in the energetic river of air, it carries
the whispers of insects to the lawn, weaving back
and forth, pulled and pushed. Where there is metal,
rust. A reckless train flowing in circles of decay,
that red-brown of time moving. In stiller times
the furniture serves as dock for the flow of birds.
Plastic peels and curls like exotic flower leaves.
What crawls, slithers, flits, and flies rests
on the surface as that same surface surrenders
to decay. No match can burn off this destruction,
now a mix of organic and toxic, sticks and a mirror
surrounded by PVC dipped into glue and then
glitter, propped on top like a Christmas tree angel.
The rest: a desk, some chairs, bed frame, lamp bases,
a cabinet, and a folding table. The lives they
enabled continue inside, the house with towels
for curtains, a sagging roof, and no working toilet.
Now the wind brings rain, thunder and lightning,
and the front yard totem continues to keep
nothing safe. The people in the house wonder if
the walls will hold. But only for a moment.

At Home, Age 14, Radio On

Kenneth Pobo

I kept it to myself.
It felt worse to admit
to anyone,
even my parents.
Bullies take your tongue
when they attack, demand
silence. At least I had
music, bubblegum songs,
The 1910 Fruitgum Company
and The Ohio Express.
Even today, the porch quiet
and cats asleep,
tunes ripple through me—
peace comes,
a red dahlia
against a gray sky.

Coralie

Kornelia Drianovski

I'm looking for the family album with a picture of Coralie in it as a baby. She's propped up on the dark green couch with a bottle of vodka leaning against her. It's as long as her slouching pink body. I wanted to scan it onto our computer for her birthday collage. But Mom lost the album during the move. This was before Coralie left. She was in her senior year, while I was just starting grade nine.

As children, our father—whom we called Lucien—picked us up from school on days when Mom worked overtime. We'd walk out from our school's front doors and wait for him on the steps outside. When I remember those afternoons, I always see Coralie's short boyish hair sticking up from her scalp like white feathers. Mom didn't want her to catch lice again from those dirty girls in our class. I'll never forget one Friday afternoon. As we stood on the steps throwing pebbles, Lucien hopped out of the car, the sole of one of his sneakers unglued and flapping, and his pretty white teeth gleaming in the hot and gummy autumn day. He didn't step on the ground; he danced. Grabbing our bags from our shoulders, he said that today was a special day, but he wouldn't tell us why. Coralie wasn't ten yet, so she bounced around with excitement like me. The car smelled like cigarettes and fries.

"Okay, here's the deal. I have a surprise for you two, but you have to do one little thing for me first," he said, looking at us through the rear-view mirror.

"Smells like McDonald's," Coralie said.

"Cor, why do you always have to ruin the fun? Maybe it's not for you. Maybe I was hungry and got myself something from McDonald's."

His long elastic fingers tapped the steering wheel as if it were a keyboard.

"You know, if your mother and I hadn't had you two, I could've been as great as Kurt."

"Who's Kurt?" I asked.

"Who's Kurt? Who's Kurt Cobain, Aur?"

His blue acidic eyes shone in the mirror. He laughed and I watched a shadow cross over one of his cheekbones. I bit down hard on my thumbnail as he stopped violently at a red light. My nail started bleeding and I wiped the blood on the seat.

"Kurt Cobain is the biggest musical genius of our time, since like fucking Mozart."

"Don't swear," Coralie said.

"Sorry, sorry, I forgot princess... But listen! Today's a special day 'cause I got promoted to shift manager, and yes, I got you McDonald's. But! You have to really focus now... You'll never appreciate real music if you just listen to all that gay shit French music your mother brainwashes you with. Now listen, if you want your Happy Meals, listen to this. This, this here is real music."

Coralie and I listened to "About a Girl" and we got our cold Happy Meals. We were very happy when Lucien got out of the car to get his own surprise. While we waited in the stuffy car outside of the liquor store, Coralie told me to try and take apart my toy and put it back together faster than her. I lost the game and tried stealing her toy so I could break it. With a little blazing fist, she hit me over the head and stung me with her narrow blue eyes. Then she felt bad when I started crying and planted a kiss on my head. She smiled with her crooked teeth.

*

When Coralie turned ten, Lucien no longer picked us up from school because we were old enough to walk ourselves home. So when the last bell rang and other parents picked up their kids, Coralie got me from my classroom. We liked taking the shortcut behind the laundromat because that meant we wouldn't walk directly through what Mom called the weird part of town. It was a particularly cold winter afternoon when we took our regular shortcut. We liked looking through the laundromat windows because the people there were always so strange. I stared at a young woman with blue hair, asleep and clutching her laundry bag like a teddy bear. In the back alley of the laundromat, an air vent blew its steamy sweet breath of detergent toward us. An old man sat on a lawn chair by the garbage bins. He was wearing a yellow jacket. He waved and grinned, revealing a gummy black hole for a mouth. "Hey girls! I wanna show you something." Coralie stopped walking. He reached inside his sweatpants and pulled it out. It was shriveled and gray-pink. I grabbed Coralie's frozen hand. Our feet ran through the slush and I felt dizzy. When we got back home, Lucien was snoring on the dark green couch, a lit cigarette flickering softly on the carpet beside him. Coralie stomped on it to wake him up.

*

Years later, a few months before Mom left Lucien, Coralie got a boyfriend. I remember that it was a big time in my life too because I had just gotten my period. Coralie showed me how to put a tampon in as I winced in our humid bathroom. Mom knew about Coralie's boyfriend. His name was Walter and he read lots of books and wanted to study in the UK. Coralie told us that he was very down-to-earth and talented. He listened to good music. Lucien didn't know that Coralie was with this boy. She always lied to him when he'd ask whether any boys were fooling around with her. Coralie despised Lucien then. She'd lock our bedroom door and say:

"I'm leaving this shit hole soon, and then you'll be left here to deal with these psychopaths, but you can't let him get to your head."
Or...

"Don't try and help him because he doesn't want any. He's a fucking pig... Okay?"
Or...

"You know, I'm just focusing on school and saving up money and Walter... Find yourself a guy like Walter. He's so smart and talented and kind and he's actually going places. Aur, don't tell Mom this but when we turn eighteen we're gonna move in together."

I listened, feeling her soft breath on my cheek and her shifting eyes. I felt like the most important person in the world—her best friend. Then she'd lower her voice as Lucien's uneven and feverish footsteps loomed behind our closed door. The doorknob didn't turn anymore.

*

When Mom finally moved us out of town and into the city, Coralie was eighteen. She had long blond hair that she mostly wore in a fishtail. At least in my memory. We still shared a room, but now it was a scene of piled makeup products, scattered elastics, crumpled papers, and tattered books. Coralie had been accepted to a liberal arts college on partial scholarship. She was still with Walter. I had never seen her so happy. Tall and wide-eyed, she was always flashing her crooked pretty smile. Late one night, as I was brushing my teeth and looking at my pimply face and greasy hair in the mirror, she barged into the bathroom, her lips blood red. She pushed me away and climbed into the bathtub, crouching and burying her face in her hands. I locked the door and sat beside the bathtub, spitting my toothpaste out in the toilet.

"What happened, Cor?"

She shook her head. For a brief second after that, she split into

two in front of me. She hit herself over the head multiple times and hissed, "Shut up! Stop crying you little bitch, stop it, stop it, stop it!" I tried holding her. And then I looked at her eyes more closely. My heart drowned. One of them was entirely closed and her cheek was starting to swell beneath it. I asked her whether Walter had done it. She never answered me, but she let me stay up with her all night watching movies in our bedroom. The next fall, she moved in with Walter.

*

Since then, they broke up and Coralie dropped out of college. She thought it wasn't for her. She wouldn't visit Mom and me. I called her once a week but she'd answer on a monthly basis. When I was finishing up my senior year, she called us one Sunday morning in April. Mom picked up and talked with her for two hours. Mom was mostly silent, nodding a lot. She looked old, pressing the phone against her ear with two hands. I never got the chance to talk. After the call ended, Mom told me that Coralie wanted to see me. I asked her where Coralie was living now and what was happening to her and how she was, but Mom cut me off, saying that I'd kill her if we talked any more about it. The following week, I met up with Coralie at a local café in the city. Inside, the Edith Piaf lyrics "Non, je ne regrette rien" hung from a picture frame on the wall. A thin and stooping shadow sat at a booth. I didn't recognize her at first with the new blackish-blue cropped hair. When she spotted my nervous figure walking around awkwardly, she stood up and hugged me. I inhaled her. Her breath smelled like Lucien's used to. Her collarbones stuck out. We sat down at the booth.

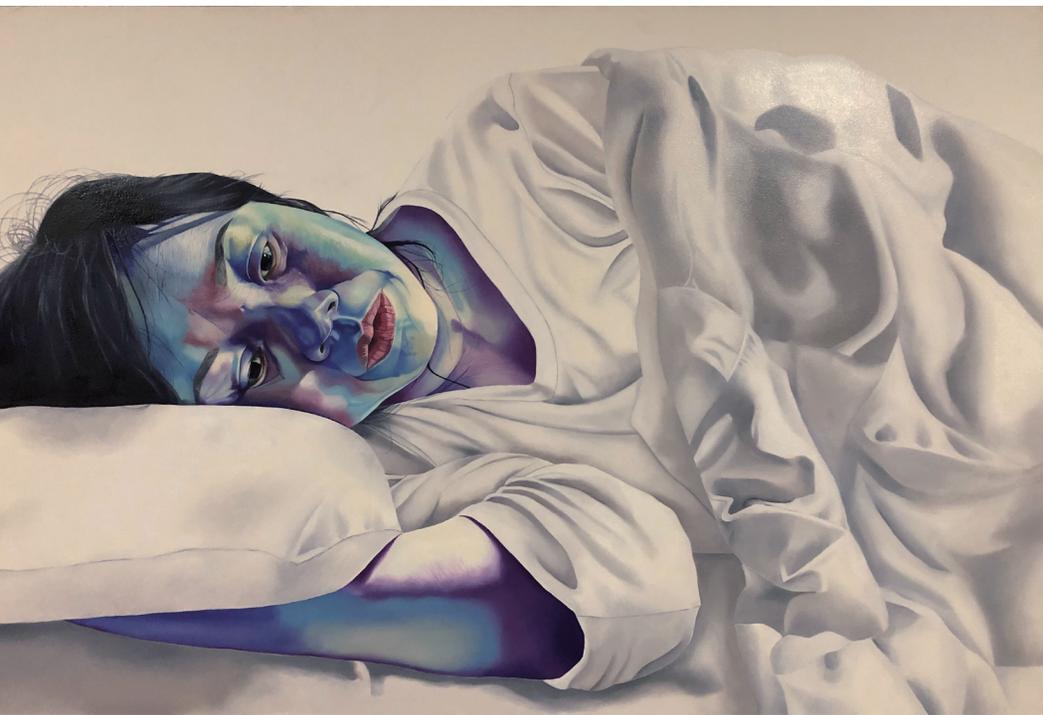
"Have you seen Lucien?" she asked. My heart swelled. I couldn't remember the last time I heard his name.

"Not in a few months, no."

"How is he?"

"I don't know, I mean he's aged a lot. How are you though? What's happening?"

"Aur, don't hate me for this," she said as she smoothed down a piece of black-blue hair behind her ear. "I'm going to have a baby." Then Coralie flashed me her crooked pretty smile.



Xun Ling

Joyce Zhu

Outside, the air was fluid-flecked. It would have occurred to White then that the mountain in which they were ensconced rose above the perpetual moisture, which was often without defined direction, and even more often completely still. One found respite in cubicles where moisture was regulated, constructed as shabby travesties of those they had been housed in. White seldom exited his cubicle. The humidity caused the mane across half his head to pulse with static and the other naked half to perspire. Though in the rare cases he did exit, many a signal, each too bright and fleeting to impart meaning, flooded his senses, like a swarm of insects having lost their physical mediums, their ghosts vying for his attention.

Outside he could grope his way, having his hands lead him. His only destination was the botanical garden, where shabby knee-high plants grew on soil that resembled quagmire. The air was still humid, and the plants that grew there shared no homology with species native to the mountain. In the cramped space, White would sit and nurse his phantom core, which had been surgically removed prior to his leaving the mountain. In its place were cobwebs and tendrils, gnawing at a void. He could harness the void, and in his embrace, it lay limp.

*

White recalled an additional detail his past self did not. Of all the things he had forgotten, White remembered the pattern of Blue's hair, during his visit to the ward, its every pleat and weave. The silhouette of bamboo illuminated by a dingy lightbulb. He did not remember who Blue was, nor the ward, nor the reasons for growing out one's hair. But if he was presented a wall of vine, an animal's follicled hide, he could recreate it with confidence. He had said at the time, My memory is really quite bad. It switches on and off. Like this. And when I forget I loathe you for speaking in intimate riddles, but when I remember I quite enjoy them. And then a someone named Blue said, I am failing. This hair is a façade. Misleading. And White said, It improves your ephemeral air, good Sir. I like it. Although their exchanges had by then become redundant.

*

When White found Blue at last he let out an exhale of relief. Blue's location was remote, but the taciturn demeanor revealed him as if stripping him naked. When they spoke via commentary Blue said, To wait is the greatest act of devotion. White responded, True. And Blue swayed on his end of the server. The swaying was slight, but grand. The light before White flickered, and so did the ground which his feet did not touch. White sensed that Blue had experienced some similar phenomenon, for he suddenly drew him aside and said to him directly, Give me your coordinates. I will come find you.

The Account

James Newell

Listen. Like divorced couples know
Each other's scars of distaste—husband, I name thy wrinkles—
In the same fashion, two lovers can wrap their heads
Around each other's limbos—consume with love
All the sick and desperate longings of the body,
This body: which washed upon the shoreline is barely driftwood
And the moon, ah scarlet white the moon
Aching masculine. Desperate for Helios.
The moon and the sun, reflecting it, a tumour bloody in the skin

Well, this is to say
There's no one way to make love to a peach tree.
With no sound, I wrapped around his trunk
His branches opened soaking darkness,
My first tunnel to the underworld...
Under epidermal layers of the bark
I found him—his rotting film-noir apple core
Peeled back the surface to face the inner
Wetness of the night, sacred oh forbidden liquor
PROHIBITION CHICAGO '24. That core his name
Put my lips to it—
With tongue washed out all shades of hatred

In the night we have no character
Beyond our shape, carvings of the flesh. I was mythological,
I was impaled upon a cross and he the cross
He the impaler, I the rod,
Blood wash a river of my sanctity—
Let us repent, let us abandon all instruction:
Yet we shall obey the metaphors Of the anteater,
And perhaps the peacock gone before him.
This is a testimony but it shall bear no witness.

My Brain Is Soup

Nathanael Eastman

Don't mind the broth, my brain is soup,
a thought mixed in a boiling pot,
my head is naught

And memories are liquid, where'd they go?
Cohesion I don't know.
A mind fed ends up dead.

mind the pool of brain soup,
a thought made rot,
I've lost my know

where'd they go?
Cohesion now gives way
A mind on coffee ends

mind soup,
made rot in a
lost head,
liquid, go?
now I know.
A mind ends

Eggshells

Hadiyyah Kuma

Please crack

open words and leak them

Down my stomach

Since God does not know how to answer me

Except in friends

I had a friend who prayed once
He was all then nothing, drowned, no defected

And then another
The arrows in his arms bent as he painted the sky

Carried his life as an invisible basketball so it was funny

And heavy and inconsistent when I say I like the view

today, he thanks me for the compliment.

One day you like it

one day you don't

On the sidewalk there are dead things,
alive things too.

He stops to touch

a patch of tired grass and doesn't realize

he's breathing. Dude—

just for today

you may crack this heavy breath
on my breastbone
and amen me to sleep
between the barb of your ribcage

I try to tell him

how essential it is to feel grass between your fingers

I try to tell him

how good he is for wanting it,

but like all friends

he is silly and

always forgets

Honeyed

Angel Bella

One million bees buzz behind the bellows of eyeballs,
Each toothpick leg flits an Irishman's jig.
Prickled, each vein is, with
Salacious sweetness.
One brush dips in the ardent hollow of acrylic,
Each bristle emulsifies a mishmash of oil and pigment.
The bees buzz behind the bellows with brute.
Cavernous capillaries' cacophony
Melts underneath each peppering of
Limb upon limb.
The brush smacks crisp against canvas.
Prints find homes on paper skin,
Landscapes immigrate to Manila,
Bees buzz in the bellows.

school trip

Mahaila Smith

i walk my little sister
home from school
to our crater
on the moon.
we survey satellite
signals siphoning back to
earth. tell the birds who have
flown too close to the atmosphere
to fly back down. draw the
phases and wax our skis,
wander through
craters
scavenge
junked radios
and call our parents.
the ink in my pen has
run out, i let it drop to my
bedroom carpet. scratch plaque
off my front teeth with my
index fingernail and
forge a guardian's
signature for
our class
trip to
the sun.
we see her
big and angry
she bursts and rains
fire onto our parasols.
it was not a good day for
a visit. my sister cries,
worried summer
vacation will
be cold.

Mass

Erika Dickinson

A priest has fallen.
He has broken his neck.

The CAT scan
revealed a mass
resting on his lungs.

He says mass
is a part of him.

I find it funny that there is a mass inside of him
but he tells me he hates that word.

Mass.

Implies expansive, sprawling,
crowded, pulsating, together,
uncontrolled.

Something that cannot be contained,
that keeps growing even when it's not wanted.

He wants mass
to be apart from him.

Congregated together,
cells multiply with time.
From his pulpit, he reaches out
to touch a congregation
at half capacity.
His metastasized colony
puts them to shame.

Lung, adrenals, bone and lymph nodes.
Spending days in a Lazy Boy chair.
In respite care.
His neck brace allows only his lips to move.
He dozes sitting upright.

We visit because he has a lot to say.
A broken neck holds a head that is fine,
while the body starts to decay.

On a Country Road

Ethan Strathdee

Turn aside, says a man met between two hedges
In the bocage near Avalon; there are wolves
In the high passes, polecats call down lightnings
From the mountaintops; even the vicars
Prop their forebears' shinbones in forked elms.
Seeing veil and nun's habit he laughs: sister,
The canonesses have ransacked the ossuary,
Tossed the cracked bones to the millpond lampreys
And kneel to worship plesiosaurs in the fluvial ooze;
The roads lead to barrows, banshees stalk belfries,
There are graveworms in the winter rutabagas.
The other stamps her hooves on the path,
Listens to hail whisper on the barley stubble,
Scratches beaked jaw behind mildewed veil.
Cloves, she says, a lovely warming spice, and
I'd best get the crackling crisp; come along now,
This road does not lead where you thought.

Lessons

James A. Jordan

He said, "There is no better place
than this," once before I was born.
But I did not hear the story

until years after I'd already gone.
He said, "To know and love a place
are the same." This I heard, mistook.

I learned words—one-sucker, burley,
Cavendish, Darkfire, Holsteins,
Herefords, fallow, silage, thresh—

yet when time came, I could
not say what was what, or offer
the best way to repair a felled fence.

"Silence," he once told me. We stood
in the back field as the remnant
harvest flamed. I stopped my ears

with fingers reddened by clay
and held my breath. He took my hands
into his, moved them from my face.

Barred owls screeched, squirrels barked,
wind moved trees. "Silence," he said,
aware there was no such thing.

Museum of Reading Habits

Bruce Meyer

Opens at ten with an exhibit
of people moving their lips,

an antique practice
considered long extinct.

There is a Hall of Bathtubs
displaying leather Classics

toppled by accident into suds,
and pages synged by flames

of aroma therapy candles.
There are demonstrations

of how to fold a newspaper
while riding a crowded subway,

a gallery of Enlightenment tomes
that fell from grace by weight

when the heroine grew afraid.
But at the back, as far from

crowds as you can go,
is a place for serious readers

who have known the joy
the printed word can bring—

a couch beside a sunlit window
with a large plush granny

reciting favorite and familiar lines
from books you lived

a thousand lives ago;
and when no one seems to be looking,

you curl up close beside her
and remember what you felt

the moment you glimpsed a treasure
or a garden bloomed in her words.

Visual Art

The City of Individuals

Niya Gao

Acrylic painting, 2019

48" x 96"

I think of my work as an ongoing experiment that questions the boundaries of distrust fabricated within the material layers of my human condition. Most specifically, the ways in which disconnection between my imminent family has hazed my perception of identity.

Culturally, I was subconsciously fed the fear of exposing vulnerability, being taught to ignore it, as doing so would make me stronger.

My art began to grow off the foundation of fear. Exposing too much or too little would lead me to feel shame when shame was not to be deserved. I chose not to believe in what I was once taught. I began analyzing the different discretions within myself, with the final goal being to rescue what was lost, me.

I've learned to study the shape my identity forms through gradients of distrust within reality, my family, as well as within myself. I seek a new perspective. One that allows me to be transparent, with my most recent works attempting to uncover and reconcile my hidden histories with the very history I know.

Perspective Series

Olivia Graham

Photography, 2019

This work explores my perception of myself and how it changes when I am around different people. I often feel as if I have a set character I play with all the different people in my life. In this work I explore the characters I play with my family and how I feel like I am my most genuine self when I am with them. I am isolated in a box of support and safety.

A Bed's Width Apart

Vivian Tran

Oil on canvas, 2018

48" x 72"

To Mom,

This is my first letter to you. Years ago, when we would always cut each other's hair to save money, I tried to cut yours the same length as mine. We would begin the same, grow the same, end the same. That's what I wanted. But as you grew, your hair fell out, shortening, growing backward, while my hair thickened and grew forward. It became longer and heavier, as if I took in everything you once had. I'd sit in the room while you'd shower because I was afraid.

What are you so afraid of?

Everything.

I said everything because I couldn't tell you that I was scared of living a life I didn't know how to live. Just like you can't let me see you cry.

This letter is like an empty envelope. One day you will receive this, but not be able to read it. It's something you can only hold, use to wipe your tears. Everything I have always needed from you, I later realize, has always been there.

With all the love I can't give,

Your daughter

To Dad,

This is my first letter to you. I feel your loneliness in my own. When I think about going to embrace you, phantom pains of generations sink in my stomach. Like I might cry. It is so easy to rub things off, make excuses. Not do it. The harder it is, the more right it seemed to me.

You were sitting alone outside the couch in the middle of the night after you prayed. It was your routine. Tonight, I wrap my shaking arms around you for the first time I can remember. As if I am remembering how to embrace you without ever learning how. I can't look you in the eye. I forgot how to. I embrace everything you can't share with me and everything I can't share with you. Through you, I reach into the world. Into the walls between us while you finally sleep, I ask you, do you ever feel like giving up on this world too? I tell you I love you into the atoms between us. I tell you I love you by not telling you I love you.

With all the love I can't give,

Your daughter

Contributors

Gale Acuff has had poetry published in *Ascent*, *Chiron Review*, *McNeese Review*, *Adirondack Review*, *Weber*, *Florida Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Arkansas Review*, *Poem*, *South Dakota Review*, and many other journals. He has authored three books of poetry: *Buffalo Nickel* (BrickHouse Press, 2004), *The Weight of the World* (BrickHouse, 2006), and *The Story of My Lives* (BrickHouse, 2008). Gale has taught university English in the US, China, and the Palestinian West Bank.

Angel Bella is a first-year student at UofT, hoping to pursue Political Science and Environmental Chemistry. She finds refuge in the likes of Sylvia Plath and Shel Silverstein. Additionally, alliteration is her favourite part of prose.

Mary Christine Delea has a Ph.D. in English/Creative Writing, and is a former college professor. A native of Long Island, she now lives in Oregon. She is the author of one full-length book and three chapbooks, the most recent of which is *Did I Mention There Was Gambling and Body Parts?* from dancing girl press. Over 200 of her poems have been published, with the most recent and upcoming publications being in, among others, *The Hollins Critic*, *The Comstock Review*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *River and South*, *Jenny*, and *Moon City Review*.

Erika Dickinson is in her final year of her English degree at the University of Toronto. She is a writer, dancer, choreographer and she would be happy to cook you a meal sometime.

Kornelia Drianovski is a third year student studying English and Anthropology at the University of Toronto. Her work is forthcoming in *Hart House Review* and *Half a Grapefruit Magazine*. She loves creatures from the gutter.

Nathanael Eastman is an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto. He is a proud Bramptonian who hopes his writing helps to heal some of the world's brokenness. That is all.

Niya Gao emigrated from Guangdong, China, to Canada at age 14. She works in a variety of different mediums. She currently lives and works in Toronto, Canada, and attends Etobicoke School of the Arts for Contemporary Art.

Olivia Graham is a Toronto-based photographer currently focusing on conceptual photography. She explores human perception through her work, focusing on our views of ourselves and others based on society and our surroundings.

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *That*, *Dunes Review*, *Poetry East* and *North Dakota Quarterly* with work upcoming in *Haight-Ashbury Literary Journal*, *Thin Air*, *Dalhousie Review* and *failbetter*.

James A. Jordan is pursuing his PhD at Georgia State where he serves as an Assistant Editor for *Five Points*. His work has appeared in *The Bitter Southerner*, *New South*, *Quarterly West*, and *The Saturday Evening Post Online*, among others. A recipient of the Paul Bowles Fellowship and member of the Peauxdunque Literary Alliance, he serves as a Festival Associate for the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival and Saints and Sinners LGBT Festival. He received his MFA from the University of New Orleans.

Hannah Kirijian is a McGill student studying Anthropology. She writes poetry and is starting to dip into writing prose.

Clayton Krollman is a graduate of University of Maryland, where he received the Jiménez-Porter Literary Prize for poetry. His most recent writing can be found in *The Penn Review*, *Moon City Press*, and *Matador Review*, among others. He has had work nominated for both a Best of the Net Award and a Pushcart Prize. Currently, he lives and writes in Asheville, NC.

Hadiyyah Kuma is an Indo-Guyanese writer from Toronto, Ontario. Her work has been featured in places like *The Rumpus*, the *Hart House Review*, *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, and *Yes Poetry*. Her debut chapbook *tired, but not spectacularly* was recently published by The Soapbox Press. Hadiyyah's poetry has been nominated for Best of the Net 2019 and she is currently working on her second chapbook.

Alex McKeever is a U of T alumnus and former Trinitron searching for purpose in the world (when not coding). He occupies his time by playing music, writing smut, and indulging in earthly pleasures.

Bruce Meyer is author or editor of 64 books of poetry, short fiction, flash fiction, and non fiction.

James Newell is a student at the University of Toronto, studying English and History. In his spare time he writes, explores the city, and thinks about all the reading he should be doing.

Kenneth Pobo has a new book out from www.cyberwit.net press in India called *Wingbuds*. Forthcoming from Assure Press is his book called *Uneven Steven*. In May he will retire from teaching at Widener University in Pennsylvania.

Tahmeed Shafiq is a third-year undergraduate studying Physics and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. His fiction has been published in *Lightspeed* and his journalism in *The Varsity*. This year he is editing the Trinity Review's sister-publication, *The UC Review*, and thinks the two journals would make a mean spoken word duo.

Mahaila Smith is a third year student at U of T where she studies Archaeology and History. Her poetry has appeared in the recent centennial issue of the *Hart House Review*, on *Half a Grapefruit* (hgfmag.com), and will appear in the upcoming *UC Review*. You can find her looking out library windows.

Ethan Strathdee is a third-year History and International Relations student at the University of Toronto.

Vivian Tran is an emerging Toronto-based artist, currently attending Etobicoke School of the Arts as a Contemporary Art major. Using distance as a means for connection, her work investigates the socioeconomic, generational, and contextual frictions within a space. Through the experience of distance, individuals, at the same time, are alone and together.

Joyce Yue Zhu is a second year student studying Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology at the University of Toronto.

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