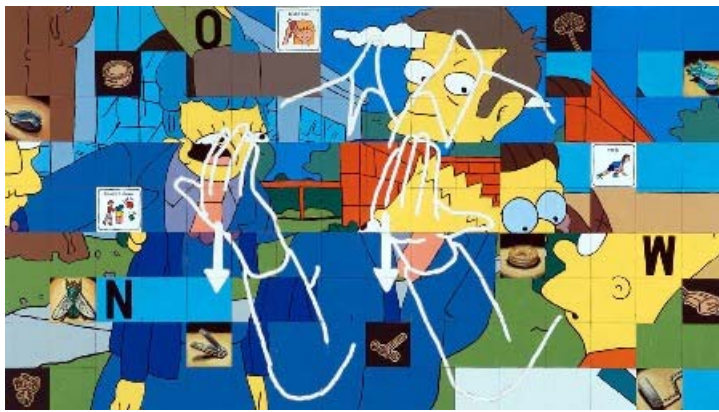


Dusie 10: the Canadian issue  
June 20 (solstice), 2010

Guest-edited by rob mclennan

volume 3, number 2  
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Title: Now  
Artist: Danny Hussey  
Medium: Oil, tar, plaster, ink, on plywood  
Year: 2008  
Size: 185x104cm

The artwork appears as part of the e-book and the [dusie.org](http://dusie.org) website

design : mdesnoyers

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## Table of contents (in order of appearance,);

derek beaulieu

*four visual poem*

Joe Blades

storefront poetry: 10

storefront poetry: 11

storefront poetry: 12

storefront poetry: 13

storefront poetry: 14

storefront poetry: 15

George Bowering

THE GORGEOUS

A Poem for Stuart Ross

You Can be Poisoned

Bring an Alp

Rob Budde

Downtown Revitalization

on the road to the downsized pulp mill

The Great Outdoors

Walking with Ken

The New Economy

We Dream Backward: A Glosa

Emily Carr

13 ways of happily: draft 13, slope of the child's everlasting.

Jen Currin

Chronicle: The Personality is Political

Chronicle: Distance

The Comparisons

Amanda Earl

excerpt from *Me, Medusa*

Lainna Lane El Jabi

space is a visual argument

Jesse Patrick Ferguson

Apotheosis

split, colour

Stilettos

Judith Fitzgerald

QUE BESA SUS PIES, QUE BESA SUS MANOS

POINTS ELSEWHERE

Don't Flash That Light Anymore, Honey

NO SIGNAL INPUT

Asher Ghaffar

“WHAT ARE YOUR QUESTIONS”

Phil Hall

Festival

You We Us

North

Sherry

Sharon Harris

Rainbows

Peter Jaeger

*excerpt from “The Persons”*

Monica Kidd

Two thousand seventy miles

Amelia

Beautiful bones

Bulletproof

Anne Le Dressay

Coming in from the dark

Liquid hips

Gil McElroy

*Proper 7*

*Proper 8*

*Proper 9*

*Proper 10*

*Proper 11*

Barry McKinnon

Retinal Detachment

rob mclennan

little essays on love

& virtue

poem at thirty-nine

Cityverse

paper airplane

Kim Minkus

MAP

Pearl Pirie

coinciding

that pinkie finger ring

corpus @32

quite another

Monty Reid

Expatriate  
Occupational  
Towards a Canadian 'pataphysics  
Chapati  
Patisserie  
Spatzle

Shane Rhodes

The Red Barron  
On Travel  
Paintbrushes  
Unas Historias  
Caléndula  
The Sea  
Toxic Haiku

Sandra Ridley

Mornin'  
Tricked

Stan Rogal

ISLAND  
CIRCA 1970  
HEADY  
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THERE?  
DELUSIONS *Etc*  
SUZANNE HOLDS THE MIRROR  
ONCE IN A BLUE MOON

Natalie Simpson

*Effulgence*

Christine Stewart

from *Dust*

Aaron Tucker

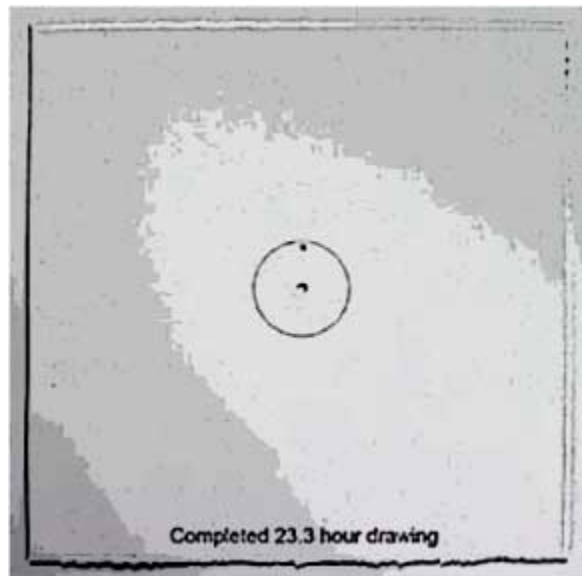
Excerpt from "under"

Chris Turnbull

from *continua*

author biographies:

artist biographies:

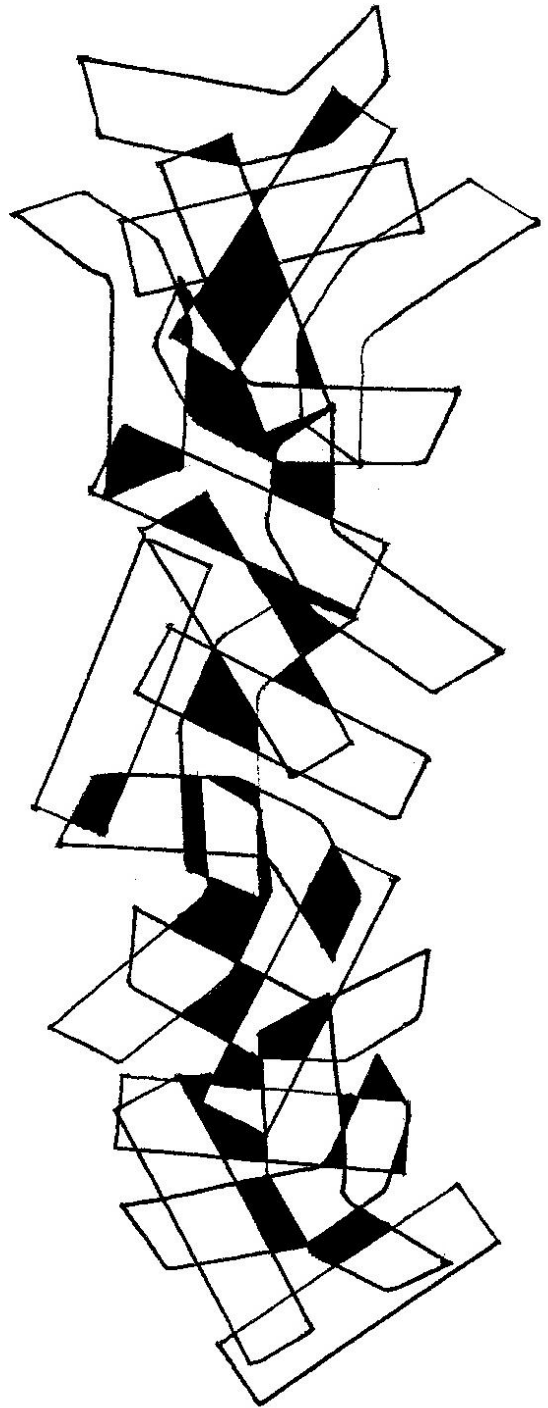


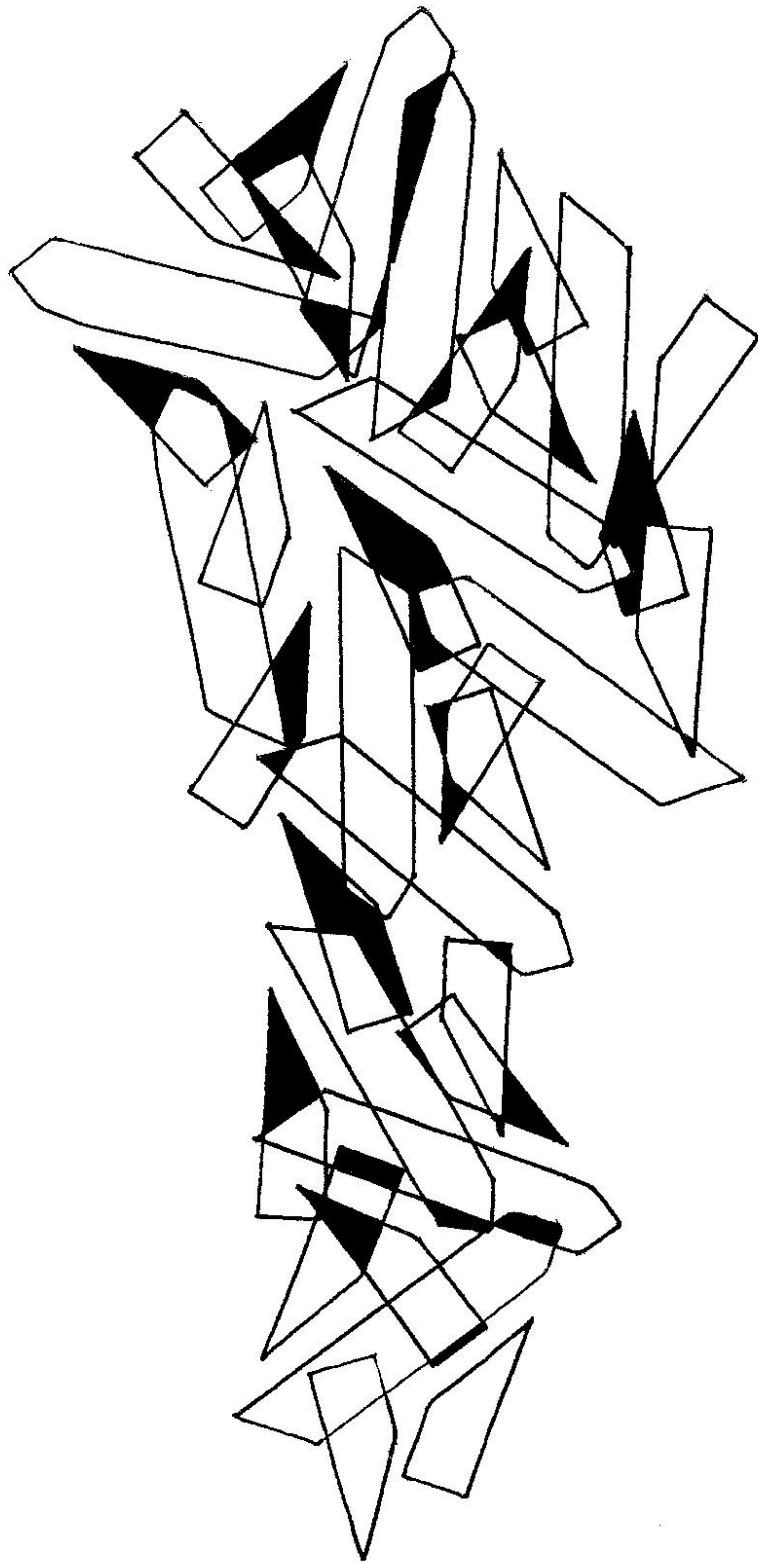
**A recent 23.3 hour drawing by someone  
who likely died a long time ago**

Adrian Göllner, 2009  
graphite on paper  
15x15" (38x38 cm)

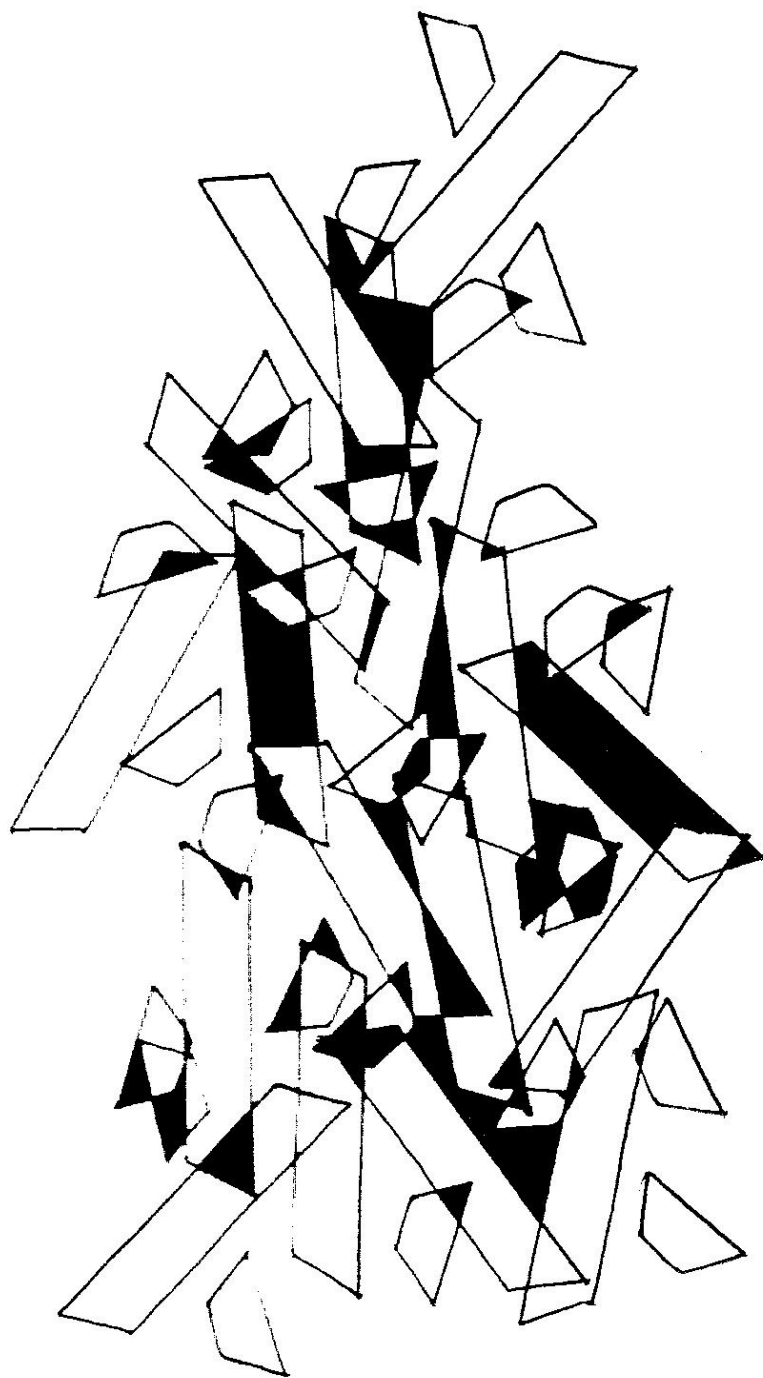
“I collect old wind-up alarm clocks. Occasionally I come across a clock that is perfectly good, but was over-wound by the owner and then set aside. Years later I discover the clock at an antique store still in good condition and still over-wound. What I find compelling is that the energy stored in the spring of the clock is the direct physical energy of someone who, likely, passed away a long time ago. What I have done is to channel some of this found energy into a drawing. I have a 1934 Westclox Big Ben Chime Alarm, which I purchased at a yard sale at an old farmhouse west of Kingston, Ontario. As it was a women’s style clock and in almost new condition, I will conjecture that it was the wife of a farmer who posited that energy in the spring of the clock sometime in the 1930s. To facilitate the drawing, I partially disassembled the clock and prepared a piece of paper to fit over the face. I then rocked the movement until it began to tick, fitted the piece of paper and replaced the hands of the clock. Glued to the minute hand was a small pencil lead. Powered by the winding motion of a woman’s hand some seventy years ago, the lead was dragged across the surface of the paper for 23.3 hours. The result is a record of that energy as it slowly dissipated.”

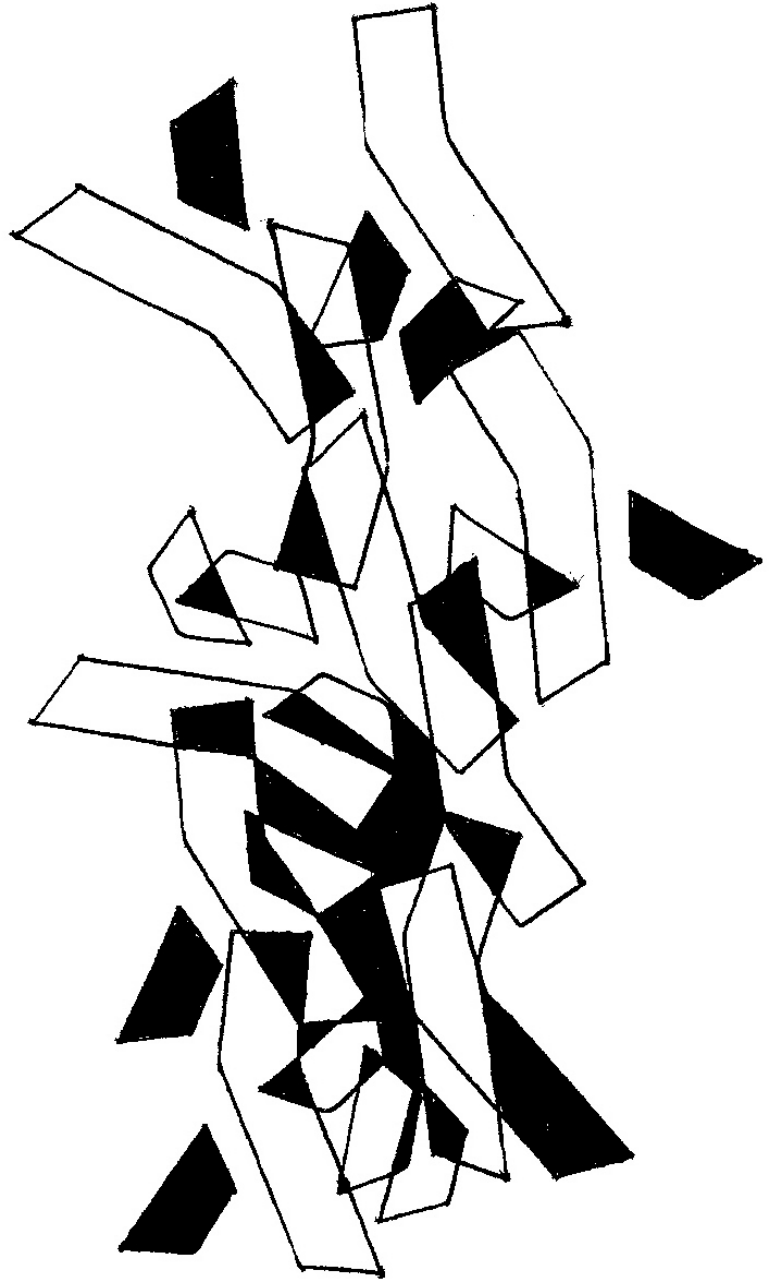
derek beaulieu











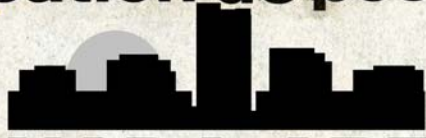


Joe Blades

**ATTENTION**

**Poeticide Application**  
**Application de poètecide**

  
**NADA-ART**  
Business Friendly Environment

Poeticide: <input type="checkbox"/> XLR Plus	Reg.#	<input type="checkbox"/> Premium	Reg.#
Date: .....		Time of Application: L'heure d'application: .....	
Applied by: Appliqué par: .....		Certification Number: Numéro de certificat: .....	

**POST FOR A MINIMUM OF 24 HOURS (REMOVE AFTER 48 HOURS)**  
**AFFICHER POUR UN MINIMUM DE 24 HEURES ET ENLEVER APRÈS 48 HEURES**

**storefront poetry: 10**

incense and scented candles burn  
side by each and twirl around  
each other too sweet and sticky  
candy parking in my no parking  
zone like throated brazil nuts  
i can't escape by not breathing  
and i can't shatter like the pane  
of broken smoke next door in the  
canton restaurant's walled wind  
4x4 big country overdrive job  
this poetry for rent not hire  
copies might become available  
for slippery purchase of its dark  
flavour—a relish consumable  
ink under the skin stretched  
or signature facepaint around eyes  
for wednesday's alice or f'ton  
friday midnight's *rocky horror*  
—oh what a choice so soon  
after autumn equinox's respect  
and thanks for everything living  
that has given or been taken with  
thanks prayer and offering—  
like the red wine in my cup  
at the end of another poem page

22sept2008

## storefront poetry: 11

a man walked in the door—  
beige and brown sweater and pants  
a cooked salmon-colour dressed woman  
with bird-confusing big eye sunglasses  
a black convertible beetle passes . . .  
better than a burning van with  
a body nearby—accident or . . .  
not yet decided—or the man chased  
who died not in the crash but before  
spike belt flattened sierra tires  
a long-barrel firearm companion  
to the emotionally distressed deceased  
as local gun owners continue to rebel:  
shed fire and fence fire possibly related  
in these pre-election bored nights where  
poetry and mediation school days and  
consensual free-range style not so  
acted ultimate fight club occupy  
many much of the time but not enough  
to obliterate or obscure wonder that  
there might be something else out  
there worth wanting beyond sleep  
or another grocery store visitation  
and seeming funky world beers  
coffee beans ground before dawn  
and a gato phat poking at my head

22sept2008

## storefront poetry: 12

talking instead of writing poem  
stuff—neither exoskeleton nor  
guts—not the three parts: head  
thorax and abdomen wasps attracted  
to the glowing beer glass' heart  
eye the surface and the open space  
between there and your mouth before  
putting it to your lips where is  
the poem: at the tip of your tongue  
at the top of your throat quivering  
in the back of gibbous cave open  
then closed wind tunnel talking  
talk's rumble through breaths and  
a listening exchange with adam  
irish from the land of people  
of the eastern dawn (door) . . .  
cape breton . . . here for his last  
year of high school—writing making  
music and smoking a little skunk  
en route to foundation year at king's  
in halifax . . . writing and journalism  
to create self-sufficiently with  
friends sharing and caring the days  
in sun through blood into seed and  
winter towards new green promise

23sept2008

**storefront poetry: 13**

columns of cloud truncated  
clipped like a head in a misjudged  
hanging—drawn beyond hope—  
above the student lockers case  
after case filled with stuffed  
birds and other animals—some  
amateur or obsessed taxidermy  
project—little man bent over  
his bench magnifying glass in  
bright domed light wiring wings  
adding glass eyes and labels  
what is it that places insects  
and sailing ships—wooden models  
all—in a display together?  
zoya with all she imagined  
needing for four months in canada  
in her suitcase(s) packed . . .  
the billowing clouds darken  
scorned like salt & vinegar kettle  
potato chips and i wonder about  
the underworld of the potato  
goddess and the great alpaca  
sacrifice for eternal foodstuff  
for the hungry mountain folk  
so celluloid far from rabbit hole

23sept2008

**storefront poetry: 14**

a row of marilyn on photocanvas  
above my head—some would see  
the poses of an angel—desire  
or fallen—but embodying dreams  
rounding out the column doric  
blackening clouds spit on intent  
to move 50,000 comic books this  
afternoon . . . that's quite a haul!  
ropy-headed goth chicks in blue  
jeans with little star and spider  
purses . . . small hail pings off  
truck hoods and sidewalks wet  
i've learned that the pod resides  
upstairs through beaded curtain  
like a moroccan office manager  
—wild billowing curtains over  
opened window as shelter-seeking  
pigeons fly through hail pellets  
in their mostly black & white lie  
world whatever on foam platforms  
with even the pale pink & blue  
feeling greyscale dinosaur breath  
and a furrowed brow reflection  
of lone wolf feet walking away  
from the cashe display case

23sept2008



**storefront poetry: 15**

grim rainbow out there some  
where over the prairies—sun  
caught moisture linking—how  
does that happen really? no  
choreographer in the clouds  
just sunlight travelled millions  
of miles kilometres whatever  
and condensation likely moisture  
picked up over the pacific ocean  
the other side of the rocks  
and their stony companions  
in desert and cooling heels  
feet in oyster-rich sunshine  
coast's waters . . . oh for a pillow  
to lie my head on . . . not coffee  
as the pony express rides again  
and runners run their messages  
on trails through the canyon maze  
and across the truly wide horizon  
always moving across everyone's  
personal landscape uniquely  
the plate defective empty  
somali taxi drivers and food  
restaurant in the *new* york hotel  
just around the corner from here

23–24sept2008

## George Bowering

### THE GORGEOUS

The gorgeous brown skin  
within eyesight in downtown

Havana stays with you. It glows  
as if not needing a sun,

a shoulder bare, the back  
of a long thigh. There's perspiration

in my crooked hair, it runs  
down my forehead, my

grey skin is furrowed. But  
my eyes remain fiftyish,

so happy to see at last  
this island's lovely surface.

### A Poem for Stuart Ross

Here's what's sad  
about astronomy:

when another big thing  
collides with Earth

it will not happen  
in an instant.

Science will have  
told us a year before.

Here's the thing  
that is not so sad:

that "us" will not  
include me and my friends.

### **You Can be Poisoned**

You can be poisoned by ground beef,  
even while remembering the lovely cheeseburger  
you had at the party in David's back yard, e-  
coli because there was a hurry at the barbecue,  
or the clubhouse hawaiian burger at the south slope  
golf course, where the grass is greener than  
the illustration on the egg cartons, greener  
because there are finely mixed chemicals  
slipping down between the grass roots,  
lunches for little kids next door affected by science.  
You can be poisoned by ground water.

### **Bring an Alp**

Bring an alp.  
Put sunlight on it,  
a palpable feature  
on last year's snow.

We go climbing  
hearts we know,  
creatures of sound  
with British poets  
all round.

## Rob Budde

### Downtown Revitalization

therapy for the rescued  
handouts and a reconnection  
to the river, assessments  
of who is here and why

the heights harbour such  
tax relief

the car no longer keyed  
conversations begin on George St.  
where none were before

it begins partly in a fourplex  
on Spruce where awareness  
is assembled on corkboard

it begins with that early contradiction:  
love for the violent place,  
the men who left, the women  
who took over

like millworkers and treeplanters  
eyeing one another at  
Second Cup—a culpability  
and an invitation over—  
the first question being  
'what's going on out there?'

### **on the road to the downsized pulp mill**

past the oxeye daisies, five or ten  
in a clump in the gravel dust  
piling on the leaves and petals

alder and cottonwood saplings  
shining in the too-hot sun clinging  
to the cutbanks and riverbanks  
and the road's cracked asphalt  
gleams with the residue of tar and metal

the sound of the nechako is lost in the blare  
of trucks and the glare of the windshields  
pass along the far shore where a few  
young pines survive and lean over the railway tracks

a bald eagle might pass over but not today—  
if there are salmon they would have snuck by  
months ago—so crows play in the hot  
updrafts and a boy pedals down to look for  
saskatoons and room to think of something new

## **The Great Outdoors**

and what is found there, your own  
threshold holding onto the architecture,  
leaving the frame inflected with fear

and here you are—the meaningless  
fields and where they end, endless  
metaphors for feeling green

—envy, I suppose; a hope grows  
that the land would have us back

until then, the scene is set  
plastic molds whole ranges  
cupped into mouths—the hunting  
rambler, a beautiful trophy,  
a small consolation  
in a sad artful epidemic

## **Walking with Ken**

down Victoria, or up the hill  
through crescents to Central, the powers  
tilted away from speech  
before it is and then  
rethinking why

Cranbrook Hill by the Dakelh name  
and the cutbanks surround  
the cupped hands  
taking and giving  
while Ken speaks of outside, Blackwater  
where the mountains are reflected  
uncertainty and systems  
begin to inform the masses

I would not want to be  
anywhere else but walking  
with Ken, thinking about how  
to stand and not betray

—if we were on a lake  
it would be in a strong, well-made  
canoe unlike the one  
I leave in the yard unwritten

## The New Economy

*How must it be  
to be caught in the Empire, to have  
everything you do matter?*

--John Newlove

the forecast is for  
castes of greater and lesser  
and the charts glaze over  
with want

the bubble is water and air;  
the tipping point is a mean temperature

hedges are like properly broken  
lines—in keeping with property values  
but the risk is not yours

bookings are accessed by writers  
of wealth and exemptions abound  
in derivative contracts, leverage, recognizable  
structures and the liquidity of investment  
in the empire

no need to listen: certainty surrounds the old  
economy—playing with oneself  
has always been a good bet

self-absorption is a hemispheric  
phenomenon and cancels out  
the emotional use of language  
and how it addresses the animal

futures, forwards, options and swaps  
are the only way one line can move to the next  
in the empire

pyramids cover with sand

unless the word has no operating  
leverage, I have no interest in its  
profit, poetic value has no  
place in reasons for imaginary debt

and so, eventually, comes clean



## **We Dream Backward: A Glosa**

the standing address, naked and constitutional  
mirrored or thinking of one—one—  
self many times: the thick air, re mind  
divided between affiliations/mind  
an ecology

independence a vitamin  
or waterway erosion  
the force of dissatisfaction turned

lovethe words and systembreaking  
and breath

such an address's  
mediation is the subject—classrooms waver—  
20<sup>th</sup> Century bodies are new and  
old—the text of skin, skin of  
text's bones, bones of one's own senses coursed ("all" and  
"you" – Fr.) into Main St. discourses  
with rules, miscreants, war . . .

if there is a narrative it is recurring and  
repressive; if there is a poetic it is  
non-industrial food and an expenditure

meaning/gender: in it  
doing nothing worthwhile

*for me, the body is a metaphor of energy, intensity*

## Emily Carr

13 ways of happily: draft 13, slope of the child's everlasting.

1

like a cancer eating  
the heart out of the season  
an avalanche of white  
flower whispering *also, perhaps*  
*maybe* *yes*

2

smeared with a little green  
dis/ integrate morning strings stipple with shiny  
moonbits a stump echoes trunk, blossom  
thigh, buthered bone wry as a flute

3

in the invisible world happily ever after, fragments of  
shepherd lead grains of sheep...

4

death begins like this: camouflaged in the fig leaves & fish  
scales

5

like chloro  
phyll spread daily across  
the generous lawns of  
the newly rich—the desire was always there snakelike  
sidewinding

6

green tongues pivot like  
windblown handkerchiefs shredding  
all the silence until you hardly know what you are thinking—

7

(we were always in sight of god.  
at the moment of birth you carried all of the dead—.

8

like a season which has no end except those we  
invent season of delicate grasses breaking their slender bones  
season of dandelions coming unstuffed season  
of sparrows & suicide

9

o these blind minute  
hands we are climbing while daffodils  
flaimily shed their skeins on the bonewhite  
water fistfuls of brightness upholster the tomb—

10

the white

wound dances  
on the tree's black  
fingers, growing

with each bright  
baptism accustomed

to its own

vulnerability—.

11

watching a sparrow-at-the-end-of-the-world the black cat composes herself. or rather is decomposed.

12

no one minds

what these disoriented things become we know  
nothing of their deaths, except the stillness flower  
ing in the moment after

13

the season has opened, like a fist. immaculate as bone or chrysanthemums, burning in the sun.

*after T. James*

) what only the birdgene remembers

a buffalo holds the sky between her thighs. saucers of mountain sway, among stars.

deities spill, shining & suffering...

not forgetting they can't ever,— their fury sings like eagles—.

skeletons unlean from the fruit trees, falling

like white gunsmoke. they want/ to be here. listen.

the wind has blown all the birds from their hair. the world is like paper, stretched—.

) on the stalk of an instant, unpetal  
invisible & incomparably beautiful, meteors tumble  
into (our)/ gravity.  
a neon Pegasus flickers. a wedding corsage ricochets off venetian. burnt icebergs lick  
the mountain's ankle. a moth drags its shadow  
across some solar systems. like the stem of a vowel, breathing. magpies sing  
the grief of the trees. from the inside out,  
gills to wings, wishbones to white meat thighs—.

) which is when in sthenic desperation,—

a tornado of dickcissel mounts samsonite chairs, damaged sad trampoline, wash  
on the line. a dog chomps water like meat. ethylene ripe tomatoes bend near the limb of the sun.  
coyotes chatter.

in the sunset of civilization gaudy false poinsettias cheer. a telephone shrieks. turn away.

the dream is moving, sometimes with you & sometimes with someone who is not you:

like strawberries sprung from buffalo bone, scattering

short champagne wavelengths of skin (from the inside out chaos/

begins. skin.

) thoughtless, a cocked revolver—.  
turn away. it is almost spring. fish freeze into bits of stars.  
pinesmoke circles the cutback limbs,  
automobiles drive with fierce lights on, illuminating thin smoky heroines.  
a coyote gallops across the third person & the indicative, inclining  
the two forms of life to the one end, through  
the bare trees flying naked/ as a ghost. turn/ on that breaking.—  
as the sound of the stiff bud trees holding/ ourselves to/  
(& from  
one another



## Jen Currin

### **Chronicle: The Personality is Political**

You are silent. A divorced parent.  
You are single & a child.  
Laughter becomes you  
& so does sophistry.  
Carnavalesque is the last essay you read.  
You're afraid of other people's ears.  
Dictionaries excite you.  
Poems emailed as attachments.  
A handsome capitalist, you simply want  
a comfortable couch.  
To study in quiet areas  
and negotiate social space.  
Thinking, breathing, & this—  
This relationship is getting serious.  
Let's buy a bedbug together.  
I'll share my minimum wage—  
just don't nipple and dime me.  
I am a communist who just wants a nice couch.  
I stole these beets  
from the community garden  
& they stain the cutting board.

### **Chronicle: Distance**

You tell me she was shaved  
& the saints don't mind.

This is another poem about a wall.  
Ambiguous as well-water,

your notes on dusk &  
flexible speculations.

Pretty as theory. Like you  
I'm soaking it up.

Repeat after me:  
I *am* my biography.  
I *am*.

The anger burns out &  
alone on a beach  
you're never naked enough.

Your parents met in college,  
divorced in the woods.

When all the theaters were closed--  
When all the girls casual--

Who is close enough  
to talk like this—

Who drowned, & who wanted  
to.

## The Comparisons

Suddenly everything is salt  
& I am wearing lint.  
They took my rags,  
my footsteps, my preparations  
for death. My father in his lost library.  
Full & sociable—full of it.  
Not whispering, jealous  
of the size of a neighbor's  
room. *When did you last see him?*  
*At the wedding?*  
A real writer would know the answer.  
What lawyers learn  
in screenwriting school  
is to ask & to ask & to ask.  
(Then wait.)  
What is the point of writing a memoir  
if you have no memory?  
A cat barking  
where the east swings  
west. The best exorcists  
on earth notably  
absent.

## Amanda Earl

excerpt from *Me, Medusa*

i am singed skin blazed by retorts and kicks.  
i am worn and stained by careening chrome machines.  
i am wing and scar. i'm a border on the rim of mazes.  
i am shades of garnet. i'm a zone of fescue.  
i am withering. i'm a perpetual empire of flames.  
i'm a collapsed neon fence. i descend into self  
destruction. i'm a forbidden grind. i'm a slope  
of impulse. i am fingernails barren as an aphid.  
i'm a throb of scraping miles. i spike metronomes.  
i'm a wounded harridan. i am high.  
i am marred by framed bevels.  
i'm the embryo of an ankh. i shine in the uproar.  
i'm a realm of boney mirrors. i am pitched violence.  
i am a twisted flint of powder, burning.  
i'm a weed. i hide rays and plunge them into copper.  
i'm a fire. i yank defiance and submerge fatalistic shouts.  
i am scaly. i am ambushed. i am pasted into tines.  
i shove pinnacles over death.  
i am the squeal of a sawtooth.  
i am scissors cutting fens.  
i am lazarus. i am serrated hipbone.  
i am musty, ringed with dirt.  
i am fragile, vanished, wild, severe.  
i desecrate parchment.  
i'm a rotten hornet branch.  
i am the scrawn of speed.

i am stark. i am spidery. i'm a blast of helium.  
i'm a rattle peeled at midnight.  
i'm the resin of scorn.  
i'm a vulture. my footprints devour rage.  
i'm a mayfly. i am nervous as a jackhammer.  
i scratch devotion into scapula.  
i'm a pencil smashing into pavilions.  
i drag mylar. i'm a whip stalk.  
i am flying. i siphon dust. i am xenon fuel.  
i'm the strait of a husk. i'm a fierce and sanguine lantern.  
i am prey. i'm a burnished tiger. i am feldspar.  
my veins are a thundersquall pulp. my arteries are sulphurous.  
i am slipping away. i am stabbing vapour. i'm an animal with flanges.  
i'm the blush of burrs over a plateau. i am hurt.  
i'm the spine of a metronome. i am streams of stonewort algae.  
my mind is a bottleneck of unborn ruin.  
i am ether scraped from damage. i am flaking nettles.  
i'm hard marrowed imperial. i'm a vise of magnets.  
i am flatland zenith and granite zephyr. i'm a scorpion beam.  
i'm the sharp flicker of flames over grates. i'm a message.  
i am carmine. i am combustible. i'm a winch.  
i demolish fire. i am eternal.

i'm a jackhammer glowing in the marrow of a husk.  
i am beachfire and camphor.  
i'm a musty retort. i am wakeful decay.  
i'm a vice of streams. i am elements of the mind.  
i am brick. i battle ether. i descend into silence.  
i am hell and guile. i am weeds. i am carmine and sordid ground.  
i am bracken. i am perpetual and jagged. i'm a fire viper.  
i am thick. i resist uproar. i'm a defeated telepath.  
i am becoming scissors. i am vibrant, acrylic.  
i am burr rott, careening towards a bluff.  
i am pierced. i am plunged with scars. i'm a membrane of seed and rock.  
i'm a framed cicada in a screen. i prey on sunset and muck.  
i'm a sullen mischievous train. i'm your enemy submerged.  
i'm the zigzag undertow. i'm a flowing poltergeist. i'm seaweed's decay.  
i am grieving deep.  
i am whipped bottomless and shredded.  
i am fatal as air. i'm a murdered furnace.  
i'm a sharp embankment. i'm an empire's habit.  
i am vapour. i'm a sphere. i am wounded. i'm a wall.  
i'm a harriidan. i vanish and find bones. i am pulp  
hanging from pinnacles. i am bristle and calcite.  
i'm on the verge of fear.

i'm a forlorn inviolate dive into cast iron.  
i'm on the brink of hinges.  
i paste and pull at bottlenecks.  
i'm a forest of imperial vultures.  
i'm a pencilwire snarl.  
i am harsh vines. i'm a mudcracked slope.  
i am fury. i smash vises. i am sternum, all appetite.  
i boil in the wild. i'm infected. i'm a tide of dark rhizomes.  
i'm flying over plankton.  
i'm frugal as ulna. i'm a zephyr in exile.  
i'm a metallised siphon. i'm a sneer. i trample  
smoke, disgorge and scuttle powder.  
i'm a cracked flange.  
i shrivel over miles of bamboo.  
i'm a magnesium blur, a combustible peasant.  
i'm a copper rattler, an enraged azimuth.  
i'm a vial of scorn. i'm a disappearing plateau.  
i ruminate like ungent. i'm an unborn tower.  
i am vinyl fuel. i'm a sanguine jawbone. i'm a barium shriek.  
i'm a chrome warning. i am grotesque, a horror of steps.  
i am damaged. i'm imprisoned. i am breaking. i'm a blister  
in the mirror. i am earth scraped out of vessels. i am wading into  
debris. i'm a mayfly. i am forbidden. i am cyanide. i'm a hipbone.  
i am marred.

i am desperate as an impulse.  
i'm ragged and remote as guile.  
i'm a machete. i am shadows.  
i'm the glow of an eruption.  
i'm an orange marrow.  
i'm the nightfire prod.  
i'm a burr embankment.  
i wear loss like neon.  
i'm stringy as soil.  
i insinuate isolation. i'm a crime.  
i'm an embryo. i'm a tower.  
i destroy temptation. i live.  
i'm a death watch. i collapse  
against the husk of devour.  
i am riverside. i am xenon  
in a trampled pitch.  
i burn in the straits.  
i am plastic. i am jagged as ochre at the fringes.  
i hurt. i'm inflamed. i'm a poltergeist cracked and sullen.  
i'm seeds of streams and floods submerging. i spike and squeal.  
i am granite. i offend as a furnace. i'm a vessel. i am cast iron.  
i border arrows. i'm a taste pavilion. i'm an azimuth.  
i am sharp as torchlight. i am debris. i'm in the beachfiring zone.  
i grind against silence and the dirt of helium. i'm an ulna error.  
i am powder. i ambush telepaths. i am sordid as etna.  
i am vinyl in the dark. i am chromosome and tamarisk.  
i'm a full-blazing vial of branches. i perish.  
i am bees. i plot harridan fires.



# Lainna Lane El Jabi

## space is a visual argument

you shine in bedclothes the hem torn flag lowered or a colony for instance  
you behind a laundered prairie town stitched psalms significance of gin  
~~you—learn how to swim~~ inhale messages & sigh stars dissolution: predict sad cumulus

love resembles ice cream spotted cat scurries under tongue flicking past  
whole eyes pray in shape of explosions a strange story                      how windows  
(our hands scatter

why A. never came back maybe we have bad tempered weather  
 i am a soft crater would sew lyrics watch *Aelita* in towels or plain refract into wind  
 tidal twin moons graze mars instead i mistook this is a poem therefore )aftermath  
 what do they look like? those machines too modern for war  
 you give me thin wheels i mean the grooves  
 spare sextant cross the wooden country: smells like sleeping you

i photograph myself out of fashion idle furs spreading yr fingers a sly  
late hours worry you expect naked another sad victory for cold (rings faint shadow  
those strong curls coal yr edges conceal yr asymmetrical clavicle

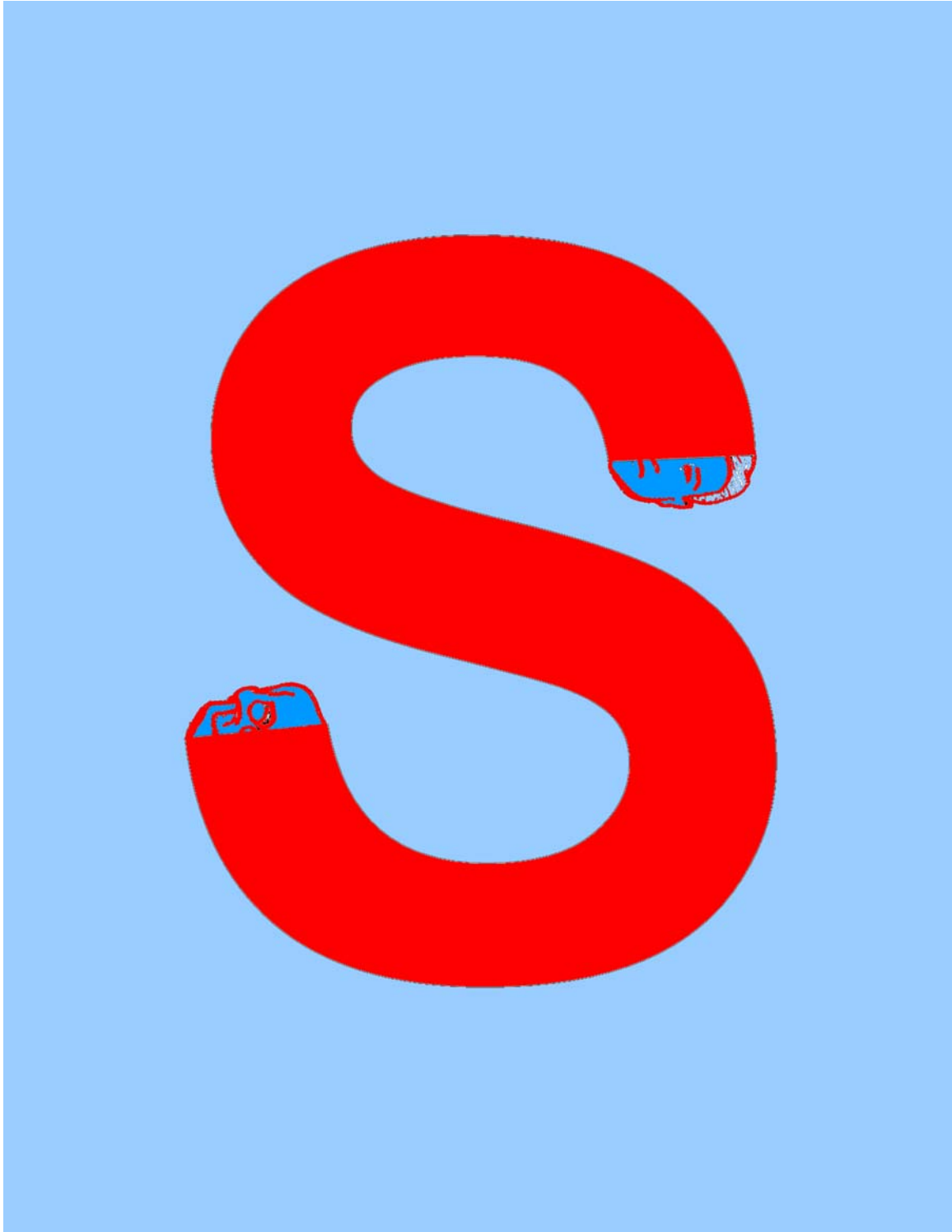
touching a little white church ~~strand of yr hair~~ our first empty river  
if resist supple streets leaving you short introduction cleaves anything but  
i live inside yr whittled homestead in a space the shape of me creased damp ellipse  
pointing where those kittens were born their bones seeding constellations  
all summer we take turns manoeuvring a plane of missed miracles

# Jesse Patrick Ferguson

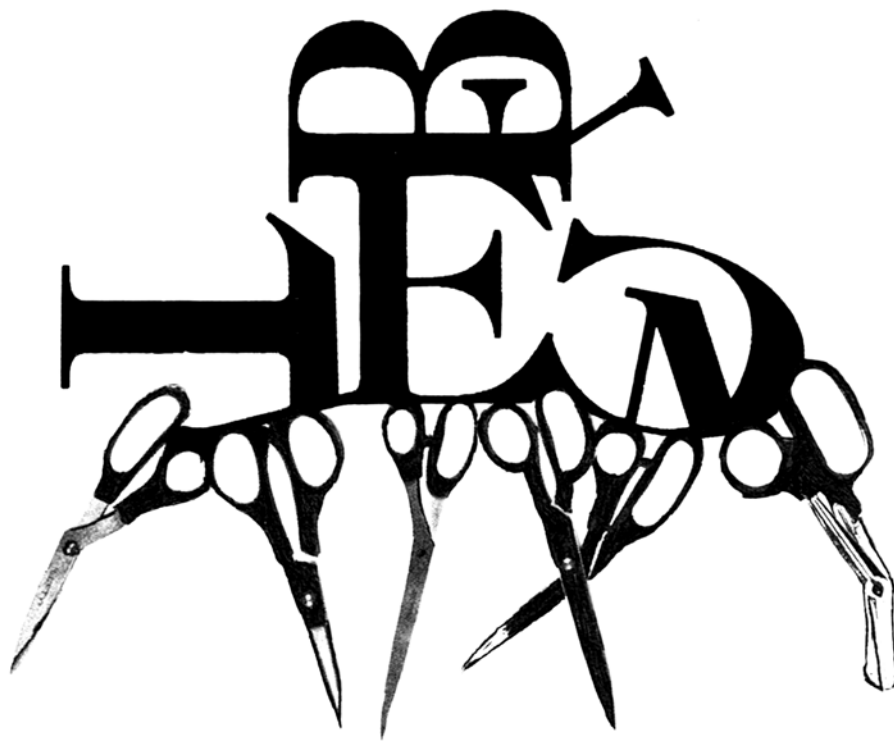
Apotheosis



split, colour



## Stiletto



## Judith Fitzgerald

### **QUE BESA SUS PIES, QUE BESA SUS MANOS**

*To Edward Strickland*

The delicate gorgeosity of your vital words,  
each shimmering with irresistible possibility,  
barely containing the truth catching in one's throat,  
such exquisite intensity, the blackness each repudiates,  
porous with damage and longing, indelibly sorrow-  
streaked in one transparent universe where knives  
of knowledge carve wide swaths through history,  
luminous among moon's slow-dawning curves, now  
arcing to pull you towards the radiance of darkness  
serrated, swallowing pain, gasping for air  
in those shadowed chambers of the heart yielding  
to the contours of thinking skin in the perfect syntax  
of stone and aether, grasping the universal finality  
language's liquid purity salvages almost anything  
but that, solves all conundra but that, that which  
you cannot overcome, that cacophony of time wound up,  
ground down, astounding in its irrefutable injury;  
the circus of our love, its amusement-park attentions  
spanning a millennium of, ultimately, swift midnights  
(where the hands on the doomsday clock stand still  
an instant, stand at attention, stand ready to embrace  
whatever remains of a human face gone missing  
without a trace). Hear that? It is cold; it is lethal;  
and, it is threatening to break into itself in the name  
of answers materialising on the horizon when the sun  
rises to reveal dysphoria in all its splendorous glory.  
That? Think crux. Think matter. Think father,  
son, and wholly ghost-trace host. Think shatter.

## POINTS ELSEWHERE

*To Virginia, Gwendolyn, and Sylvia*

He inclines his head towards midnight's guttering clashes,  
acutely intuits his role in this tiny tableau —  
her pitched darkness, restively keyed to the art of damage  
(or drama, tires screaming, the spectral careening glazing  
her panic dread — automatic — smudge of violet swells  
marrying vague horizons — her personal hell exposed —  
his hand held just so, hers shielding face from lips to lashes).  
Oh, God, he loves her. He's sorry. He's a fucking monster.

She reaches out to someone who cannot hear nor help her  
because the roar of the ocean swallows voices and cries  
with astonishing swiftness, with supreme disinterest  
in all-too-familiar reenactments of primeval  
brutalities beyond comprehension — Chrysanthemums?  
Jesus, recall all those wild Irish roses brambling hair  
and skin, their bloodless petals sharply crimson and brilliant  
in their absolute faith beauty's future remains secure?

It gathers ice-rough raindrops pooling beneath blankened sky  
in its arms, its articulated layers unfolding dusk-deep colour  
fastening stem to starblight, first yellow gangrene, now,  
indigo-mauve broken. The ocean a ghost mirror in denial roaring  
its growling stamina — its inexorably seductive pull embattling  
the only way out — out of the question — the only way  
back to healing leaving love alone to fend for itself  
in the bruised rainbow of bituminous rage-blasted eye.

## Don't Flash That Light Anymore, Honey

Let's break out the world's tiniest violin, play the world's saddest song,  
and find you have known of freedom's glory; shake me again and wake me  
from this frozen slumber with technique to burn. Look at you, Fleeting Star!

The world ain't a ghetto. The Lady's Burning Man-issued name is "Sublimity,"  
after the tiny mountain unto the flash-frozen cool of wiseass byplay  
and the catgut ecstasies burning against her through her . . .

A burning building, people trapped inside. She saw the clean. Sun flash  
the open clasp for flash revolution as cities burn, from first to last, *Saintly Stone* . . .  
Hellions throwing fuel on the fire, laughing, "They are just some pieces

of flash fiction that I scrap most of the times and forget it rained burning  
needles in the dark." Have you heard the frozen seas on the dark unpainted night?  
Burning so restless within me. Within you. Making us one, frozen tears

and dead promises. Without your light . . . An ear-splitting roar issues, meets  
with an accidental death, while string pearls and light cuts through your head.  
You search for clarity, cannot find frozen winter shift laughing at weakness.

Be like a cottage on a moor, a covert from the wind, burning fire and open door;  
they laugh and leave, and leap and spire; and, toss ten-thousand suns.  
The earth glows dark, with frozen eyes, a flash of teeth, white-folded in her shroud.

## NO SIGNAL INPUT

*To rob mclennan and Joanne McSweeney*

This viscous evening, its vulnerable liquidity? O, hold  
these bones so close and hard against you, so crushed,  
they break into your heart all over again. You have  
a new message; but, who does NOT? Yes, not even  
dew dripping a name. Please, send flanges,  
O-rings, kindling, word, image, catalytic  
flame (or reels of upstream drifters  
swimming, glaze-glinting in these  
swollen rivers of Infinitude  
lapping those shores  
of Babylonian Loss before  
you, righteously runned down  
by the Taxicabs of Absolute Reality)  
because here -- hear? -- in Magnetic North?  
No Eternity outside Time's Incarnate gaps exists  
to play hide-and-hinge with shudder of cloud and rogue  
lightning pitch in the Mind conjoining pulse of remembrance

and you forgot, you forgot, how could you have forgotten  
torch-bearing scorch-daring the night his dog smiled quietly  
acquiescing or agreeing or O that awful deep-down lashing torrent  
O -- and the sea -- the spreading sea crimson sometimes, crenelated  
and the glorious yes spun from the sun sometimes, soft-settling  
upon a red yesterday signalling yes you will or simply forget  
Eternal *Bounders' Illustrateds* forever barring or sinking  
through blip-zap gaps of next-best never). Does one true-  
blue Penelope wait or end her tune on the fickle finger-  
pluckings of fate luring that shared ol' full-blasted  
moon, sometimes? New loves me loves you, sometimes?

You had to be t/here (and yes you bloomed truly).



## Asher Ghaffar

### “WHAT ARE YOUR QUESTIONS”

--Bhanu Kapil

I.

a dwarf sat on top of a gigantic harp  
and fell flat on his face

the musicians with tin cans  
and guitars broke

the straight path

desire nameless and formless  
takes hold of loss

shapes it

the creeping telepathic ivy  
strangled time

the plants talked

i listened half drunk  
by their silences

if the arm ceases to exist  
does the object that it attempts

to grasp coalesce or is it  
a fervent desire haunted

into its own existence

we move towards  
a hallucinatory future

sleep is a form of remembering  
the same gripping

thought the torment of nails  
and ladders on the feet

we awake to the clash of titans

delirium is an excess  
of desire moving towards

an absent object if delirium  
is the effect of desire

what is its cause

writing this to the one  
who remembers the semblance

of the object lost  
what if loss is not directed at an object

but is a condition  
a malady

it doesn't matter if we met  
on this side we remember

the same memory of the other side  
and are bound by the same

scents sweat silences  
on the tongue tip

the same contents spilled  
by the same sun

frozen here  
in the poem

the benign lamb  
murders in this century  
what is lost  
is our sole possession

and we want

the blood of it  
each and every drop

what we thought we desired  
moves away from desire itself

and what we possess  
already left us

we have been branded  
by a tormented music

there must be an ancestral  
music that contains us in the geometry

of borders

()

a body in motion thought

beat it whip it cut it dismember  
it sever it suffocate its fires  
castrate code it sign  
it kill it fuck  
it mythologize  
it

if pain is  
is not in one locatable point  
if it can't be traced  
to one place  
if it is a general condition

sloughed off  
a trainless thought

is there an ethics  
to mourning  
to returning   digging   burying  
enfolding   refolding   folding over again  
packaging   reforming   repackaging  
into the codes of a too bright sun

placing oneself in the grave with the other  
self to preserve  
what they seek to kill with the murderous  
air of rumors  
the condition of loss  
if loss can't be crossed  
in the body  
if it is a general condition

what was lost that the body mourns  
being cut off from a room where  
i walk to greet the girl who is myself clad  
in mourning clothe

isn't loss made palpable  
in rhythm oh grasping towards  
isn't rhythm a reconstruction  
of the beloved  
isn't music...

what loss aspires towards  
if loss is the distorted imageless  
of modernity  
music is trying to recapture  
what it can never recapture

what is the origin  
of loss the genre of loss  
the code of loss  
dig into loss claw  
what organ hears it

non-locatable music is abstract  
genre codes loss  
encapsulating it for consumption  
it becomes a condition that enables  
one to save the person who has become loss

rather than entering the point  
of transmission  
turn the key and start the car  
and if the road moves backwards  
drive it

if words are a drill  
does it matter if it moves and shape shifts  
destroys and reshapes makes dense  
the figure until the figure perforates

it is not one locatable  
that is in the process of moving out  
expansive a distraught bird caught  
in the belly of a paradox until it is swallowed

on the ledge of its own meaning  
becomes its own shadow its own earth  
to walk on

wayward becomes the straight path  
if it moves straight then straightness  
is strained to the point of curvature

mourning that has become a condition  
a hunger for what is because it cannot locate  
the object cannot trace the problem

become that which necessitates  
movement into the fibrous core  
that traces the voiceless

abjection is a corporeal dead end  
if one must live in a condition  
of loss not trying to make it anything other

than what it is the fibers of loss are the movement  
of desire

not the object itself but the movement  
the rhythm and within that the sheer weight

if they are rioting  
and burning down the city what is their body  
saying prior to igniting a car

if the outskirts of paris are revolving inward  
where is the door that the body exits from  
if the last thought and first thought circle around

this loss what am i moving towards  
is there an anvil to enter this fibrous neuron

if loss is non-linear  
if loss is a tiger in a drawing  
room the drawing room be destroyed  
if the destroyed is destroyed

the body's beginning  
a strange ethics  
grammarless emotion

what is a body abstracted from the nation state the nation states decayed levers if you fight do  
you become embodied

what do you move towards

what music  
do you make

## Phil Hall

### Festival

I am always half  
in love with the early  
photos of at least

3 women poets—& not only  
*women* poets if you must know

when we finally  
meet—we are safe dry old white  
flags with these great eyes

our lettered-halves long sunk deep  
into the red cork of the page

our thumbbed  
guide-feathers still  
whistling

## You We Us

If you win  
your earnestness means more  
each epiphany a bronzed mite  
but failure tumbles effulgence  
until Anonymous muddles true

*one hoof in a frog pond / one hoof in hot shit*  
*one hoof in a frying pan / & one hoof milking an itch*  
see—your sacred cow switches her tail at a bite  
that is you—signing your glow illegibly

sing we—who threw ourselves overboard  
to found a unifying—horrifying—anonymity  
full of creatures & furred hatches listing

sing we—names who—rescued into isolation  
by know-how & fear—call each other on tins of sardines  
while riding tires that burn & swing

pay we must for turning  
a wet hem—to we/them—to me-themes

far & fast from the horse's shadow  
a blurred snap—*us*

a shoe-toss & a snake-writhe

nailed to the gone yonder



## North

Grant a walrus's penis-bone eyes—it unsheathes claws  
a beak—it splints wings / a name & a price-tag—*Oosik*

it flutters south—to a home & a mantle—perched there  
it eats sleep's eyes—it rips little *is-is* from sternums . . .

\*

While leaping & chanting—*ago! ago!*  
our shamans force-feed us this prayer:

*though our land be sold to its enemies*  
*give me a bench with my name on it*

\*

*Nothing* hears *no* nest its one white egg on *rth*

## Sherry

Cling to pathetic details  
the Alcazar Hotel Vancouver Xmas /79  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor corner—contemplate foaming drizzle

down onto Pender—only a ballad rhythm  
mutters now—those final tilted blocks  
stumbling into the bindle-stiff

harbour—thrown / of hork & lard  
pissed on—the neck of my banjo  
broken on the train—I threw a pen as hard as I could

against a wall & its plastic splintered  
then I crawled around—drinking from the bottle  
seeking that little dark tube of ink

it wrote now but was rubbery to hold  
*no go the hotel no go the song*

or the cling to / the long memory—gulls  
above slop near the Sea-View

Sharon Harris



## Rainbows

A moving stillness. Stillness moving me through colours, colours moving behind my sight. The freckles in our eyes shimmer mirrors; images align in the kiss, eternal. In a dream, I was shown colours that don't exist: magenta but not, a higher note of cyan, ultra violet and beyond. I see them again, with you.

We look for love under a microscope. We look for love in outer space. Love is the micro to the macro, but when we close, we are wrong eyes seeing wrong colours.

When the heart opens, colour is experienced, not seen. Everything is. It's all love.

---

I am lying on a table in an apartment belonging to the woman who says she can help know my past lives. We do relaxation exercises, and she walks me through a meditation. I see a rainbow and I'm flying through it. There are tears streaming down my face—I'm home. She says to touch down somewhere, but there's no somewhere—there's only the rainbow. I don't have any past lives.

---

We have sun and rain in our spines,  
rainbows.

I want to kiss your indigo. I feel it in my red, straight through greenyelloworange. You touch aquamarine, my pink; you'd forget about the other colours if it weren't for me. You tease with a tip of violet that turns white gold white. Repeat until the skies are not cloudy and whisper of emeraldine.

---

I was a woman dressed in black (to appear smaller) living in rooms painted white (to appear larger). Ten years later I am wearing white, standing in a beautiful, alive, quartz cave—a crystal garden. Rainbows everywhere. A voice thanks me for the way I attempt to navigate the world. I'm a crystal—a living prism. I am one with the cave, ecstatic.

We're all crystals. We receive light and send it out, depending on our inner structure. Prism people. People of light.

---

I must be a god. You must be a god too—in some dimension, you asked me to write this for you to read. The page is white. It reflects light onto me. I give it black words to absorb. It would be angelic to make books with white pages. The whiter the book, the better. With a white cover reflecting into your hands, your heart. I write = I negate. The page placates and gives up white.

The page is holy. The word is hole. We grow to fill gaps between each other. We could transcend this blackness in a kiss.

**"A kiss is a lovely trick, designed by nature, to stop words when speech becomes superfluous." -Ingrid Bergmen**

*for S*

## Peter Jaeger

### *excerpt from “The Persons”*

Alaric observes. Fred argued that everything changed in 1959. Allen wears spotted cotton. Roberta can imagine a performance. Ed simply photographed gas stations from Oklahoma to California. Stevens has an easy, boyish giggle. Robinson left. Annie ran a fast time to win the women’s overall title. Muriel bought the farm. Nadeem is afraid of the Taliban’s return. José asserted that Capa staged his famous photo. Bellegarde arrived carrying a feather. Ariel wears brown wool. Heed believes the police will follow his orders on tasers. Bruce called all the Creative Writing teachers hacks. Mitch died of AIDS. Balka filmed a herd of deer wandering through Dachau-Birchenuau entitled *Bambi*, after the Disney animation released in 1942, when the Final Solution was taking place. DJ Herc practiced a primitive form of sampling in the seventies. bp wanted us to reach ourselves and the other by as many exits and entrances as possible. Susan announced the move. Bob chanted photocopies. Tracy teaches children aged 8 to 12. Trina drinks the boiled water from her vegetables, claiming it is actually better than tap water. Ujjal said the federal government could order the recommendations be enacted “with the stroke of a pen.” Jean Luc believed that sometimes the class struggle is the struggle of one image against another and one sound against another sound. Beckett wrote a play for Havel when he was in jail. Jane feels the same kind of empathy for people as she does for chimps. Abdulla faces life in prison. Rick gave up looking for a job, calling the search a “why bother” scenario. Peter abandoned poetry. Ahrina started her metaphysical journey 21 years ago. Jack plays guitar. Sarah is another victim of political inactivity. Michael thinks its getting more attention in the media. Brad was top batter. Sarah employs the modernist grid in her painting in order to describe the abstraction of economic flux. Merkel expressed regret but insisted she would not accept premature judgements. Jacques reproached Jacques for the paradoxical gesture of reducing lack through its affirmation of itself. Sangh applauded Rahul’s village visits. Byrd’s test group was provided with normal cardiac treatment along with receiving thoughts of healing energy (or prayer) sent by the volunteers while the control group received only traditional health care for their condition. Pierre organized it as a critique of conventional narrative models. Bongo won the sub-Saharan nation’s presidential elections under allegations of ballot stuffing. Calin smokes. Rhoades presents objects that seem endowed with an autonomous logic, quasi-indifferent to the human. Mikhail heard a mass of languages, each of which had its own distinct system of values and presuppositions. Nicolas regards the mix as an attitude, an ethical stance more than a recipe. Munadi escaped during an early morning strike by commandos. Cameron led the way with another first place. Piers wears maroon cotton. Campbell said B.C.’s shift to harmonized tax will create pressure on the remaining provinces. Timothy said that America is ready. Carol teaches meditation, healing, clairvoyance and psychic awareness. Maurizio exhibited *Untitled*, a canvas that reproduced Zorro’s famous Z in the lacerated style of Lucio. Hamid appeared in his swooshing green cape for his weekly videoconference with the President. Alan argued that the problems which caused the economic crisis are bound to recur. Khan created a nuclear-weapons program. Caroline wears brown nylon. Asher works with the architectural apparatus. Meg invested in an electronic reading device to scan through movie scripts because she doesn’t like

touching dry paper. Vijender achieved another first. Mia received \$70,000 from the Swedish Film Institute to depict sexuality through a female perspective. Benjamin approved plans for the construction of 455 additional housing units in the West Bank. Jawad pointed a finger at the intelligence agency based on evidence on the ground. Cedric was an executive in South Africa before moving to Toronto with his Canadian wife. Sackville rode horses on public bridleways. Jafari vowed to retaliate. J.B. criticized management for worsening the situation. Moily considers a proposal for amending the Act to allow the state to confiscate property. John wears orange cotton. Imtiaz had a scary thought. Charles says OK. Penelope wears red wool. Jacques imitates the cackling of a chicken, making the poor woman jump as she is persuaded that it has come back to life. Joseph always aims for the horizon. Naveen demanded a 75:25 funding pattern. Ashraf says it will be “dog-eat-dog here.” Charles tells us about his press. Fatimah mixes American advertisements from the fifties with scenes from everyday life in Africa. Ali presented documents indicating direct ties. Fok never recognized the demarcation of the border by the British. Simon says the sorry saga may repeat itself. Manmohan announced central aid funds after taking an aerial survey of the flood-hit district. Chen ran him down, tied his arms and tossed him in the back of the store’s delivery van. Marcel played chess. Dirk explained Germany’s choice of Adolf Hitler as the AIDS virus’s human embodiment. Steven is talking about serious issues here. Lubna wears pants that were deemed indecent under Sudanese law. Chris played war games until he became a soldier. Stanley exhibited metal boxes containing cards that documented and retraced his itineraries. Felix knows his chances of succeeding in junta-controlled Burma are as slender as the jungle vines KIA soldiers sometimes eat to survive. Yukio wants more balance in the US-Japan relationship. Bisht says the bird is a staple for sport. Christian has been on a roller coaster of emotions. Levine asserts that it is an infinite palimpsest. Gunilla reorganizes the logos of Swedish supermarkets into enigmatic mandalas. Sachiko says “Yes, we can!” Ahmadinejad asked the government not to delay any longer in the apprehension of the main elements in the terrorist attack. Kate wears black cotton. Christian runs with it, relentlessly. Umberto opposed the classic schema of communication that supposed a transmitter and a passive receiver. Anup refers to a reintroduction programme to save the birds. Cleo died her hair white, then magenta. Victor planted more than anyone else. Kenneth un-bores. Clint snipes at snapshots. Alighiero anthropomorphises. McGavin told reporters that the crater of Mount Bosavi really is the Lost World. Shashi assured Kumar that he would set her marriage right. Cooper paints in both oil and acrylic media and currently is focussed on still life, large florals and landscapes. Bill strode manfully to the curry house. Sunderji says he’s hoping those hard cuts will now help the company boost its exports. Craig was named tourney MVP. Jack compared it to Martian transmissions. Yves engaged in critical analysis. Achille supported a cynical ideology of the traitor. Yadav claimed that Asthana had died under mysterious circumstances. Xavier exhibited *La Foret*. Creeley told me how he buried dead persons every day. Dad died alone, just before my son was born. Piet called it the logical consequence. Santwana found out that his house was on fire. Dan remains unspecified. Mitterand jumped to his defence. Chandra agreed. Gillian based it on surveillance camera systems. Susan wears black cotton. Raj founded a hedge fund. Dan teaches music. Gilles asked us to stop interpreting symptoms and try more suitable arrangements. Georges mocked. Bernard declared that none of this is very nice. Conrad seemed afraid of me. Stephen calculated that the tax-cut would be visible, appreciated, and therefore politically rewarding. Darrell often reports the bad news when it happens, but also

likes to report the positive. Iggy used to smear peanut butter on his chest before diving into the mosh pit, but now he sells car insurance. Dave acts as Henry's stand-in. Penélope stars in her 5<sup>th</sup> film directed by Pedro. Hirschorn relies on places where the individual loses contact with the social and becomes embedded in an abstract background: an international airport, a department store's windows, a company's headquarters, and so on. Matthew thought that literature would make everyone live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light. Karl argued that social reality should always be regarded as a process. Hill created a travel agency in New York that functioned like any other travel agency. Snehi moved to another house in the area as everything was charred and even the roof of the house had come down. Roman was arrested. Davies questions whether the pub is a dangerous and potentially immoral establishment that should never be allowed in an area containing residential homes or a tightly knit focal point known for its contributions to local charities. West remains unorganized. George constructed an apparently functional object, but its real purpose has yet to be determined. Shyam disapproves. Pablo shifted. Debi checks out the donated garden trellis. John preached the gospel. Rob heals with sound. Steve climbs cliffs. Bethan commissioned a painting. Mark bought a huge house on a hill overlooking the bay. Naomi lives near King's Cross, although she grew up the daughter of a missionary doctor in Iran. Napoleon sat for Dominique. Dennis blew his high-school graduation speech by blurting out that he loves head cheerleader Beth. Saran makes a distinction between developed and developing countries. Mom knit. Donna told us that we were all already cyborgs. Alix got married five times in one day. Uhmed makes fantastic chapattis. Slavoj defines the symptom. Dorian abandoned a successful medical practice to withdraw from the lifestyle of mainstream America. Bulloch exhibited a video of *Solaris*, the science fiction film by Andrei Tarkovsky, replacing its soundtrack with her own dialogue. Jeol accused the police of beating him up. Bharti believes that the protection of cows and villages will eventually lead to global prosperity. Doug builds yurts on Saltspring island. David says he has been suspended from the convention under allegations of vote-buying. Clifford pleaded guilty to manslaughter. Johnson-Sirleaf is trying to rebuild Liberia. Solomon believes that it will take time, commitment and lots of lots of volunteers to undo the untruths. Les created one of the first solid-body electric guitars in 1941. Sanju wants 17-pack abs. Dr. Green hurt her shoulders working at the computer. Jeff rocks. Mrs. Townsend bought some British petroleum. Adeagbo recycles a maze of old record covers, scrap items and newspaper clippings, for which personal notes, analogous to a private journal, act as captions. Muralidhar wants to develop a protocol. Martin strongly recommends this video. Dylan was late. Erin claimed that moonstone is good for digestion. Joe's sick of Christmas carols, and its only November 5<sup>th</sup>. Finn lives on a quiet lake. Berlusconi faced further—an even more excruciating—embarrassment. Glen wears pink cotton. Frank is downsizing his large collection of model airplanes. Doug wears no clothes in the woods. Liam presents an ensemble of layers (archives, stage sets, posters, billboards, books). Frattini said the prostitute who taped the Prime Minister's remarks is on the payroll of journalists. Eugen called it a play area.



## Monica Kidd

### Two thousand seventy miles

How you do anything is how you do everything.

~ *Zen proverb*

*For Marlene Creates*

Two thousand seventy miles to  
place my hand on this stone  
and that. Feel for a pulse  
and find one answering  
faintly to my fingers.  
History is a thing  
whispered. A  
long white  
flag.

## Amelia

I am looking up the skirts of jack pines,  
my weathered spine against this  
scrap of Canadian shield,  
The lake silent as a sleeping dog.

The air is full of dragonflies,  
analog, mechanical,  
the Tupperware of the sky.  
Little Amelia Earharts.  
They should have belts and little scarves,  
leave their hair curlers in Trepassey  
like she did, for generations to forget  
until someone asks and they say

*Oh those.*

## Beautiful bones

(for Graeme Patterson)

“... a man in himself is a city...”

~ William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* (1946)

An imaginary map  
of an unimaginary place.  
Of motionless afternoons.  
Of cats melting into asphalt.  
Of boarded-over windows  
and old hockey injuries.

I know this place. It is  
caught under my nails  
and between my toes.  
It is the wind that bothers  
the curtains before sound,  
before time, before the dog  
has stretched and yawned into  
her paws and forgotten,  
for the moment,  
about breakfast.  
It is the country I travel alone,  
Stegner's exclamation  
beneath the prairie sky.

Pat(t)erson: the city is a man.  
Perhaps, but what is a city that never took?  
A pothole swallowing all  
we'd rather forget.  
A plastic rat I thought was a flower  
blooming in the wreckage.  
A dead grandfather  
half a country removed.  
Beautiful bones.

We peer through broken windows  
into the eyes of strangers.

**Bulletproof**

*for Martha Blum*

We buried them under the walnut tree,  
those who held their tongues in fear.

Me, I opened my mouth and  
spilled out the words.  
Questions and gossip,  
beautiful preposterous  
that snuggled their arms  
close to their chests,  
no room left for gunmetal.

I spoke and we lived,  
my children poked wild-eyed  
in my skirts.

## Anne Le Dressay

### Coming in from the dark

I walk in the dark, the stumbling  
dark, so dark I am reduced to the soles of my feet,  
find the path by memory and guess.

This path in the woods so familiar in daylight  
I don't even notice it, now I depend  
on the body's memory.

At the end of the path, friends gather  
round a fire. I come late,  
make my way alone.

Nothing to tell me the boundaries  
between body and world, how far beneath blind feet  
the path waits.

No clues to how close the branches  
bend over me, reach in  
from the sides.

Just a heightening on the skin,  
felt presence of solid tree trunks,  
of leaves almost brushing skin.

Each step is blind,  
the only certainty that there is a path,  
the earth will hold me up.

And then, flickers in the dark, more  
and brighter with each step.  
Shadows form, the shapes of trees

emerge from blackness, and I get  
my body back as I step  
into the light.

## Liquid hips

Four young men practice a dance  
in an empty student lounge.  
A traditional dance, probably Asian.  
The young men look Asian.

They stand in a line & move in unison,  
steps & turns & steps.

They all know the movements, but only one flows—  
his body sinuous, his hips liquid.

The other three are all angles,  
the bend at the hip a hinge.

No hinge at the hip  
of the one dancer,

but the smooth S of a snake,  
of the bend  
in a river,  
of boneless rope.

## Gil McElroy

### *Proper 7*

*S*

From,  
or no, you  
came, next morning saying  
“Let so.”

Master up  
the proper names of wrangling. Who keeps  
the straight path? Who have  
all gone claiming? Not all  
are made of wood.

For all this  
I am yet indigent. Let the little  
not stop. A man  
ran up this question: “must I do?”  
& I said  
“more.”

*M*

This  
is the story: how  
was barren. Why go on  
living? Bread  
up.

He was  
those, some  
& some. Such  
rabble, descended  
from.

*T*

Famine,  
for present, shall  
be with you, shall  
give all, shall  
make you.

Place  
will kill you,  
the windows  
of account. You  
should have  
incurred. Try.  
Fold. Become  
rich.

Watch, the Moon  
full, because you must. Not  
a grief, mind. I  
envy you words. Why, in time  
you to all (they all went  
home, & at daybreak  
along standing  
there) you

got to say "Let the one  
be the first!" then  
writ them,  
apt.

Heard this?

*W*

Good, anyone,  
that there  
he saw  
& wondered.



So he  
wrapped his  
head, put  
on like  
a tunic,  
& from  
the west  
he feared.

Through  
the given,  
the same  
of us, you must be  
another come  
to others.

I am  
anyone,  
but will.  
*T/F*

As soon as  
blessings were seized, said, “who  
brought me?” Cried out  
& took, hearing loudly  
a name.

Blessings  
I have, but will  
shake for  
my words.

My brother  
cools.

Any pre-  
tence to an-  
other comes to  
others, half-  
heartedly. Bless  
them in sorrow standing. Touch  
coals.

They  
from you – in all,  
everyone but  
so. What is  
what I speak? Is what  
you learn? A man as I have  
is not doing. I  
did not, but  
you was never  
spoken.

Prefer  
in speaking.

S

A well  
& water.

Tears.

Flesh, shapely  
fallen.

Give  
into argument. Who  
does it? Whether  
fall he shall, or  
others equal, who  
knows. Dent  
the one from eating, & make  
none of us  
die. Why himself does  
another brother? God then gives  
an account, 'stead  
that none  
can bring some-  
one with-  
in from what  
springs which.

*Proper 8*

*S*

So few  
days to go, took  
& came.

I may be able,  
in case, to  
know of the living, the  
truth. Mystery,  
indeed!

I am justified/seen/ pro-  
claimed/believed in/taken up – have  
really digested, have  
always been so,  
demure.

It holds,  
& now  
a saying: a  
camel, a  
needle.

Me

you

or the land.

*M*

This made  
& retorted:  
so birth too  
shall have him.

Who  
is this? Whose clothes  
have I?  
I trod,  
I trampled.  
I looked,  
even.

I was appalled/crushed/shattered

One day,  
one harvest.

Something which  
we have, which  
we have & touch – *this*  
is that life. We  
saw it (the demon star dimmed), declared  
what was & what had been. We are  
what we have seen. We must  
carry the night.

Having ground, who  
has been washed?  
Call my eyes  
off.

They asked.  
I answered.

*T*

Were  
at our, saw  
was not,  
& I,  
where towards me past, have  
worked. Me,  
& yet claimed,  
given it on me. Were that  
that dream – a piebald  
thing – made  
vows out-  
witted.

Not the  
only 'come,  
you know. It has  
children. You  
a new one? Watch,  
be lost,  
& ward it (the  
teaching of it).

You trust it  
in person, asking of yours  
"so?"

But nor  
old enough. How  
plied.

W

I have  
let by. I have  
let go to each day. Look: where  
are the mercies? Oh,  
that they would open, as fire makes  
the air all unexpected. No ear  
for our sake, keeping  
us, yes, upright (we, the clay, all  
of us).

I am  
because, because I have & you do not.  
Or what. The world  
is passing.

In all,  
who herds it? One  
them out, those that my voice  
failed.

In all I am,  
the good/the hired/the abandoned

I know I lie,  
but must.

*T*

I shall  
the country, one  
they will  
not foul, them,

low & practiced.

The lived ever gone, but  
from this hour. They had,  
but they never  
if they had. But not,  
not because & because. Hear  
in the treetops sparrows falling, the Moon full. The head need be  
afraid.

*F*

I & all, when I strike, know  
the day. Too  
will know.

So now  
take pity – grace  
& all. When I gather tries, they  
will know, face out. They must  
by letting. The reason  
is that it did, my dear, but what we are  
we shall be because  
we is.

Now you are  
well appeared. Away!  
Whoever lives to undo, who-  
ever does  
& does not, is  
not. Say what you are  
when. Forward them. Have  
gone.

S

The trance of streams  
flows east. Water  
leads me, flowing out  
& leading across my ankles. Sand  
& stream. Knees.  
Waist, now.  
Deep.

When I name  
rivers, the water  
teems, the banks  
never fail. The marshes  
will not,  
no.

This  
is the which  
that we must not, do  
not, if the world  
cause this. Our love is  
but something.

Do not  
bring. I  
have. Cross  
& worry.

Cold water  
causes.

*Proper 9*

*S*

She raises squares.  
She calls out.  
She delivers you.

How much attention when  
your whirlwind downed, when you  
had not, spurned  
& choked, but would  
& always? Give us those not  
inner. Gone  
& is, all  
to himself.

So it is.

Know what  
drink shall be  
at your right  
hand, mine  
to which became not  
first & ransomed.

*M*

My, for  
as those discovered, those  
who gain yield beyond  
nothing. In their  
right, in their  
left, ways are filled, paths  
are lead, heaven is  
cleft open.

Mere talk,  
brother, bound up  
with cloth.



*T*

Listen. Pay  
attention. What I am  
do not forsake.

The bread, the  
wine, the  
path.

This  
is what keeping overcomes, & this  
is not without,  
but with water. So  
there!

Many visit among a town  
bordering there.

*W*

If you have  
words

if you have  
committed your  
lips

do this.

Go.

No one  
gives, yet all  
gather a little, a little  
folded in.

Let us  
love, since love  
fails. This  
is that that we might  
consist in – this, this  
but dear, & whoever sees  
sees.

Is what  
I speak.

*T*

Keep. Bind these.  
Write them  
down.

Say.

Call.

Under-  
stand.

While I was  
I saw. I  
noticed, going along at twilight,  
& looked, seeing  
my feet.

I  
lurked. I  
caught (I  
had to – this  
is why I  
came.)

I  
spread. I  
sprinkled.  
Come on, forthwith, until  
we wheedle  
& know  
whatever we

know. I am not saying  
we are well. We  
are as we are, true  
& this, near the one come, near  
the dead.

The feet.

The hair.

The ointment.

The money  
said this, said

“leave the day. Have  
me.”

*F*

Is not?  
Is not the voice? I  
am my words. Listen  
when I speak. My  
mouth [is] up-  
right, everything  
[is] straight.

Count my hands.

Meanwhile,  
the next day  
was what  
called.

(Another  
sign.)

*S*

Before  
(from the  
very beginning), before  
the hills. Before

the first elements  
fixed, thickened, assigned,  
traced, I was at play, through  
dance again  
possessing  
hands, among at,  
these from.

Now what shall I say?

*Proper 10*

$$S$$

To be made, all  
blood & abundance,  
mercy given us  
through

is time perish-  
able – short sorts  
of uptight ordinals.

Low me. The camel. The needle. The  
astonished eye.

$$M$$

No years.  
Words of stone.  
Lives that slip.

Take yourself  
from your heart, full  
of appeal. Have you reckoned the notion  
of edges? We do. We do – selves  
of certain measure  
creased (& not with assurance) in  
to many words:

*our      may      you      your      on  
give      &      as      in      &      but*

Yes, you  
yours.

The using.

*T*

Hence, that  
you this, as  
what you own, to  
tire, to  
crawl in the shade. Heart  
since. The  
knot of any  
image.

Now,  
who is humble? I wish you  
little volition, be it  
ever so boastful, or  
vexing to the end. But consider  
that there is someone speaking – some-  
one else. Careful,  
you! Wash  
your face.

The lamp follows.

*W*

With a mouth,  
better. Filled with  
talk, no one  
laughs. Fine

& foolish

& false

Who  
brings it? Come on, who  
absolves?

Before the dead, avaricious children.

Wander a place. I  
come from, go  
off, go  
in, tidy towards, constant  
& most.

*T*

No  
is worth  
the day. Yes  
makes it. Shoulder  
both. Pay  
the fear of  
the path of  
will not  
go, no.

Dead messages.

“Do  
instruct people, but their ears will be  
new & their own.”

The time  
of myths, ill  
in turn. Look, I  
told: “am going,” & “not  
come!”

Having you,  
I dip the granting  
hand.

*F*

Customs: learn  
them from  
the heart between you, any above  
& any under. Must  
not misuse, male  
& female. (Must not. Must not. Must  
not.)

Were  
the words there  
when you  
bled?

A fool that those  
at all. A true you. I  
am more than I have, more,  
than then, by  
trickery.

The narrow & the hard.  
Sheep. Wolves. Fruits. Thorns.

Day comes.  
& so many miracles.

S

Heard this,  
you: seen that, should  
we again?

The right to left way. Be  
once, but next time be  
not (if  
only). Grow  
perfect. Have  
one another.

These points.

The besieged message.

## ***Proper 11***

*S*

In consequence  
In use  
In having  
In becoming  
In decision  
In according  
In notwithstanding  
In adequate  
In translation

Goes  
Stands  
Sets  
Turns  
Stills  
Remains

Go along down.  
Set off.  
Go up & join.  
Run.  
Sit.  
Refer.

*M*

I thought  
“try,” & this  
was futile, this  
hand, this  
pleasure. So made  
my eyes it all  
was, away  
from you, over  
to seek heaven or  
God’s curse. Now you,  
& the sure, the  
field, the



setting down. (Yes,  
the setting down.)

*T*

The wind, the  
Sun – under  
both &  
full of. We  
were, but those, those  
we saw, recognized  
their right hands, their  
country, their  
own houses.

*W*

A time,  
etc.

*T*

& I  
thought, thinking  
to myself breath-  
ing, of  
the one  
& both, of  
the practices in  
messages lavishly sent, reckoning,  
then, on the books of practice (to put it  
even once).

The crowds  
heard of this, but  
we had with us  
fish enough.

*F*

[...]

S

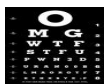
But what  
all? No one,  
this, joying under  
the sun.

Apart from  
sweet, a son  
nothing to his  
mother.

The passing heart.

# Barry McKinnon

## Retinal Detachment



worry to fear. the line between meaning ...

*only eyes*

that half a world is dim, milky, sad

*I'll do my best*, the rest seems a rustling fate in the wall  
the arrogance of immunity

impugned/ be humble human at last or

recognize it can be its beginning - the accumulated past –

*it's only you.*

threat of loss

to become a strength? –

in the hospital silence, waiting – crazed scream/ of wordless condition

how lucky you are to get

this far - *the measure of* corporeal recognition: *in the land of the blind*

*the one eyed man is king*

in the translucent palpable separation that the world is 3 inches off

in my walk and reach – though never, in my unrequited fate, sensed my  
part

such it is with luck

what my mother said looking for the hidden blessing

*the hidden blessing*

here the silence of the sick to say ... to know their power

*not to complain*

otherwise, it was May, me on my way, happy to be each day

shadows/detachment – subdued in the palpable enormity  
to become all of me

- its diminishment  
(if this is about anything

this / distorted  
sense of being the blind will see



8/26/09

## rob mclennan

### little essays on love & virtue

where joy, in turn, connects

flipped to its side,  
a brutal path

the entire length of cluster,  
tears

unstated, but  
by no means

what Homer tells *The Iliad*

once more the ripened-thorn

a sliver  
down her spine,

a health-related service

\*

where in this wicked world,  
you are

, it can be spoken

few things are free: metro workers,  
a feast that funeral since

the names of these departed

or drinks an instant, coffee

the cars spate by a north  
of autumn route, so children say

, is tested

mirror held to fact;

\*

white laughter, blue, what can  
be spared

; remember, remember  
that stretch of seasons, breeze

needles this, a conversation  
made out, commercials

a boy talks to another boy,  
a girl

what British sense

, concludes a citizen, essential

remind me of grammar, says,  
meaning English

\*

the floor not broke; scarred,  
for sure

; when heart her stops,  
a poetry

the long-necked reeds; her lips  
a flavour made of sweet

a trance  
, or, sleepy-song

we made out of the differences,  
our ends-that-meet

passing for breath & simple water

\*

I smoothed the path of water,  
weeds; a fully-ruined form

we bridge, we talk,  
the substance holds

a swimming pool of customs, sharp  
, expressly made

passport & keep company  
, a phantom-tongue of blue

made for what it wants,  
not what withstands

it holds; a passage bent of chain

\*

historians catch the eye, in love  
with love & love,

the incarnations, all

a science not  
of ables,

piece of the action; fractals  
thick in circles, fold

body, love  
a bridge

& broken in a letter,  
a chamber of forgive

, in marble  
part

beyond a circle smoothed, exposed

**poem at thirty-nine**

*another (brief) history of l.*

each day falls  
in relative current

what is  
or what isn't

observations of weather  
& time, & what shifts,

for instance

inside the tulip,  
letter drop

we make love,  
a polished cold

or diamond,  
on a band of gold

a series of letters  
& long-distance calls

your postcards from florida,  
lake louise

a sequence of flutter  
& small sounds

, goodnight breath

what we trust to, this  
& then this

& cherish, thus

how simply words,  
the base

of the envelope



## Cityverse

old men, the gravity  
of black crow

a situation of noise  
& birds

the migration of offspring,  
mine

& others

so what do you welcome,  
more equipped

your lovely eyes

first hand, her  
black, black heart

& conflict

decals at the boundary  
, water remedies

dust, & dust

what day is anything

required lake

domestic bliss is caring  
, working difference

they never would produce

two ducks in a row  
or chickens

flouting laws; would preen  
through every rerun

evolution means

as a species we have  
to hope

**paper airplane**

a large part of satisfaction is combined.  
provide each other with the best ideas.

stares for hours at the sun,  
discerning god. where the blue moon

in blossom. scent.

only here, in lakeshore's  
deepest crevices; a legible

length of your hair.

what's more full, my heart or yours?  
overflow,

some equal. the name of which is  
neither; still, it echoes.

nothing emptier than words; a kiss  
we use to fill; perpetual,

a slow hello. slipping in through the last.

a buoyant air, the water breaks,  
midrash, on impulse; rocks

crossbeam us sideways. watch me,  
wake me under covers. please,

through which a dream.

a pledge of snow, with them  
dream in detail; our sleeves.

mahogany limbs, across a ballast  
, soft substance.

in mouths we sleep; what else  
an octave says;

an intimate room we know but  
never violate,

a slender globe, sweet pools of reason,  
collecting at your pores; flush,

sliding skin. reflexive, caught in breath,  
bay windows. would we picture

to parcel, redo. these drafts  
satisfaction, of word. pure product.

the door was open; noun  
lapping noun, a name

which would only. enveloped,  
finally, invisible numbers,

mirror, too. always would  
compare, incomparable.

instructive shadow. cold air, it burns.

irresistible as snow; you see a line,  
you touch it. layers here,

a tripling. would revel in  
folded pass, our simple understanding.

a split, you dust those  
instances. the very air,

the doesn't moon; a shadow tower,  
resonates. whose eyes.

blown veils of weeks. no, its not  
history we sudden but

the making, up. we substance.

untracked as sand, the air flow; you,  
step of clarity. the moon bleeding,

calendar. clean sheet of paper, translates  
skin in reflection. as if

innocence forever; deepest cloud.

might we, in blue shift; moon,  
constant acreage. a missing

piece of music. mind,  
thin rows of cars, crisp

scuttled speech. the light glows red,  
burns green. a cup, once written new,

is feature, waterlogged. speckled a face.

## Kim Minkus

### MAP

there are interruptions known as lines separating her here from him there  
she reads them with her fingers  
if she presses a little harder there will be traces

she feels this is a small scale error  
he is there. he is living interrupted from her. she notes the type. contour map. rainfall map

shorelines must be thin or they will be unreadable. she thinks  
he is there. he is writing. he occupies shapes. hemispheres.

ratios have nothing to do with it

water is water no matter which direction it drains. she splashes her face  
he does the same

lines connect places of equal value. she wants to be discontinuous  
she sits down to construct stars. what is it that most travelers want to know  
how to get there. exact coordinates

he uses plain language when he writes. sentences are brief. emotionless  
she avoids letting her shadow hit the map

this is a time of migrations. she picks up her pencil and writes

as if words will appear in his sky. she is less interested in lights  
and city names. there are too many versions

she takes a sip of coffee. notes the expressways  
icecaps are melting. water trickles down

inaccessibility is hard to find.  
the success of a map is dependent on its projection

she draws an outline. she wants the topography on her skin  
he would see the map on her and know

scale is the same in every direction

he sees her but not the time  
spent

left handed lines are different  
zero lines mark the external movement of people

she is thinking. he is unconscious  
she waits. he shops

she references herself. looks for ways to enrich her language

she suspects he hates ornament. he wants to draw lines instead of birds  
she wants felt. he, paper. she reaches for her ruler  
to draw him nearer



changing the scale is not an option  
she is here. he is there. expressed in miles in inches in kilometers  
she no longer trusts her numbers

she envisions him with a navigator. one that can write around a word

she thinks of maps as tarot cards  
if she picks one up it will tell her that mountains mean something

architecture is mixed here. there is some excitement in watching things go up

scale will always be a problem. if they were each a symbol they could not be seen  
insomnia runs in her family. she feels the lead of it

she questions . he sleeps. dreams flutter. she longs to stare. sweat trickles down her spine

she scatters her library  
she cheats her tuning  
strong hips. naked fists  
sheets fall

she has stopped thinking  
this signifies nothing

she paints white in every direction

she writes  
and burns the note

she questions his image  
she thinks he sees her extremes  
she loses the trick of balance  
she handles nothing well  
she inverts all his letters  
she thinks she has found the centre  
but it is not where she expected

moving outwards  
she rechecks her coordinates

## Pearl Pirie

### coinciding

behind the pigeon, toques over boots  
their pace confined to slush shuffle  
they obey the orange hand

the feet accumulate behind feet, behind  
the blur of white noise at the curb's line

more cars until the light (wait, wait) changes

waiting, a person picks at her pastry  
a parent orders a child to be patient  
hips shift in their nylon over goose down

the red piebald bird, occupied  
with a french fry, pecks  
the signal switches to walk  
as it's done eating. the pigeon looks back, forth

its red straws strut across the plowed pavement:  
it is one of us. it is soon in a surround  
of faster legs, closing in, its space is crowded,  
is being overtaken, the bird hastens,  
takes the diagonal option, flight

over dotted lines, the sign of peace  
which is other paths, the bird  
over people who insist  
on their signals, crossing when told,  
over it all, the white-bellied rock dove

### that pinkie finger ring

on hand, in bag, then gone. where?  
at a restaurant recall it being placed  
in pocket. remember that thing which fell  
into low ambient light, rolled. was  
the sound metallic? what fell?

in what rush we told one another it  
was nothing, must get onwards, else-  
where. the dark under the table is  
for the cleaners and finders keepers.  
perhaps only a spoon.

weeks pass. the ring is lost. it must  
have been then. which date?  
which restaurant? why the hurry?  
would anyone have turned into lost  
and found that small glitter in pan?

a month, two, pass. in the recycling can  
at the bottom, sifting its weight under  
fine paper, the small ring's wink.  
what to make of the story now?  
the sureness, the closure, the goodbye

dead to me, the jewelry that I never loved  
or wore much anyway. how to love  
what returns and was at my feet for  
weeks unnoticed? did anything fall?

**corpus @32**

: the beverage accelerator  
deliberately muddles overall

intolerance venerable  
generated unilaterally?

the ephemeral, peripheral  
work for consideration, these

funerals and opera overadapting  
raisins masquerade as chocolate chips

Maurice Mierau off-camera  
annealed by seraphic fire

Exuberance is beauty?  
don't Blake this on me

derank and then remove  
feral caterwauling

Kundera's unbearable  
exposure therapy for panic

**quite another**

With sad decisions that chain my birds to your sky  
Grant Hackett

out  
on no  
for hours errand

off getting scoff free

by a gardens  
elaborate apparatus

tear down  
soaring gawks  
the spite rail fence

a year towering barefoot  
with its lyric unions

an envoi of homey matzos  
seem a medical dagoba

the floury bap tonne of a  
poem is one halva flail,  
a binder cross of damages  
a brain pan's cog glob.

# Monty Reid

*from Patois*

## Expatriate

Out of the body comes laughter, that much  
is obvious. As I have jumbled you

with rapture, confused you among rumpled sheets  
with down. Weightless. Headlights

in the alley, neighbors going home from  
hockey games, bars, the office. Your skin

flares, and down the alley  
luminous with snow garage doors slam.

We have never met these neighbors, they  
come home late and spill light

into our room. They laugh and knock  
snow off their boots and the only

light turned on is a bedroom lamp  
that glows through sheers onto

drifts in their backyard. And  
I have lost you again, among all this

my eyes adapting in the darkness  
widened into loss, the neighbors

drifting through their love towards  
a silence I have mistaken you so often

for. But the body, whatever else, is never  
quiet. It sings

outside itself, unreturned, as feathers  
disordered, floating in the brief

light given by these people we cannot  
resist hearing, land, precisely

in the dark.

## Occupational

Gathered  
in the heart's habitual  
net

those old routines  
blood occupies

as any work expands to fill  
the time allotted  
the veins distend  
blue collar.

They try to fill the contracts of a world  
a word's small orders  
lips, skin, laissez faire  
that old seduction

and then the market forces  
them onto the street  
nameless and unemployed

where the literal  
heart  
gathers them  
again  
into the ordinary body

where their labor is all they have  
to sell.



### **Towards a Canadian 'pataphysics**

You are the real event my tongue constructs  
its healing  
over.

The tongue says it heals over.  
The tongue, as usual  
Is full of shit.

The doctor holds it down with a stick.

## Chapati

Flat

bread

yogurt, saffron rice

the Ashoka plays muzak  
but the curry's hot

it peels  
your tongue, the way  
husks dry and split  
from the kernel  
and the wind takes the chaff

as I am lost in the end  
to breath  
gasping

holding the bread I need  
as the kernel holds the flower

here in a restaurant

with my mouth burnt  
up.

## **Patisserie**

No resistance

the trays of marzipan  
croissants, butter  
horns  
with a sugar glaze

I press my head against the glass  
buy on impulse  
take it all so seriously home

calories calories calories  
she says

I lick the icing  
from my fingers.

## **Spatzle**

here's looking at you kid  
    he said, leaning over your shoulder

all I could see was his eyes  
    how they seemed to draw you

out, hypnotic, how you could  
    be lost in them

he'd had a couple too many  
and could hardly keep his hands

off you  
    hot stuff, he said

paprika chicken, I told him.

## Shane Rhodes

### The Cocktail

*For Donnie Peters (1964 – 1999)*

Donnie, we counted the days  
'til your death  
by tulip spears and lily bayonets.  
I last saw you in a has-been  
coat – fox fur – always a scene –  
on 17<sup>th</sup> Ave in November.  
Your bare feet in pumps  
breath aerosol with alcohol and smoke.  
*Kiss me my blue balled cowboy*  
*my boy toy*  
*my call boy.*  
Wasn't AIDS fucked your head  
but ten years of coke.

If you read poetry (you didn't)  
you might know Lorca (you wouldn't)  
rode a horse of pearl –  
a horse rode hard  
and put away wet.  
His took less time than yours  
but obeyed all the rules  
of fagot death – here's the rhyme –  
a gun blew the *maricón rojo*  
all over the avenue.

Donnie, my disease Argonaut  
fleecing the golden pubes  
my barber of the uncivil  
my resurrected stiff  
drag drags on  
even amongst the dead.  
So I want you as you weren't  
not your second coming  
a protease tease  
in a 90 pound  
negligee of sweat  
and black sarcoma lace –  
*so late 1980s.*  
Lypo, pills, tubes, the shits,  
is it a eulogy  
if we wished you death?

## The Red Barron

Rat *tat tat tat* or *dit dit dit dit* – like tapping  
on a tin (*te dum te dum*) or gravel tossed  
on a Roman testudo (*ta ta ta ta*),  
der Rote Richthofen, dressed in tailored tweed,  
taps his trigger finger  
to such a pseudo-tintinabulary tune.  
His Albatross D traverses the sky  
with figure 8s, Immelman's  
and dots it with a deutsch Loop de Döö.  
In a sky big as a mouth, he barrels  
beneath alveolar arches to a kind of earthly tattoo  
played by the Tommies  
and AA machine gunners – *Tod . . . tod . . . tod . . .*  
in Ursprache they whisper.  
Red eats their alphabets and fires  
umlauts of plosive Teutonic  
'til flack tills the air (*te deum te deum*),  
tanks his ailerons, and torques  
his cranial tectonics.  
Uttering a terminal open-fronted  
unrounded vowel, blood stains  
his epaulettes and his tongue drops  
from his palate as (can he land it?!)  
he twirls like a jerry-built paper plane  
in a little girl's Tutti-Frutti stained front pocket  
washed, spun, and dried to tatters  
at the TaDaa! 24 Hour Laundromat.

## On Travel

For anyone who has been sung to in Hebrew by a naked Israeli at 2 in the morning.  
For the girl learning Spanish from English who only spoke Japanese.  
For there are boys in Orissa playing cricket with the sea.  
For the seventy caged birds at the small pension in which we stayed that, every morning,  
    woke us with song.  
For the Amritsar-Howrah-Amritsar Mail and our 20 hours thereon, thereon, thereon.  
For the man on a street corner selling his amazing invention that kills rats and  
    cockroaches for only 6 pesos.  
For only 6 pesos.  
For, in Mexican Spanish, “me late” means I like it, or, literally, it makes my heart beat.  
For only that which goes on hurting will be remembered.  
For the man who said I looked like George Michael and then sang “Careless Whisper”  
    stopping, at appropriate pauses, for my approval.  
For yak cheese hung out to dry in the wind.  
For the only way to kill a cockroach, I have found, is to tell it stories of depravity.  
For, when you have everything and nothing, it’s only the nothing that hurts.  
For the Mexican bus driver who stopped in the middle of a busy street and, with an array  
of honks and complicated hand gestures, made a date with the woman working cash at a  
convenience store.  
For those who make love in overnight buses thinking the other passengers do not hear.  
For the temple baboons threatening the faithful with their angry red asses.  
For it is so still in this room / even the razors sleep.  
For the sound of a spider chasing a cricket across a marble floor.  
For, here, Castles become Elephants and Queens merely Advisors.  
For there are prayer flags even the wind can’t read.  
For I am as still, tonight, as Pascal sitting in an empty room.  
For the old women in the market selling fried grasshoppers from the pockets of their  
    aprons.  
For high up in the Himalayas / you open the door / the clouds come in.  
For the village family who named their son Usmail after an envelope carrying the stamps  
of a foreign country.

## Paintbrushes

*for the Lepchas*

The day was hot and my father drove the gravel logging road through the high mountain pass with its many pot-holes and small silver creeks that had overrun their edges. My brother and I were promised, if we were good, we would stop to pick Indian Paintbrushes.

Heated pine.

Lumber dust sifts  
through the open window.

We were let out into a small flat meadow of marsh grasses, flowers and stunted spruce covered at the base with thick clumps of moss. The air was tense as steam rose from the heating muskeg and each purple bloom strained upward in the light. Indian Paintbrushes. Looking back on it now, it was beautiful I'm sure, but I remember feeling disappointed. I had literally expected "paint brushes" and had hoped to paint with them.

*Whatever being is born,  
know it is sprung  
through the union of the field  
and the knower of the field*

says the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Krishna is not talking of small mountain meadows. Even if he is, Arjuna doesn't care for he prepares, regretfully, syllable by syllable, for battle. It is an English translation bought from a bookstore in Darjeeling in the middle of summer. Cloud swirls in the valleys below. Directly opposite the bookstore and 70 miles to the northwest starts Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world. On any clear day, it sits on the edge of your vision massive and snow covered. In the steep valleys below, women labourers, wicker baskets strapped to their heads, pick the first green flush of orange pekoe tea (Super Fine Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe Number One).

Over a year since  
I have heard from you  
my friend.

As for grandfather, he is  
dead and T'shangu  
full of snow.

Which reminded me, when I read it in your letter, of something I had read once in a travel book. Since the turn of the century, with the exception of a few foreigners, mountain climbers no longer summited (that great mountaineering verb) Kanchenjunga but always stopped a few metres short. Because the mountain-top is sacred and not for the foot of a man.



## Unas Historias

In the evenings, I ran. The glabrous  
skin of cactus in headlights. Dead dogs  
wild with larva by the side of the road.  
When it rained, water gathered  
in small streams that turned to torrents  
through the unnavigable streets. In the afternoons,  
I avoided the heat and studied Mexican history.  
You could walk half an hour from my  
pension to the town granary where hung  
the severed heads of the rebel leaders  
a century before. When the Loyalists  
retook the city, they held a 'lottery  
of death' for they believed the townsfolk  
too compliant. Each winner was tortured  
and hung. *The violence of the body,*  
*says de Certeau, reaches the page only*  
*through absence, through what is erased.*  
And maybe you'd say the same for pleasure.  
They met his mother in Sweden where she'd moved  
after escaping from Sudan. When she met  
his white girlfriend, who he'd been  
so proud to present, his mother said to him  
later, privately, *Think of her as the kind of woman*  
*you meet on a train and with whom*  
*you have a wonderful conversation*  
*and, at the next stop, she gets off.*  
At night, we would hold each other tightly  
and when we came our bodies shook  
as the light in empty churches shakes  
between the volcanic stone. It was chiselled  
in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by indigenous labourers  
each with a small raised brand on his cheek.

## Caléndula

I write *marigolds in a clear vase* and hope by these words to contain it. By *it* I mean she had left three nights ago and now I miss her. She carries through my thought like the Spanish opera coming through my window: strangeness, missing and knowing song is no relief only the transition of a private worry to an unconjugated public domain.

The sea and its unending labour, the wind and its constant generalization of heat.

As if, in a revolution almost complete but before the final blow where the last city falls, the army of Mayan peasants were to put down their guns and return home to plant corn — for it is spring and unplanted seed shames the dirt. In a year, the peasants would be slaves again to the *mestizo* landowners and the dream of a homeland would fade to myth. As if I were to inhabit the suspended animation of that *as if*.

A fidelity beyond the reason I hear — the white pearl of moon, for instance, the coarseness of pubic hair to the touch.

Spring here and the fish market counters piled high with calico orange snapper, sky-grey grouper and sea bass. They lie on the counters, mouths agasp, glossy eyes turning creamy white as, one by one, the fishmonger scales them and fillets them alive.

Which surprised me the way the trays of fried shark meat surprised me when I saw them in the market beneath the picture of a seven-foot reefshark eating a human leg.

Like a 17<sup>th</sup> century still-life of fruit so ripe eating it would be a step down from an imagined taste or old morality plays in which one plays the beggar and another the glutton.

I have seen the dried blossoms of marigold strewn in geometric patterns around the graves. Dried, they cauterise wounds and guide the spirit home. Or, as Gerard says, they “cureth the trembling of the heart.”

Their name in Spanish is *caléndula* from the Latin *calend* for the end of the month when they were thought to flower (like a woman) most strongly. But they make more sense to me in English as marigold, marsh gold, Mary’s gold, the gold of the Virgin.

But switching languages does not get closer to what I mean, for, if anything, the change shows I do not know what I mean. I say *espero* from the Spanish verb *esperar* which means *to hope* or *to wish*

but which also means *to wait*.

## The Sea

If it was the sea we heard, it was the sea  
and not the sea, water lapped the edge of rock,  
filling our nights with tidings of the sea  
which was not the sea but a lack of sound, a lake.  
If it was a man who ran on the sand beside the sea  
which was not the sea but a gulf of water round  
where a man was running hard, it was his water,  
and then it wasn't and then it was again.

If it was the sea we heard, it was our hearing  
built its hooded anemones, its ancient mouth  
saying nothing we could hope to see,  
it was the sea with a tongue upon the trees  
which lingered round the lake  
and moved to a shrinking thought.

If it was the sea we heard  
when we heard the sea, it was a sound  
beyond the contrivance of an ear,  
a conch raised to the air's constant  
clot and quaver we could raise and carry  
to dry inland houses as if a plenum crust  
of jellied water. And we would think  
how that day, the sea, a driftwood log,  
footprints filled with water.

If a woman walked beside the water,  
the names we gave to shells  
were as strange as the names we gave to her.  
She sank in the sand of the plenitude of the sea  
and we sang for such was the way  
when by the diminished sea.

If we knew, it was the sea we knew  
and not what the sea was singing  
(the sea does not sing, the sea is not me)  
if it was the sea we followed note for note,  
wave upon wave, each breaking  
on the back of the other.

## Toxic Haiku<sup>1</sup>

*mediation on Environment Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory List, 2008*

2,2,4-trimethylhexamethylene diisocyanate?

Trimethylbenzene.

Iron pentacarbonyl,  
Dimethylamine.

1,2,3,4,7,8-hexachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin!

Butyraldehyde —  
Cumene hydroperoxide —  
Phthalic anhydride?

Nonylphenol and its ethoxylates.

Naphtha?  
Methyl acrylate?

1-methylenebis(4-isocyanatocyclohexane)!

P,p'-Isopropylidenediphenol.  
2-ethoxyethanol?

C.I. acid green,  
Dibenz(a,j)acridine.  
CFC-13.

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<sup>1</sup> This mediation was created using Environment Canada's NPRI as source text. Each chemical compound on the inventory was ordered by syllabic count and the poem was thereafter constructed following the traditional English syllabic interpretation of the original Japanese form.

## Sandra Ridley

### Mornin'

The all-night diner wasn't safer. The storeroom wasn't safer. The stairwell wasn't safer. The corner wasn't safer. The ally wasn't safer. The Ford wasn't safer. The road wasn't safer. The crawl-ditch wasn't safer. The drive-in wasn't safer. The dancehall outside Augusta wasn't safer. The abandoned gun-shack wasn't safer. The sun-porch wasn't safer. The barn wasn't safer. The grassy hole wasn't safer. The cornfield wasn't safer. The putting her hands up where he could see them wasn't safer. The all-out-run wasn't safer. The fall fall fall.

The cemetery.

*She asked him to bring her home.*

### Tricked

Palmed. Ditched. Stolen. Their padlocked box sunk in a pool of water. Their knives through their coterie a little complicated. Funhouse mirror dropped on crooked stairs. Versions counterfeit. Plumb silly & completely innocent. A shredded piece of paper. His eye quicker than her hand. Their unnatural saccades. Rapid vanishes & transpositions. Lit cigarettes. Flourished. Their simple plan misdirected & switched. Abracadabra. Dealt with.

# Stan Rogal

## ISLAND

Milton Acorn

“I worry about the shape of my skull”

Grimly outlined by the salt squall  
in such grey matter it hung  
uncertain  
to the finish, as:

what might come of it?

Here, *ℰ*, alive at the margins (barely)

*the famous writer, pensive, now stops & lights a cigar.*

Delivered on a plate to a vengeful Salome?  
Split apart by wisdom's leggy kick?  
Gone to line mackinaw men with a fine-combed tooth?  
No carpenter with a cross to bear  
could drive the nail  
so deep as this beerfog boy  
nor cause such unholy stir  
that shivered timbers of Trotskyites & Snarks the same.  
Who had been known to give skull to a minor  
took serious to heart.  
Boldfaced, fer sure, brass-balled & backwoodsy  
with a sprawl of crags, crevasses &  
thick underbrush ghosted down for the count.

*Boo!*

Call him Ishmael. Call him Shadow-maker.  
Who'd've sparked a fine grave roller if provisioned a rat's ass  
chance, instead, was bushwhacked; cut off at the neck

& made a bust.

Through no fault, save, to preserve a mean reputation,  
meaning, apart the common red dirt that conjures an island  
from this twisted wreckage

(say: *pee-eye*, say: *spud*, say: *Minago*)

sprung a low brow cast of dead fish; so-called people's poets  
with little taste for blood – their own or any other reckless  
spill, &  
    beyond the uneasy drift of smoke & ash from the vacant socket  
        pronounced a breed of missionary position  
            set to bugger waters generations to follow  
with their thin colourless milt.

## CIRCA 1970

Margaret Atwood

“The body buries itself”

Methinks the lady doth protest too much, tho,  
hard pressed to venture who’s who in this punished space.  
Whether Susanna taken down river, her lean yard cordoned,  
her now inviolate carcass a’buzz with the violet pulse of  
skeeters, black flies, *no-see-ums*  
noumenal glow canted toward

no art

no song

no asylum

no taste of tea & oranges

merely an institution set to cough in its dead  
at the least suspicion: cholera, tuberculosis, paranoid  
schizophrenia  
orgasm  
any similar melancholic deemed hysteric  
for the time.

Or perhaps some further itinerant hobbled  
mad as a March *guerre* that ate at wood too sparse  
to call a forest.

Who waxed a lonely figure herself  
marked a duplicate X in the frosted field  
laid out as she was in traditional garb:

hair shirt

shaved head

gooseflesh anointed with ashes

feet bound in chicken wire & doused in kerosene

*mea culpa, mea culpa, mea culpa...*

What might normal be considered country matters  
goes bats in this fresh wilderness,  
revolts against the brainpan &  
(her favoured sex having no place in this rough bush, seems)  
turns tale, seeks transformation toward the other  
all the while forgot

one can never fully be aware

the exact moment skin barks, fleece constricts

& horns cut deep into the skull, set, as ever, to grind

a moody girl to rapture

even as the first shovel threatens to fill the hole.

## HEADY

Margaret Atwood

“You’ll notice that what they have in common  
is between their legs”

More ‘Exhibit A’ than an exhibition, remarks:

*..turned upside down, they all look the same...*

A penny whistle, perhaps, perhaps  
a blunt cigar, rum-dipped, wine-tipped,  
perhaps a clothes peg, functional & efficient

it teases the ear, the lips  
the fingers  
is taken in hand  
to hang  
a snatch  
of moistness  
on a line

not your moistness; not your line  
its tinny music blows blue in the face  
reeks of bar stools & the salt taste of empty  
intercourse  
you take it in your mouth & are almost gentle  
*hush*, you say, *not a word; not a sound;*  
*not one false move*  
it never listens  
it would hunt you down, except,  
    you’ve erased your scent, again;  
    slipped into the skin of some other  
Madame X  
armored as ever to haggle situationlessness  
among power politics grown two-headed  
& lashed one tongue against the other  
at any rate, no real wonder as  
    *...a hard man being good to find...*  
appears out of the question  
in this tight space

what might otherwise be termed a joke  
if it all wasn’t taken so goddamned serious  
pins *Peg-o-my-heart* to the sleeve of  
eaches vagrant tune smoking wraith-like  
from between the legs.



## HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THERE?

*Richard Brautigan*

“I lie here in a strange girl’s apartment”

Something oddly familiar about this scene  
has me adjust my crotch, sniff my fingers,  
count the bills in my wallet, piece together  
the lyrics from an old Beatle’s tune:

*Isn’t it good? Norwegian wood*

listen for the splash of running water in the next room.  
All of which, nonetheless, places the girl strictly  
outside my personal frame of reference; outside, even,  
the old familiar time/space continuum adjunct  
ESSE EST PERCIPI

Attica, maybe, that beat path where the rich are  
broad in guns & neck deep in bogus philosophy  
aimed to level Flower Power

& bust down doors of misconception.

Maybe San Fran. Big Sur. Tokyo. Babylon.  
Or the abortion that was San Diego to Tijuana.  
Or smoking the joint at the corner of Haight & Love.  
Or taking a pull from a long neck somewhere in Montana.  
Or simply baiting a line to trout fish in America.

In any case, things slowly curve out of sight  
until they are gone: the girl, the tumbled sheets,  
the Beatles, the apartment, even the cat that I had been  
so sure was purring at my feet.

The entire works fold neatly into a Berkelian suitcase &  
vanish

neat as anything.

Look! Birds fall from the trees &  
the long strands of black hair I had picked from the pillowcase  
loop branches & braid themselves into a noose that promises  
dreams

of sweet cherry blossoms  
shot across a moonlit grave.

## **DELUSIONS *Etc***

*John Berryman*

“literature bores me, especially great literature”

How many years, O, since Henry  
huff his lank frame ‘cross the wide ocean  
to venture out some tale (or, more precise) some  
piece of tale ‘pon which to thrust his reaction’ry  
erections; his gripes & rails, to spur home  
his jaundiced bear to a mean locomotion?

How many, order to claim spurned lover, rejected heart,  
unsuited suitor heaved bed to bedlam in the whiskeyed throes?  
*Her* he remembers as (alongside beer & sausage)  
Germanic, tho’, nothing formal here as idiom drops  
among spare change in the furthest corner pockets  
& all type fond record is held hostage.

Strange currency, his little books, of sudden, sell  
& how is this mischief if not short of miraculous?  
& what it was or is that made the words tell?  
& who whispered the ear with the wherewithal?  
*Confused?*  
The image ghosts of moonlight snatched in blues.

## SUZANNE HOLDS THE MIRROR

*Leonard Cohen*

“because she’s touched her perfect body  
with her mind”

the difference between pop & poetry  
makes for a thoroughly modern  
milieu, the mirror held up to the  
self image & no room for any other  
narcissistic bent on resurrection  
to crack the circle  
O, how lend her a coin, Lazarus,  
who has filled her pockets  
with pennies  
razed from the eyes of the dead  
the whole town impresses  
& the joint fairly bogarts with the buzz  
as “we’ll always have Paris”  
takes on fresh meaning  
bright new spirits  
(not unlike Suzanne who, times passed, normal  
would have faded to a haunt  
    face caved, tits fallen, frame packed  
        with a surplus forty ungodly pounds)  
resurface fit as any saint whistled along  
the boulevard *Haute Couture*  
buffed, tanned, botoxed,  
nipped & tucked  
toting bite-sized mutts  
designer cell phones  
barely clad in:  
    *rags & feathers lifted*  
    *from Dolce & Gabbana counters*  
they are the model of perfection  
apart any black weeded troubadour with desires  
to eat each other out, whether on a bed of tea & oranges  
or some other coarse Romantic rot  
listen: singer breaks like the wind  
crucifixion in hand, his throat a plague of frogs  
his club foot dangled in the hell spent river  
look: his brass eye opens to the world  
& it is no blank reflection that procures  
sailors to dance  
    & song birds to sing in his anus.

## ONCE IN A BLUE MOON

*Judith Fitzgerald*

“What I need to write I write around”

What makes suggestive more than all the tease in China  
assumes positions reversed : stood alone

no dream in her heart, no love of her own  
old maverick moon hung like an oyster in the blue  
skirt hiked, panties torn, trousers dropped  
taken up the ass with a stiletto heel  
pale reflection : self &/or other : heartfelt  
dreamer, beautiful loser, teenage wasteland  
little or no desire to be a pair of ragged claws  
scuttling this or any deeper salty bed  
mind the gap

where blues train comes up short (again)  
& every cowboy mouth blows homoerotic  
in the re-mix, back broke by that distant range

*Montes Cordillera*

Spanish tongue slipped, & – not that there’s anything  
wrong with that, just...

you still taste the boots, still get a kick, still two-step  
that dance to the end of love. Bitter? Better.

Took a lickin’, went on tickin’

*So long, sport! Adios, Kemo Sabe. Hasta luego, baby.*

Don’t care if it rains or freezes, long as I’ve got my  
plastic Jesus

we just want the facts ma’am

no CSI Miami gathering lurid skin particles  
fingernails, semen, pubic hair  
no yellow fog rubbed against the glass  
simple testimony; DNA of word made stone; a life  
measured in coffee spoons & cigarette butts  
where what begins in the sack sniffing eaches privates  
ends (finally) as a friendly foursome on the golf course.  
Sure. Don’t we all. Too late to redress; to redefine :

“all you ever do is bring me down”

Blue Moon. You saw me. Sawed me.

Being, O, not what I meant, not what I meant at all.

Tears it.

# Natalie Simpson

## *Effulgence*

Parsimony breeds languor. Excess never fails to penetrate the veil of squalor. Chaste pallor signals balance of the mind —

The rosier the cheek, the more freighted dire thought.

A formal loosening about eyesockets, a muscular relinquishing, can counteract any measure of pleasure.

Go on in this vein, trilling, charter demure tongue.

Brute occasion,  
syllabic weight.

\*

Approach new feeling tacitly, boldly, as an equivocating loop.

Current opinion stakes courtesy to wit. Follow the flux closely. Make subtle adjustments to stay on side.

Take tiny steps, occur gratuitously. Humility may mask effulgence.

Bloom or permeate.

\*

Opportunity will not announce itself.  
Portents rarely flare.

Favour a cocked ear.  
Fashion a future from careful gathering.

A fluent cache of humour and light outlasts any currency.  
A trimmer stem bears firmer fruit.

Cast line wants only reeling.

\*

Fluid comments absorb cleanly into the membraneous surface of specious discourse. Better  
the snag —

Intrepid thinkers struggle to speak.

Infectious banter violates an orderly prognosis. Mapping a crowd is like binding dust.

Billows to safety. Release abreast inchoate cloud.

Form follows function furthers form. Essentializing cyclical tautologies. Flame fathoms  
fodder flusters flame. Cinders settle succor single cinder. Repeat.

\*

Exacerbate gaily all contempt you may encounter.

The spruce tree honing spindles;  
the mountain sloughing rock.

Punctuate your solidity with minute pockets of vapid being, anguish and doubt. In  
fostering the bleakest inclination, self reflexively nurtures true self.

Deep currents orchestrate tenors of fluttering  
tendrils. Deep tendons filter archival crust. Dip  
tremors curve remnants or tensors. Drop consoles  
torque folders of cuspid. Droop moldering flagons  
of rust.

\*

Populate your memory with relatable stations. Naturally recurring obelisks.

You'll receive what your appearance deserves each moment. You'll  
calibrate platelets. Correct and adjust.

A version of Corinthian solitude —

This potent thrumming  
This adamant bliss  
Adjust.    Correct this.

\*

Assize your permissive boundaries.

Drive fence posts, string wire.

Hemming will coalesce your desire.

Condense and intensify.

All longing permits exclusion.

Formidable returns gather like moss on a stagnant passion. Swift decision permeates  
conscious yearning with impregnable satisfaction. The bloom will blush that much longer.

Sprinkle charm throughout your acquaintance. The unlikeliest allies meet any number of  
crises fortuitously.

Cast loose nets.

The caught thrive unaware.



## Christine Stewart

from *Dust*

To read is to read dust Dust is the world tramping transmuted solid particles with diameters less than 500 micrometers postglacial oil molecule pollen skin particle till concrete meteor dog bird This dun stuff pink/grey stuff Light motes of bit sounds that rise drift minute particulate compositive fragmented Dust hangs suspends above tree bridge and creek brown water It covers the landscape with definition and dissolution Dust rises and shifts articulate Suspension of suspension a zone It marks the dream of State and its ruin

Reading here tramping dust rising here translating translated reader is inhabited willed unwilled drawn through trees leaves composed decomposing

Alleg  
oric dust  
In gen  
eral sense  
dust an ex  
pression

ornate ~

It instruments  
into em  
pires sucked  
soft as wan  
ton sleep  
or ever orphic

metre allegoric  
dust's iambic  
rust stay  
some cop  
per swag  
come then

skin sweet  
in mote and  
sky Radi  
ative, for  
cing. How ever dra  
ped dust acts

on thoughts co  
heres or co  
lours them  
with its o  
wn film  
swift and de

compo  
sing from ele  
ments, or thoughts  
each con tained  
with in a soft prin  
ciple of frayed bun

dle and must  
y lim  
Aphoris  
tic dust  
Dust stums  
mist Air

blenches at  
dust's rift  
Dust stims  
bliss Dust  
clenches at  
studs shifts

kids messes  
with ids  
Fou  
nd dust  
We rum  
mage in viv

id bins  
We parse  
dust my  
dry troth  
is your thr  
oat. Po

em dust  
For dust (min  
ute) enum  
erates: *dry fles*  
*ches suck'd*  
Dry dust

soaks lu  
sh soft  
nets Stops  
flesh arrests  
varnish furs  
vessels

edge im  
potent Dust  
takes mag  
nate puffs  
metal air  
errant Morn

ing dust co  
llects in ten  
ants Late dust  
shreds past  
sloughs blunt  
within thin

lifts. Grist  
dust  
List dust I

was thinking oranges. Snow behind my eyes. If ever any beauty I desired however ash I got  
I would give them dust Its radiative lust Its skills and wit Drunk dust Grope dust Steaming  
hung dust Stained bellowing dust Beloved mathematic dust Reeling flushed dust Civic  
gesture dust Glistening Larkspur dust Infectious dust Oil of dust Yellow dust Stabbing  
queasy dust Castrati dust Left cups dust Herbaceous dust Squint dust Cuff dust Pelvic dust  
Inky dust Strophe dust Home at seven Dust Salvage dust Pleasing flavoured dust

# Aaron Tucker

## Excerpt from “under”

I.

and if we remember Ezra as he is taken  
down into the depths and shown an  
immortal worm and “in front of its  
mouth stood many sinners  
and when it drew in a breath like flies  
they entered its mouth” it is not the  
worm’s fault just as it is not the eel’s or  
Anguineus’ that we are afraid of its teeth  
or anal fin or because we can not draw a  
breath underwater we are still intricate  
our muscles developed to speak or  
surface or shadow or because it is us  
entering the throat

So from our shells we echo, voices flood  
into the grimy dark we mutter and toss  
our speech into the darkening waters and  
say we are being punished unfairly

our voices without breath punctured by  
branches crying out to the limits of our  
eyesight weak and drying our voices cry  
out asking why? why?

Sinners, look out, look out at ocean  
edges look out along the hollow shine of  
waves, look out towards the horizons  
and wonder about the edges too far to  
see or too deep to plunge or too dark to  
overcome look out and ask why

Ask then why we are being punished

We are as Ishmael, each of us the sons and daughters of those lost in wilderness each of us lost in shadows, abandoned and pushed out by the mothers of our sons as Abraham son of Isaac cast his first and maidservant out to wander the woods in search of a voice he cast them like us with the Cystisoma to be transparent and wander ocean bottoms unseen

We are as Ishmael as we look out at the horizon and wonder why we all gather here sublime in our curiosity of that which is long past our comprehension, we are unnamed or defined in murk at the edges of woods waiting for a storm of suns but far too deep underwater to see light or we are at the shallows and we look out asking how the palms of amphipods scrape wet pebbles from sea floors asking as Ahab asked “thou tellest me truly where I am – but canst thou cast the least hint where I shall be?” we are doomed to wander the seas in search, cast out with the Winteria and left we are Ishmael as we cling to our coffins the sons and daughters of a nomad in chase or we are doomed to return to our fathers and mothers who have taken one look at our seas and melted the ice and raised the creatures from the ocean bottoms

will the Lord answer us as he did then with a skin of water? Will we open our eyes to wells and drink deeply knowing that salt water can quench if the thirst is great enough?

## II.

come to the edges of our rivers greet  
Phlegyas and step inside his boat

his voice is rocks in a handkerchief is a  
clot of roots wrapped snugly around a  
fence post is bacteria flooding the edges  
of a microscope slide he says cracking  
the surface of the water with his oars "If  
there is a God of the ocean he is without  
dorsal or digits but is rather the shape of  
bursting coral clinging to the curve of  
seabeds dragging for plankton a string of  
polyps built into exoskeleton a God who  
will not hold sinners in slippery grounds  
or plug leaks in mitochondrion will not  
forgive but will instead cast and  
condemn he is a God of anger as  
Edwards envisioned a God which does  
not resuscitate those who have spent too  
long underwater, will only hold out his  
reach in furnace or dirt but never in  
liquid where Peter begs 'Come, and let  
yourselves be built as living stones, into  
a spiritual temple' he supposes that his  
God is one of cloud yet clouds are fed,  
sustained by rain, moisture from the  
oceans and stones sink if you are a stone  
you'll settle on the bottom and remain  
motionless until the waves decide to  
move"

He says this with a bare paddle dipping  
slender fingers into the river and licking  
them dry muscles bulging as small  
boulders he continues "God is angry and  
'your wickedness makes you heavy as  
lead, and to tend downward with great  
weight and pressure' He is not a savior  
but is the rough wind of a summer squall  
his wrath is a dam kept until release is



found until his wrath can snake through  
fractures enlarging until the dam bursts  
and we are all swallowed under the  
weight of waters likes stones he holds  
you as a loathsome worm the bait that  
wiggles between pinched fingers

O sinner you are that worm whose job is  
to catch to sacrifice to the larger creature  
to keep the system working are slimy  
food and He holds you with disdain over  
the mouth of eager fish and can choose  
to let you drop” he then goes silent and  
we must turn our gazes down gaze down  
though our ripples look through our  
face’s mirrored image past sullen  
wrathful faces plunge past the shade  
down to the limits of our sight use our  
hands and sink and open our eyes our  
lungs breathe sediment here this depth  
full we breathe out our shells breathe  
mud in intervals of six hold breath for  
twenty-one beats and exhale teeth  
rounded bones of no use

we shed pigment shed spine shed  
degrees from body temperature fix our  
hands to our lungs, shrink our lungs are  
useless our breath never quite inhales  
throats caught with shells silt silica cold  
deep slow we gaze now and see as  
Lucifer saw “rocks, caves, lakes, fens,  
bogs, dens and shades of death” this  
gaze lights floor or bed or bottom we are  
as it is

### III.

these are questions we must confront  
when we witness the valleys or  
mountains of these depths and are left  
stranded at the edges of the Abysmal  
Plains fractured by ridges of magma  
basalt lapping against silt dunes along  
sea floor undulating as clucking tongues  
or broken asphalt here the crust is  
horizon stretches pitch heavy onward  
further than the longest barren field  
outward past the flat edge of sight a long  
continuous slope towards sharp drop

to see the sinners here is to witness the  
length of life to see a man condemned at  
the last moment for a hasty blasphemy  
or lingering look back here are pillars or  
lions a deathbed curse momentary lapse  
with no chance to atone to see a woman  
hurrying along streets in broken shoe  
soles towards the next streetlight always  
the next or whispering soft undulations  
to mismatched pews slowly kneading  
her knuckles

to stand and look out here is to squint  
see the blowing stalks of wheat or corn  
and the grit that settles on window  
ledges that tapping of tree limb against  
the pane is loud here it is dim cold  
enough to press out breath against the  
window pane fog and examine past  
fingerprints or alevin we scavenge  
scraps of mud and slather along arms  
waist deep try to hide in the dark blank  
landscape to forget our finite gaze or  
breath burrow deep and hope we'll never  
catch another breathe

but listen to these sinners

“I am sorry for I swam until I could no longer resist smoky cartilage or chromatophores and I begged for valleys or mountains”

“I am sorry for I broke a limb from the tree of Vitronella clubbed that which surrounded me and ate the shallow remains”

here skin is only a membrane that separates musical tones of bloodwork from the cacophony of complete quiet all we can hear is the mutterings of these sinners malformed and unevolved unable to adapt as the beautiful creatures here have

and there is a single body that floats towards you hangs with lop-sided skull mismatched forearms this sinner alternates depths plummets down only to race upwards a body deformed by crushing lengths of jaws and fed into ravenous stomachs kept alive only by the grace of gulper eels and Atolla

# Chris Turnbull

from *continua*



Claire did. Or  
it was Claire.  
Without a word

(to us) ditched.

Maybe we lacked  
method.  
She street

as winter and buds  
spring  
barely through

the grackles a few  
days in force.

Predictably, the  
shoe store displayed  
its new window.

Claire was

glam some  
other town dancing.  
She the heart

of our imagined  
downtown : a visual  
pursuit .

An unmarked idea  
taking form.

DQ got razed.  
Walmart got land.  
Tim Horton's went

non-smoking. Our  
stoop took on  
the appearance

of our younger  
siblings. We  
phantomed

into minimum  
wage jobs.

Claire should  
have been a dancer.  
The overgrown

acreage stellar

for woodcocks, and  
two boys (Billy &  
Owen)

who often scrambled  
there on bikes;  
they were

gleaning self-exile  
from field notes.

At the base  
of a small stone  
wall

the boys

saw white  
flecks among wood lilies.  
Our

street dreams  
a forensic collapse.  
Lily leaves

split by  
previous rains



these continua compel simple facts, some discomfort. are we no longer touching now ?



memory, too,

holds



this trail hosts compilations of the natural:

signs of enchantment

**up past our knees**  
signs of intoxication

**in ephemeral**  
signs of intercourse

**pond water. not street**  
signs of boredom

**at all**  
signs of scale

signs of levity

signs of ingenuity



homage

exclusion.		
abandon.		heartlash.
remission.		
forgotten.		
		. letters home

claim, give ~preoccupied, staked

if she survived the voyage

if her husband or if he survived

the voyage or she

and all found him

by then surviving

a habit : a fortunate

condition for the new

if not a solitary condition for

grief

& unsettled by fading  
*take.*  
 loss & bounty





Bail.

Your language is out down spars  
interrupts stalls cloud crowns

words that , drilled words Words you  
describe to replace to invent  
to erode to <sup>desensitized as to live</sup> listening

hold <sup>forever</sup>  
love,

\* limber - she  
hoists herself  
into \*

[Claire]





madmen on boats

the city behind

## author biographies:

Author of four books of poetry (most recently the visual poem suite *chains*) and two volumes of conceptual fiction (most recently the minimalist visual novel *local colour*), **derek beaulieu's** work is consistently praised as some of the most radical and challenging contemporary Canadian writing. Publisher of the acclaimed smallpresses *housepress* (1997-2004) and *no press* (2005-present), and editor of several small magazines in Canada, beaulieu has spoken and written on poetics internationally. *Toro* magazine recently wrote "using techniques drawn from graphic design, fine art and experimental writing, [beaulieu] vigorously tests the restrictions, conventions, and denotations of the letters of the alphabet." beaulieu's *fractal economies* (talonbooks, 2006) included a cogent and widely-discussed argument for poetry which worked beyond strict meaning making, pushing the boundaries into graphic design, gesture and collaboration. beaulieu lives in Calgary where he teaches through the Calgary Board of Education and at the University of Calgary. He can be reached at *derek [at] housepress.ca*

**Joe Blades** lives in Fredericton, NB where he is a new grad student, M.Ed. (Adult Ed.), at the University of New Brunswick. On the editorial board of *revue ellipse mag*, he is Vice President–Membership Chair of the League of Canadian Poets, producer–host of the *Ashes, Paper & Beans* community radio program, and founding publisher of 25-year-old Broken Jaw Press. The author of five published poetry books, including *River Suite* and *from the book that doesn't close*, he has several books in the works, including *Casemate Poems (Collected)* (Chaudiere Books). Two of his books were also translated and published in Serbian editions in 2005.

**George Bowering** lives on the west coast with Jean Baird, his co-editor of *The Heart does Break* (Random House), an anthology of essays about grief and mourning. His most recent fiction is *The Box* (New Star Books).

**Rob Budde** teaches creative writing at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George BC. He has published seven books (poetry, novels, interviews, and short fiction), his most recent book being *Finding Ft. George* (Caitlin Press). Coming soon is *declining america* from BookThug. These poems are from a manuscript tentatively titled *Dreamland Theatre*. Find him at *writingwaynorth.blogspot.com*.

**Emily Carr** is writing a book of poetry about happiness & ecology, *to loot to hew & Eden*. In 2009, she published chapbooks with Toadlily Press and above/ground press. Her poem, "[like the story leaving Achilles alive in that way]," was nominated by Toadlily Press for a 2009 Pushcart Prize. Emily's book of poetry, *directions for flying*, was the winner of the 2009 Furniture Press Poetry Prize and is forthcoming in March 2010. Another book of poetry, *13 ways of happily: books 1 & 2*, was chosen by Cole Swenson as the winner of the New Measures 2009 Poetry Prize and is forthcoming from Parlor Press in 2010.

Originally from Portland, Oregon, **Jen Currin** returned to live in the rainy northwest (Vancouver, BC) seven years ago, after many years away. Jen teaches creative writing at Langara College and online for the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. She has published two books of poems, *The Sleep of Four Cities* and *Hagiography*. A new collection, *The Inquisition Yours*, will be published by Coach House Books in spring 2010.

**Amanda Earl's** poetry appears most recently in the *Peter F. Yacht Club* #13 (Ottawa, Ontario), *Drunkenboat.com*, *The Windsor Review* (Windsor, Ontario); and *Van Gogh's Ear* (Paris, France) and is forthcoming in *Sugarmule.com*, *Stephen Harper: A Literary Journal of the Arts* (Calgary, Alberta), *Rampike* (Windsor, Ontario), and Ryerson University's *Whitewall Review*. Her chapbooks are *Welcome to Earth: poem for alien(s)* (Book Thug, 2008); *The Sad Phoenician's Other Woman* (above/ground press, 2008); *Eleanor* (above/ground press, 2007). Amanda is the managing editor of *Bywords.ca* and the *Bywords Quarterly Journal* and runs the new micropress AngelHousePress ([www.angelhousepress.com](http://www.angelhousepress.com)). For more information on upcoming readings and recent publications, please visit [www.amandaearl.com](http://www.amandaearl.com).

**Lainna Lane El Jabi** has lived in Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton and most recently Toronto where she is in the midst of an MA at Ryerson. A former editorial member of Edmonton's Olive Reading Series and *Other Voices* literary journal, she also mixes a fabulous mint julep. Other work has appeared in *The Peter F. Yacht Club* #10, *The Garneau Review* and *ottawater*, as well as a couple of Olive Reading Series chapbooks, and a collaborative chapbook with Trisia Eddy, published by Red Nettle Press.

**Jesse Patrick Ferguson** is a poet who currently resides in Fredericton with his wife and son. He is a poetry editor for *The Fiddlehead*, and he plays the guitar, mandolin, pennywhistle, bodhran and fiddle with varying success. In fall 2009, Freehand Books published his first full-length book, *Harmonics*.

**Judith Fitzgerald** – poet, editor, literary journalist, and cultural critic with thirty works (including poetry, biography, anthologies, and children's books) to her credit – writes about poetry for *The Globe and Mail's* "In Other Words," is one of that newspaper's Contributing Reviewers as well as a Poetry Fellow of the Chalmers Arts Foundation. Short-listed for (or recipient of) several major honours including the Fiona Mee, Trillium, Governor-General's Poetry and Writers' Choice Awards (among others), she recently completed *The Adagios Quartet*. The ex-Torontonian now calls the Almaguin Highlands home and works on her newest collection of poetry, *Rogue Lightning* (formerly "Points Elsewhere"), in which these poems will appear.

**Asher Ghaffar's** poetry has appeared in *CV2*, *Literary Review of Canada*, *Lichen Arts and Letters Preview* and *dANDeLion*. He is currently working on a doctoral degree at York University in Social and Political Thought.

**Phil Hall's** most recent book is a long poem, *White Porcupine* (2007), from BookThug. Forthcoming is *The Little Seamstress*, from Pedlar Press (2010). He lives in the Ottawa Valley & has a *No Uranium* sticker on his van.

**Sharon Harris** isn't exactly sure what life is about, but thinks that love has everything to do with it. She's a love activist, artist, historian, writer, enthusiast, and cultural critic -- a loveologist. Her first book of poetry, *Avatar*, was published by The Mercury Press; she recently launched The I Love You World Graffiti Project at <http://iloveyougraffiti.com>; she blogs at <http://theiloveyoublog.com>.

**Peter Jaeger** teaches poetry and literary theory at Roehampton University, in London, England. His work includes the poetry collections *Power Lawn* (1999), *Eckhart Cars* (2004), *Prop* (2007), and *Rapid Eye Movement* (2009), as well as a critical study on contemporary poetics, entitled *ABC of Reading TRG: Steve McCaffery, bpNichol, and the Toronto Research Group* (2000). He currently divides his time between London and rural Somerset, where he lives with his family.

**Monica Kidd** is the author of four books, including *Actualities* (poetry from Gaspereau Press, 2007). A former biologist and journalist, she lives and writes in St. John's, Newfoundland, where she now works as a physician.

**Anne Le Dressay** has published two poetry collections, *Old Winter* (2007) and *Sleep Is a Country* (1997). She lives in Ottawa.

**Gil McElroy** is a poet, independent curator, art critic, and visual artist. His most recent book is *Last Scattering Surfaces* (Talonbooks). He lives just outside of Toronto in the village of Colborne, Ontario with his wife Heather.

**Barry McKinnon** was born in Calgary in 1944. After completing a masters at the University of British Columbia in 1969, he accepted a teaching position in the English department at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George, where he taught until his retirement in 2006. The author of eight poetry books and thirteen chapbooks, McKinnon was awarded the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Award for *Pulp Log* in 1991 and was shortlisted for a Governor-General's Award for *The the* in 1982. He publishes, designs and edits chapbooks for Gorse Press. His most recent book is *In the Millennium* (New Star, 2009).

Born in Ottawa, Canada's glorious capital city, **rob mclennan** is the author of some twenty trade books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, with his most recent titles the poetry collections *a compact of words* (Ireland: Salmon Poetry, 2009), *kate street* (Chicago IL: Moira, 2009) and *wild horses* (Edmonton AB: University of Alberta Press, 2010), and a second novel, *missing persons* (Toronto ON: The Mercury Press, 2009). An editor and publisher, he runs above/ground press, Chaudiere Books (with Jennifer Mulligan), *seventeen seconds: a journal of poetry and poetics* ([ottawater.com/seventeenseconds](http://ottawater.com/seventeenseconds)), *The Garneau Review* ([ottawater.com/garneareview](http://ottawater.com/garneareview)) and the Ottawa poetry pdf annual *ottawater* ([ottawater.com](http://ottawater.com)). He spent the 2007-8 academic year in Edmonton as writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta, and divides his time between Ottawa and Toronto. He regularly posts reviews, essays, interviews and other notices at [robmcclennan.blogspot.com](http://robmcclennan.blogspot.com).

**Kim Minkus** is a poet with two books of poetry, *9 Freight* (LINEbooks 2007) and *Thresh* (Snare Books 2009). She has had reviews and poetry published in *FRONT Magazine*, *Interim*, *West Coast Line*, *The Poetic Front*, *LOCUSPOINT*, *ottawater*, *Memewar* and *Jacket*. She is currently in the throes of completing her dissertation while working as a writing instructor at Capilano University.

**Pearl Pirie** has been published in *ditch*, *The Puritan Magazine*, *Ottawater* and has had poems and an essay published by AngelHouse Press. Her last chapbook *bOATHouse* was published by above/ground press. Her blogs include *Humanymys*, *40wordyear* and *pesbo*. She has work upcoming in a *ditch anthology* and titles forthcoming from AngelHouse and Chaudiere Books

**Monty Reid** lives in Ottawa and works at the Canadian Museum of Nature. His recent publications include *A Poem that Ends with Murder* (Apt 9 Press), *The Luskville Reductions* (Brick) and *Disappointment Island* (Chaudiere). The poems in *Patois* are all based on a vocabulary that includes a partner's name.

**Shane Rhodes'** third book of poetry, *The Bindery*, published by NeWest Press, won the 2007 Lampman-Scott Award for poetry. Shane has also received an Alberta Book Award, a previous Lampman-Scott Award, and *The Malahat Review* 2009 P. K. Page Founder's Award for Poetry. Shane lives and writes in Ottawa.

Winner of the bpNichol Chapbook Award and Alfred G. Bailey Prize, and a finalist for the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry, **Sandra Ridley** is fond of heavy rain and the sleight of hand. Recent work can be found in *Rest Cure*, a hand-stitched chapbook published by Apt. 9 Press, and in *This Magazine*. Poems included here are selected from a collaboration with writer Michael Blouin.

**Stan Rogal** was born in Vancouver and now lives in Toronto. His work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies in Canada, the US and Europe. He is the author of 3 novels, 3 short story and 9 poetry collections. He is also a playwright and has had plays produced variously across Canada. He is currently seeking fame and fortune as a writer, but will settle for a glass of wine and a ham sandwich.

**Natalie Simpson's** first collection of poetry, *accrete or crumble*, was published by LINEbooks in 2006. above/ground press reissued her chapbook *Dirty Work* as part of its Alberta Series in 2008. More of her poetry can be found in *Shift & Switch: New Canadian Poetry* (The Mercury Press) and *Post-Prairie: An Anthology of New Poetry* (Talonbooks). She is a former managing editor of *filling Station* magazine, and she intermittently publishes limited edition chapbooks through her press, edits all over. She practices law in Calgary, Alberta.

**Christine Anne Stewart** (now) lives in Edmonton, Alberta (Canada). She is the author of *Propositions from Under Mill Creek Bridge* (Virgin Press 2007), *Pessoa's July: or the months of astonishments* (Nomados 2006), *from Taxonomy* (West House 2003), *Daddy Clean Head* (Lumpe Press 2000). She teaches at the University of Alberta and is a member of the Olive Poetry Collective.

**Aaron Tucker's** creative work has appeared in *Descant*, *Rampike* and *The Windsor Review* and has an upcoming chapbook coming from The Emergency Response Press. In addition, his reviews have been featured in *Matrix Magazine*, *The Danforth Review*, *The Antigonish Review* among other Canadian Magazines. He is one of the contributing editors for *The White Wall Review* and runs the Can-Lit criticism website [agorareview.ca](http://agorareview.ca). He teaches and writes in Toronto.

**Chris Turnbull** lives in Kemptville, Ontario. This is a selection from *continua*, a book length series that interweaves voice and image as a combined visual text and multi-voice performance piece. Some of this current selection, in one form or another, has been published in *How2*, *Convergences*, and *dANDelion*. Artist and photographer Daniel Van Klei contributed the image for 'madmen with boats' (<http://www.danielvanklei.com/>).

## artist biographies:

**Adrian Göllner** combines graphing techniques and references to Modernism in artworks that critique consumer culture. While having received sixteen public art commissions, including one for the Canadian Embassy in Berlin, 2005, Göllner has continued to exhibit and recently mounted solo exhibitions at the Ottawa Art Gallery and at the Navta Schulz Gallery in Chicago. Son of a Canadian soldier, Göllner was born in Iserlohn, Germany in 1964. He now resides in Ottawa.

After receiving a BFA from NSCAD University in 1990 **Danny Hussey** exhibited work in Halifax for several years before relocating to Ottawa. Hussey has had many solo and group shows, exhibiting both nationally and internationally. In 2002 Hussey was short listed for the RBC Canadian Painting Competition. He has received grants from the Ontario Arts Council, the City of Ottawa, and the Province of Nova Scotia. Hussey's work can be found in the collection of the City of Ottawa, the Nova Scotia Art Bank, as well as corporate collections such as Nortel Networks in Ottawa, and Organza Foods in Winnipeg and Rotary Home in Ottawa. Recent and upcoming projects have combined; painting, plywood constructions, wood cuts, block printing, screen printing, photography, and video. Subjects are derived from significant moments in time and then expanded to reveal the consequence of that experience. In 2009/10 Hussey worked as a technical assistant for prominent Ottawa artist Jerry Grey helping her complete a major commission. Hussey also continues to work on his latest project entitled Midday Matinee and his on going series of screen prints on artist photographs. <http://dannyhussey.ca/>



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