

# ACTA Victoriana

The literary journal of Victoria University

2007-2008





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Acta Victoriana  
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# Foreword



# Foreword

For me, the final product of this journal evokes memories of the long afternoons spent discussing the submissions, searching for something coherent amid the jumble of paper and notes. It is satisfying to realize that the time I dedicated to this journal was spent with a group of people who were also willing to devote their time to ensure that the journal would represent the thriving creative force in our University.

It is hard to believe that the journal is in its 129<sup>th</sup> year and that it has managed to survive the transience of university life; remaining a place where students and members of the community can publish their work. For that, I would like to thank Victoria University for their continued support, and especially the Editorial Board without whom this journal would not have materialized.

I hope what emerges for you, the reader, is a journal that continues to carry the legacy that began in 1878.

**Alexandra Hong**  
Editor-in-Chief  
2007-2008

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If we found the truth there  
we found it in alleys, edges, the places  
where the city cracked open  
and the weeds leapt in like fleas.  
The truth we found did not walk  
with the beautiful people,  
or open in the smiling faces  
on the steps of the good houses,  
though the houses were good,  
the truth should have chosen to live in them.

But it did not. No, it was obstinate, rude,  
the worst sort of junkie. The truth  
wasted itself on apartment buildings  
blackened by weather everyone denied.  
That is always where the truth resides.

Occasionally a window opened  
and through it we glimpsed  
something shining,  
an aquarium filled  
with old water.  
The fish swam  
and swam and swam  
through the grey universe,  
around plastic treasure chests  
and weeds and skulls.  
The fish did not notice the sores  
chinked between their scales.

We walked past that world, we always had,  
we did not see it, we carried it in our hands  
like a weapon we did not know how to use.  
The truth was there next to us like a lover  
but as usual we were afraid  
of commitment,  
we did not know how to love,  
we had always just pretended,  
it had always been enough.

Later, we were so surprised  
by the metal and smoke,  
shocked to recognize our own  
plague, the darkness that grew  
like placenta  
around us.  
Then all that blood.

she asked-

what exactly are you asking?

i replied-

out into the silence the early morning  
silence with a bit of concrete and the low  
steady growl of a streetcar in it

you will (kiss me) i will (go)

out into the morning five a.m. the young  
morning with a warm world of sunlight  
and coffee and a smile as big as a quarter  
watermelon in it

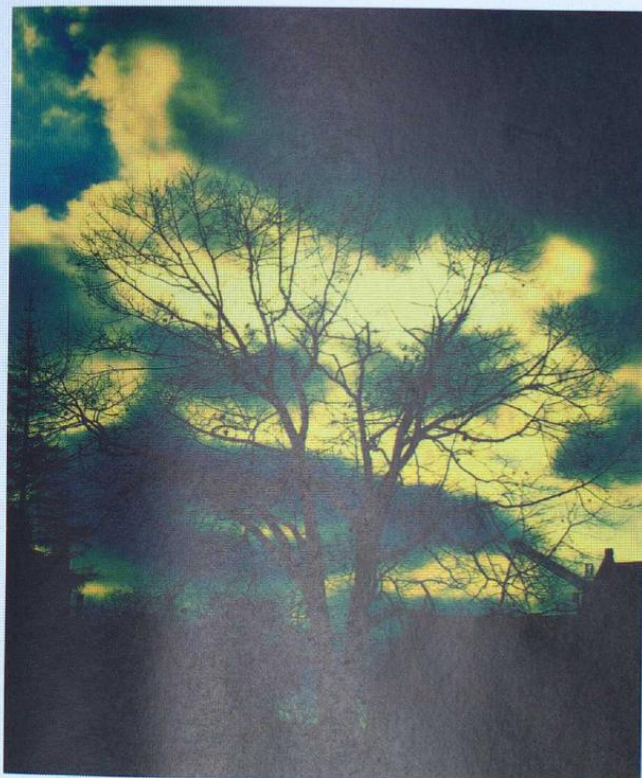
i will (kiss you) go (you will...)

out into the sunlight the fresh  
sunlight i will slide-  
a fast blur on two wheels-  
freshly fucked into the day

you will i will (kiss me) go

into the folds of memory  
a memory in brief memory

i (kissing you) will go



Treescape | Dara Skolnick  
Digital Print



nothing against art garfunkel  
but i'd sucker punch the guy  
if i ever got the chance,  
really rattle his skull and  
send what's left of his  
ridiculous, frizzy hair  
skittering into the air

and even though some say  
he is nothing more than  
a tick engorged with  
paul simon's blood, he  
wouldn't deserve the  
beating, not in the least

i mean, all he did was  
move his lips a little after  
paul's and in so doing  
created the greatest harmony  
the world's ever heard  
which hardly makes him  
a parasite, instead the  
lesser half of a symbiotic  
relationship, few of which  
are entirely equal (long-  
beaked birds tirelessly  
picking bugs off the  
backs of hippopotami –  
suction-lipped fish clinging  
to the underbellies of  
indifferent sharks)

perhaps talent arrives  
bloated and lumbering  
at birth, the birds swarming  
to sustain themselves  
off of it, or instead talent  
is found in the toiling  
and it is the primeval rhythms

that we shape out mouths  
to consume

but it hardly matters  
either way, symbiosis  
being a crutch of the  
beasts, the animals that  
cannot sustain themselves  
inside themselves

and art garfunkel's  
career is the echo of  
someone else's song –  
ringo banging pots and  
pans in his basement –  
it is a reminder of  
something primitive  
and pure and vital that  
we muffle deep inside

a voice which echoes  
our joys and sorrows –  
repeats them, one octave higher –  
asks us to listen

a thing which i cannot  
mute with my fists so  
instead i dream of punching  
art garfunkel square in  
the face and watching  
him fall helplessly  
to the ground.



Headlights fan out, tentacles  
submerged in the darkness –  
your '83 Buick lighting up  
the tracks behind the bingo hall.  
The two of us kick up sand,  
assemble split wood into a bonfire  
of overgrown grass and the shimmering  
orange veins of railroad ties.  
The blaze of our Du Mauriers climbs  
with embers of car exhaust,  
voices thick with whisky,  
surging into a cacophony of laughter  
and smoldering fire. When it quiets  
we hear the pop and sizzle of grasshoppers  
in the disarray of the inferno,  
the snap of your ankle,  
bone releasing along a break,  
you collapsing to the sober ground.

I.  
the type on the pulp  
pressed and held between your  
fingers desiccates an imprint onto your  
eyes when you close them and your  
mouth whispers the drawl of your  
tongue as it softens to curl up over your  
lips that whet to produce pulse for your  
ears as they hear a sound that patterns your  
mind where the ideas and your  
thoughts play quick-handed games that slide up your  
legs and swing open your  
hips and your  
hair flies up and over your  
shoulders and rests on your  
back behind the lap of your neck and your  
collar your elbow your arm wrist finger your  
position on paper  
until it's no longer the pages that turn,  
nor the words that move.

II.  
all forms of contact with your body  
I am jealous of  
the paper you touch, of the  
window that frames your sight, of the  
smile that breaks down your vestiges of weariness, of the  
red stain left over after you've been soured with wine, of the  
cigarette impressed by your lipstick, of the  
hum you hear in the stillness, of the  
weaknesses converging when you lie alone in the dark, of the  
love that you will not stop loving, of the  
pavement keeping time by your pace, of the  
thrusts engendered by a quiver, of the  
rain pursuing your uncovered head during a storm, of the  
shadow that follows, pauses, walks with you, of the  
numbers that make up the angles formed by your neck, of the  
print on this page.

I am jealous even of the  
words you read,  
even when they are mine,  
even though your  
reading them renders you to me.



Bacchanalia | Laura Bydlowska  
Lithograph Print



Of course it was a Sunday. Your coffee cup stained rings onto the Formica counter but this time I wasn't home to pretend to scold you. I'd sauntered alone to the marketplace to watch the fruit, periodically checking my hair in the reflection of the over-waxed red apples while you sat, I imagine, poking the dust bunnies underneath the table with your big toe.

Neither of us had ever been very good at Sundays.

I bought you a persimmon and wondered whether it would get eaten. I think I must have known, somehow. After all, we weren't exactly the type for funny fruit.

I guess I must have given off a whiff of gloom and doom because the old Portuguese grocer called me honey and begged me to smile, bless his heart, while the train down the road wheezed along its tracks for what seemed like forever. Were those the same tracks that tripped you as a kid, or am I thinking too far West? I kept on meaning to ask you.

Trains were on my mind then, too. As I skulked along the pavement with that brown-bagged persimmon thumping against my thigh I thought about taking you train-hopping through the deep South, where we'd be "honey" and "darlin'" dozens of times over. And, I'll admit, I smiled a bit then, because in spite of everything it was love.

I thought of you heroically after that daydream. When my shoelace broke halfway home, I didn't read it as an omen; instead, I thought of what you would do in my place with a mile to walk and one good shoe. Surely you would have come up with some ingenious repair, fashioned from pocket lint and thirteen cents. Me, I had nothing but to shuffle.

There was hardly a city-block left when I saw the trucks outside of our building, and I knew instantly. Fashionably late as always, I barely made it for your curtain call.

I don't remember the 16 clicks of the elevator or the busted-down

door, but I made it into the rocking chair somehow. I guess it's like finding yourself in bed, still drunk from the night before, and wondering how you got there. Survival instinct maybe, though I'm not sure this one counts.

You worked it out so that I wouldn't have to walk in on you in your sorry state, and I'm thankful for that. I saw only your big toe peeking out of the chrysalis they'd put you in, still pruny from the bath that had sloshed itself through the neighbour's ceiling below us. I guess the damn super had lied about finally caulking the bottom of that tub.

It probably goes without saying that I've changed my routine. I don't let dust bunnies collect anymore and I've given up on trains. The deep South is postponed indefinitely, my friend, until a good enough reason comes along to stir me; until that happens, if it ever does, I'm making Saturdays twice as long as they used to be. Sunday is dead to me now.

You'll have to pardon my gallows humour.



The House  
crawled with ants.  
I sat and watched them  
making their frantic way across the kitchen,  
probing the cracks in the tile floor.  
They'd pause and test the air,  
antennae waving as I,  
with great disinterest,  
crushed the life crackling from their bodies.

The T.V.  
had been broken for three days, so I sat  
on the front steps, smoking;  
the yellow light from the neighbor's window  
forming a makeshift screen.  
She was giving him head in the kitchen.  
He looked bored.  
She looked uncomfortable.  
I wondered if their T.V. was broken too.

The Clock  
ticked onward,  
Same as yesterday,  
same as the day before.  
I sat and checked and rechecked it  
before trudging back to retail.  
There were no customers,  
but there was coffee every morning  
so we sat behind the counter,  
watched the clock,  
and twitched for money.

Prismatic blooms, warm red and radial blue, extending from primary coloured cores, deep flat red-yellow-blues, colour-blind traffic lights pulling time forward, slowing time down. The blooms sublimated into the air, spray-painting moist particles hidden in the atmosphere, rendering them into visible rainbows, dazzling our kaleidoscope irises. High on ecstasy, coming home from the Wolf Parade concert at La Sala Rossa, we couldn't tell where the soft vapours began blending into one another as our taxi floated across the Boulevard St-Laurent. Finger-painting the air with our fingers, smudging Montreal's colour palette of glows with just our fingers, carving smooth rivers of colour into the night with our fingers, the universe began to take on a protean shape, a glassy jelly like a swollen water glob we could spread. Tangible enough to squish and stretch and manipulate, fluid enough to sluice through our fingers as we drew them through; an elastic universe of possibilities. Each touch of our body felt fluid, and we didn't want our driver to see, but we were warm blankets on this snowy night; we were warm jets of liquid, flowing into each other. Leaning against the car door bumpy plastic, hot cheek on cold glass, we were a pair of dominoes in mid-fall, asleep for all he could tell, only the slightest motion of our hips betraying us. The city's luminous lines, green to gold, every ray of the spectrum, ran over our skin, doing what fingers couldn't. Lips nuzzled into necks, nostrils flooded with sour coffee grounds and sweat and baby powder and heady flowers. The windows were ever-shifting flower gardens, fantasies to dance in, each flower a little droplet of watercolour; vivid violets, sunny daffodils, striking red poppies, creamy pink carnations, impossibly blue roses, we were burning them all down in a marigold blaze. The world slipped away, saturated vision, a colourful dream growing ever paler, every edge bleeding like sugary juice, oozing out of raspberries and peaches and green plums, all over our wet, sticky skin, the pigments mixing on the back of our eyelids, so dark but bruised with colour.





Misinterpretations | Laurie O'Handley  
Digital Print

You said Grandmother made  
you from a riverbank, hands digging  
in soft earth feeling  
for clay to mould  
your muddy hands, your muddy lips.

You said clay once set  
can never change, but  
I saw time touch your lips,  
wrinkle your skin.



I had a particular issue with this assignment, since I questioned the hypocrisy of any study about free speech that was subject to a word limit.

"Does free speech exist?"

I was surprised by the bluntness of the question. Usually, they ask me to 'examine' an issue, or 'explore my feelings on' something. But here, the question stared back at me, not asking for my ambivalence, but daring me to take a side, to make a choice. God forbid I have to make a choice while in college.

What do they mean "does free speech exist"? Did they mean physically, as a thing? Was there any doubt that it didn't? Were there skeptics to this claim, people who thought that free speech, like Big Foot, hid itself from public scrutiny and existed only in blurry photos of free speech running through the forest, or second hand accounts from meth addicts who swore that free speech probed them in a hovercraft?

And what is there to know about free speech, except that terrorists, your political opponents, and your parents are always trying to suppress it?

This assignment was stupid. Yet I didn't find myself especially worried about it. How difficult could it be to catalogue everything there is to know about freedom of speech into twenty five hundred words? Just review something someone else has done, and then take a side. Easy as it gets, ambivalence about the nature of the question aside.

I began reading and started with the fundamental question that so many free speech scholars deal with: "if someone yells 'fire' in a crowded theatre when there is no fire, does that prove the limits of free speech?" After considering testing this hypothesis on several crowded theatres, I learned nothing conclusive except that people who yell "fire" in crowded theatres are assholes. Also, that if you yell "fire" in a theatre screening the *Love in the Time of Cholera* movie, people will actually thank you afterwards for the good

excuse to leave early.

I considered the idea that free speech is a gateway to the conclusion of objective truth. But doesn't free speech mean we can say whatever we want? Why would speaking freely encourage anything but stupid people confusing the smart ones? Or smart ones misleading the stupid ones?

I decided that intellectual exercises in free speech didn't make sense anymore, so I tried to work on more practical cases.

My study lead me to America, a country that has tripped over itself for civil liberties its entire history, unless it meant they had to abolish slavery or treat people equally.

A recent civil rights debate there particularly caught my interest.

"Is it reasonable to protect flag burning as a form of free speech?"

The Supreme Court in the United States said yes!, as they ruled it violated someone's constitutional right to free speech if you arrested them. At first I found this weird, since, if I pulled a similar stunt involving my sworn enemy's lawn, for example, I would doubtless be charged with arson and trespassing.

I didn't really get it, until someone explained to me that doing things was in fact a highly valid form of free speech: in legal circles, they call it "free expression". I found this concept very useful since it validated my longstanding belief that doing something destructive is far better at getting your point across than saying something honestly.

I now realized that every time my mother told me to resolve conflicts with my younger brother by "using my words", she was spewing horseshit, and had I not been kept down by her censorship, I could have freely expressed myself with as many knuckle sandwiches as I wanted. Suddenly, war made sense. A war is an expression of how much two countries hate each other; a peace deal, conversely, is simply "the man" trying to limit their free



expression by making them "use their words".

Well, I hate the man.

From now on, not only was I going to practice free expression, I was ONLY going to practice free expression.

Needless to say, this plan was doomed. For some reason, my roommates didn't understand that my taking their valuables was my way of expressing "I don't believe in private property anymore", and my then-girlfriend didn't really get the idea that while I was watching basketball and ignoring her questions I was really saying "I don't care".

The more I "learned" about free speech, the less it actually made sense. In liberal democracies, for example, we are free to speak as long as our freedom does not make someone else feel less free because we're freely expressing our feelings that encroach on those feelings they freely feel. It's about this point in the project that I started drinking heavily.

\*\*\*

Nothing was coming. In part because there may have been nothing to have to begin with, but more importantly because the more I worried about it, the less it made sense.

I got mad at myself—how I could have nothing to say about something that so much has been made of? I mean, I had made sense of far more outlandish topics than this one. Why wasn't this coming?

I watched flies cross the wall.

I walked around the block again and again, thinking the stimulation would give me something inspired.

I searched YouTube to see if they had videos of those dogs barking 'Jingle Bells', even though it was the decidedly unfestive

month of April, and those dogs were the most shrill byproduct of the technological age. I was *that* bored.

Nothing was coming.

I eventually moved my efforts away from thinking about the topic and focused instead on the exercise itself. Why should I be expected to come up with something vaguely analytical or disective or insightful? How could I understand a damned thing about something there wasn't anything to understand about? Where does free speech exist?

I decided a meeting with the T.A. would help me set things straight. I could vocalize my concerns, have him assure me that everything I was thinking was invalid and provide a shining path to thoughtful clarity.

I entered the office with a certain tension in my chest. Why was I nervous about this? Why did the prospect of honest expression make me anxious?

I sat across from him, with literally nothing to offer.

I clammed up. I had to give him something, after all. I mean, what would he say if I questioned the project? How could he help me out if I ripped at the underpinnings of our relationship like this?

I struggled for a moment to devise an adroit way out of this situation.

"You know, I was just kind of wondering...you know, do animals have free speech?"

It was probably the most terrible thing anyone had ever said ever. But what else was I going to do?

He paused.

"Man, that's great. You're really on to something here."



I actually wasn't.

"Thanks, yeah, I've really been thinking about this a lot."

I hadn't been.

"Yeah, so how do you plan to go about researching this?"

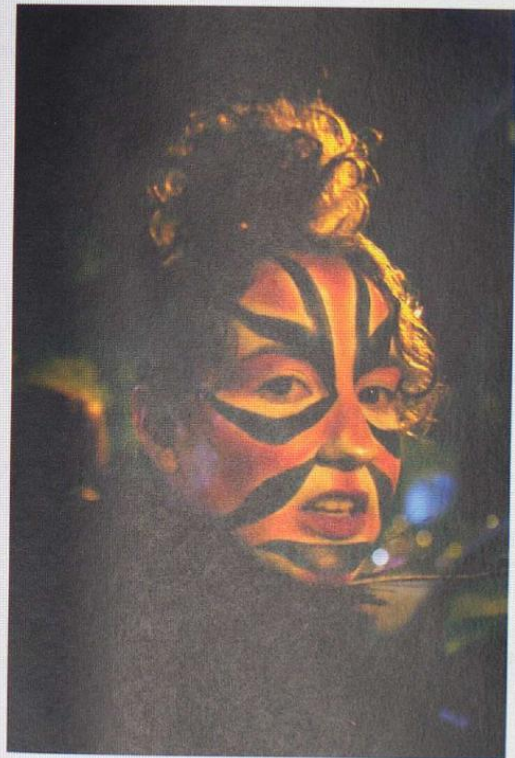
This was absurd. I considered telling him everything I had actually been thinking about this kind of ridiculous exercise. How is there any kind of universal freedom to do anything? Why is humanity the only species to ever believe social constructs can ever be divined as anything other than a construct? That the serendipitous, random complexity of human interaction could be boxed into a theoretical frame, or positioned as

existent in a naturalistic place in a world evolved by biology?

Smart people can be the stupidest kind of people.

"I was thinking of starting with monkeys. You know, see if they have free speech, and then work from there."

"Yeah, monkeys, good place to start."



Julia with Japanese Hair and Makeup | Dan Epstein  
Digital Print



My sister used to hitchhike all the time | Karen Connelly

In memory of the murdered women of Vancouver's Downtown East Side  
In memory of the missing women and the murdered women of Highway 16 in northern B.C.  
In memory of my sister

I have been the woman  
walking on the edge  
of the highway  
so small compared  
to the road stretching  
over the distant hill  
her white chest pressed  
against the black sky.

I have been the woman  
who walks into the roar of the wind  
at 2 a.m., her face turned away from the gale  
while her eyes stare directly into it,  
outraged. Because she refuses to look away  
she sees the storm as it comes, smothering  
the stars, bearing down upon her.

I have been the woman  
who is wrong, who lies, who strides  
into the tunnel of her drunken mind  
and stumbles out the other side  
into the common despair of morning.  
She has been fucked over  
and under and inside out  
and she is too tired to care anymore  
because home is so far away  
she will never get there.

I have been the woman  
who loves the storm when it comes  
even as it soaks her jean jacket and shoes  
and her socks become grey rags  
I know her so well, the woman  
with hair stuck to her scalp and chin,  
whose makeup is running down  
her face, she is so damn cold  
and crying, trying to remember  
something she forgot, something the rain  
tries to tell her, a story about getting clean.

I have been that woman, sick  
of the cars thrashing her spirit  
as they speed by, oblivious.  
She knows the one that finally stops  
is driven by a man  
who can hurt her.

The car skidding over to the shoulder of the road is  
death, asking another blunt question.

He pushes open the door.

Sometimes she answers by getting inside.  
Sometimes she answers by walking on.  
Often he answers for her.



shirt's riding up, again, exposing  
a naked onion belly to the harshhumming  
of metro lights. here i don't have  
an audience, other than the harshhummingmetrolights.  
as a result i begin to lose track of my

present character choice. the lights  
are still there, watching — i pull  
down my incorrigible outerskin (i believe  
i asked a grade school teacher what  
incorrigible meant, at one time — i believe  
she told me it was what little boys  
are. this memory may or may not

have been part of a book or  
movie). hitler liked male architecture, no  
curves. after building the große halle  
did he plan on levelling the alps, just to  
keep things balanced? at belzec

the jews got off the train. at charlevoix  
metro station people got off the train  
heading east. most, probably, went home,  
it nearing two am and all. at lionel-groulx  
i went east when i should have gone west,  
and only stopped to notice three stops  
too late. now, while most people have  
probably gone home, i wait for godot

to come rescue me, in train form  
preferably. just outside of berlin  
there is a monument to the jews  
who got off the train. an empty platform  
and an out-of-commission stretch

of railway, with countless countable jewish  
names engraved onto the tracks. at belzec  
the jews got off the train, and were asked to tie  
their shoes together (to make them easier

to find later, they were told), and throw them into a  
pyramid pile. later-later, naked and aware that a  
nazi would soon probably be wearing her shoes,  
their shoes, jewish shoes, Sarah turned to her brother

Abraham and kissed his lips: "they never fitted you  
properly, anyways," she laughed  
as the line began to get shorter and  
the completely tiled room closer. a metro  
employee in a uniform one or two sizes too small

trespasses the fourth wall, "*je  
m'excuse, chérie, mais le dernier métro est  
déjà passé.*" she says, smiles, and ascends  
the stairs. i sigh, collect my things,  
adjust my incorrigible shirt (which  
is probably one or two sizes too small), shove  
my feet into awkward shoes and ascend  
the stairs. in the showers as the tiles began to

press in against people and gas, people climbed  
over each other, attempting to escape. when  
the proctors went in, later-later-later, they  
no longer stood in awe of the jewish testament  
to a pharaoh long-passed. "every time," mumbled one,

two nodded as three and four began to move bodies.





London | Joseph Mackinnon  
Black & White

I found you coiled on concrete stairs, coughing out  
clouds of rush-hour smog and trying  
to smile flirtatiously from behind your puffer. That night  
you stayed awake texting me while the emergency room  
scrutinized your brain, my heart rate jumping  
when I thought about the pacemakers skipping beats.

We went to see Body Worlds but you felt sick  
when you saw the diseased liver plus I was bored  
by all the stasis so we left to listen to records  
and practice amateur surgery on each other.

You say I'll put myself in traction with my headphones  
but I leave them in anyway while crossing highways  
and railroad tracks. I guess I was tempted  
by the thrilling anti-septic smell and  
the blinding whiteness of the walls that time I came to visit  
and brought you playlists and your favourite books.

Secretly I love the broken parts of you,  
from the shoulder that keeps dislocating during sex  
to those fragile nerves at the base of your skull,  
threatening to unravel at any second.  
And I know you love diluting my prescriptions  
and teaching me new diseases  
so we can assume this is probably terminal –  
since we already know the prognosis  
let's skip the waiting room line-up,  
just grab something for the pain and self-medicate  
while we degenerate together and escape  
through freshly disinfected hospital windows.

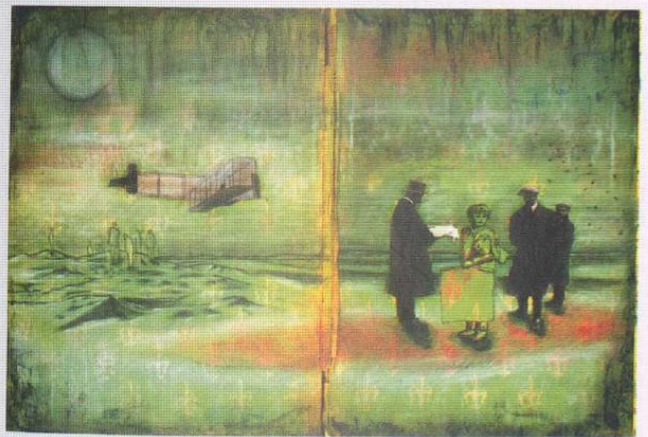
we take a walk, quiet,  
under the sky  
those  
grey underbellies of Beijing mornings  
gently exhaling the exhaust  
of seventeen million  
(and three)  
we used to live here.

but not  
near this hotel  
where the doormen bow  
and i can barely speak to them  
my tongue too heavy,  
weighed down with sayings from another place.

without a lilt  
i talk around things  
like a foreigner  
and by noon  
i remember nothing of this  
sweaty, gritty place  
but i do like eating ripe lychees  
under the hot sun,  
gawking.

my faded memories not at all like photographs:  
"this is where you went, in xiao xue,"  
"everyday."

fourteen years of  
dredging up this place in the rare reverie,  
the occasion probing conversation.  
fourteen years later  
"it has not changed at all—"



Between Burlap Covers | Felix Kalmenson  
Watercolour, Ink and Conte



Picture yourself  
a whale  
in an ocean that is less than perfect  
but the only one you've ever known,  
with a school of fish for friends  
somewhat indifferent,  
somewhat afraid of your size,  
your power,  
yet seduced by the size of your eyes.  
Suspended above  
in the ocean's atmosphere  
is a child who is swimming.  
Imagine that the waves lick his body  
like a salty tongue  
and that there is sand  
in his hair, and his bathing suit, and his eyelashes  
and that one day he will be a pilot  
but tomorrow he will be sunburned.  
The whale will never meet the boy  
except in dreams,  
the beautiful watery dreams of a whale:  
the dreams that propel the tides  
and smooth the sharp edges of glass.  
The dreams of whales and boys are each fantastical,  
inspired by chests of sunken treasures  
and the possibility of flying like birds in the sky.  
Neither the whale, nor the boy, will ever be as beautiful  
as they are when they are dreaming  
and this is a truth that only the night can know  
because it is the only one dark enough,  
deep enough,  
to keep the secrets of whales and boys.

Wreckage, everywhere wreckage,  
as the trawl rises, fathom-depted, from  
the ocean, a writhing knot of  
enmeshed, entrammelled life.  
Flick of wrist and the  
knot released, a cascade and

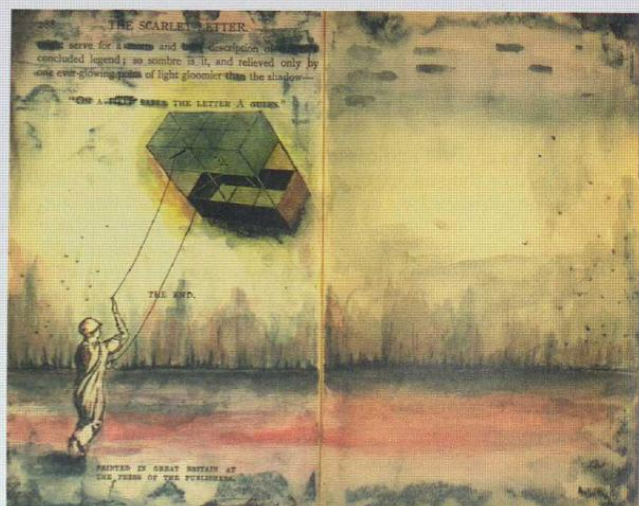
flourish of silver-grey and speckled  
gold, the deck gripped with  
sudden convulsion.  
The limbed, the crusted and carapaced,  
scrabbling across the surface of  
this palpitating flesh; a lone creature

reaching astern, climbing  
the thwarts, glimpsing the sea-jellied  
shores of Japan, and yet, its shell inevitably  
voicing the dull echo of a small plastic  
tub. Cleated rubber thunders  
among the dying, salvaging the

salmon and trout crushed  
under the weight of primordial  
life, the gelatinous, ententacled blooms,  
no longer sub-terrestrial,  
welcomed by the warmth of  
saltwater coasts. And the men,

anchored to this labour, the  
scraping of knife against bone,  
the wreckage, everywhere wreckage,  
of entrails, surrounded by the  
silent gasp of too much air  
upon this blood-empurpled planking.





On a Field Sable | Felix Kalmerson  
Watercolour and Ink

where there is silence, there is echo  
of the silence  
that existed between words once spoken.

I want to write a word for you  
that is foreign to words,  
that is read aloud but once,  
to erase all other words,  
and the words before and after the words,  
and the spaces between the words,  
and then is forgotten

one that leaves behind a sense of itself,  
and of those who spoke it,  
and the time that it takes to be said  
should be equal to the time it takes to be remembered.

but everything now being forgotten is everything:  
the back and forth time,  
and the slow and fast time,  
and the time looping back on itself  
to recollected conversations,  
repeated and rejoiced in their specifics and details—  
the words that forced your mouth to curl up when you said them,  
or the words that darkened the air around you before you said them,  
or your name

beginning words and ending words,  
and the ones in between  
that bear within them all information  
about the time of day,  
and the season and the direction of the clouds,  
and what you were wearing  
and what was wearing you,  
if your hair was pulled back  
or left loosely down,  
what you did with your hands when you spoke,  
or if the height of your shoes brought you closer to my eyeline,  
or the position of your shadow in relation to the sun,



what you did the night before,  
and what you were doing later that day,  
pause and intonation and inflection and voice and all the other  
sounds that receded  
while you were talking,  
and if you stayed, or if you walked away.

# Biographies

# Biographies

**Adam D. Smith**, not to be confused with Adam Smith, does not like talking about himself and kindly asks all curious parties to refer to his writing for insight into his nature.

**C.J. Maddison** is in his first year studying Cognitive Science and Ecology & Evolution. In the summers he lives in Vancouver and counsels at a creative writing camp in Oregon. All year round he is a bird-watcher.

**caroline x. aksich** is one of the numerous montreal diaspora located in toronto. she attends the university of toronto for english literature and linguistics, and is in her third year; coincidentally, this is her third appearance in *acta*. being a narcissist, caroline relishes third person autobiographies.

**Chris Berube** is not a very good writer or actor or speaker or anything. But he's okay at these things, and that's fine, I suppose.

**Dan Epstein** was born in Royal Oak, Michigan. He started taking photos at age 6 with a Polaroid instant camera, and since then has developed a vested interest in media of all types. He is a fourth year Semiotics major, *The Varsity's* photography editor, and a staff member of UC's *The Gargoyle*. Dan loves Toronto, U of T, and all the people here, so give yourself a big hug why don't ya!

**Dara Skolnick** is a fourth year History/Art History double major at U of T. In her few spare moments that aren't spent taking notes and essay writing, she enjoys photography, painting, playing the piano, and other such creative endeavours. Her favourite number is 42.

**Don MacLaughlin** has previously published his work in the literary journal *Magpie* and is currently finishing a novel with the assistance of the Toronto Arts Council.

For **Emily Swinkin**, the only thing more exciting than wearing a lab coat is the infinite potential offered by a blank sheet of paper. These are good signs considering that she is in her second year of Human Biology and English. Poetry, an experiment with words, connects these studies.

**Felix Kalmenson** is an artist, photographer, and amateur filmmaker who pretends he's a writer.

**George Pakozdi** is a U of T student and has workshopped with Albert Moritz. He is an editor for *The Wa*.

**James Marsh** is a fucking poetic genius.



**Jim Johnstone** is the co-founder and editor of *Misunderstandings Magazine*. He is a two time winner of the E. J. Pratt Medal and Prize in Poetry and his work has appeared in periodicals such as *The Antigonish Review*, *Descant*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Grain*, *The Malahat Review* and *Prairie Fire*. His first book, the velocity of escape, is forthcoming from Guernica Editions.

**Joseph MacKinnon** is a second-year English/Philosophy student at Saint Michael's College; S. Dali, A. Adams and G.K Chesterton fanatic; "desert-rock"[er]; Nikon SLR fiend.

**Karen Connelly** is the author of seven books of best-selling nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. She has read from and lectured on her work in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. She is also a working photographer. Her latest book *The Lizard Cage* won Britain's 2007 Orange Broadband Prize for New Writers, as well as being shortlisted for the Kiriama Prize 2006 and longlisted for the Dublin Impac Award, 2006.

**Kelli Korducki** believes strongly in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as well as bicycles, dark chocolate, and the Great Lakes. She writes and invents vocal harmonies in Toronto, where she is a student.

**Laura Bydlowska** was born in Warsaw, Poland, eight months after Chernobyl and three months premature. She moved to Canada at age 6. She likes art nouveau, wasabi, Lewis Carroll and long bus rides. She can tell you what colour sock matches your personality.

**Laurie O'Handley** – Need I say more?

Since last gracing the pages of *ACTA Victoriana*, **L. Shane's** apartment has one less wall, slightly less furniture, and is now a lighter shade of blue. The process of mastering handstands continues. Shane's stint as an MA student is almost over. No joke.

**Rob Taylor** lives in Vancouver. He was out of town the last time Paul Simon played Vancouver, and he still tears up when he thinks about it. His poems have appeared in a number of publications with "review" in their title, including *The Antigonish Review*, *The Dalhousie Review*, and *Vancouver Review*. More of his writing can be found online at <http://rollofnickels.blogspot.com>.

**SP** is an English specialist still lamenting the lugubrious loss of the World Literature Program who believes, perhaps falsely, that chicks dig alliteration. He has a red beard, like Vincent Van Gogh.

**Zexi Wang** likes to sleep in but often finds herself eating leftover pasta at 5 am, waiting for the sunrise. She is currently ambivalent about Milton's *Paradise Lost* & can be spotted rushing to class in a great haste, perhaps with a piece of stale toast.

