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EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank you for opening up ACTA Victoriana. If this is your first gander at our fair journal I hope you find it quite enjoyable and will revisit our pages in the years to come. And for our returning readers I hope that this year's journal will live up to the standards that have been set over the past 130 years.

On such a landmark anniversary it seems fitting to take a stroll down memory lane, give into nostalgia and reflect on this journal's achievements. In line with this retrospective spirit, all of the art in this journal is compiled from ACTA's illustrious archives. Also included this year is a compilation of interviews spanning the 1980s and early 1990s conducted by ACTA editors with Professor Northrop Frye.

The pages of this journal come to you courtesy of the diligent group of students that make up the Editorial Board. Their hard work is impossible to quantify, but with any luck as you read and encounter a particularly moving sentence or a strikingly witty turn of phrase you will not only take note of the author, but of the board who sifted through hundreds of submissions to deliver it to you.

After long meetings, countless correspondences and sleepless nights consumed by hours of work I am pleased as punch, and dare I say *proud*, to present the 130th anniversary edition of ACTA Victoriana 2008-2009.

Corrine Aberdeen
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
2008-2009

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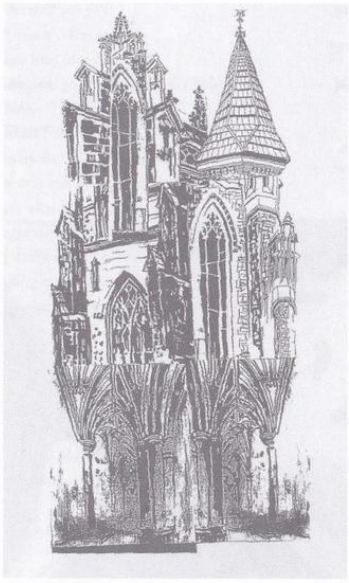


UNTITLED | Ben Shannon (vol. 123, no.1 1998)

(iii)
your grandson,
grown tall as your sons, those three pillars,
hunches down in the swampy heat
and begins to dig,

sinks his weight against that spade
as teeth into cheekflesh, heaving
with wet hands the dry, brittle pile of dirt
onto you,
you in the red, wet hole

(iv)
I stand behind him until the murmurings
begin – women I don't recognize,
eyes wide behind sleek, dark glasses,
wringing hands, plucking handkerchiefs with
painted fingernails

I leave

behind me:

the hollow scrape of a shovel, alone
a grandfather's legacy, guardedly sown

THE ORGAN

Adam Long

Because there weren't many cars that traveled the dirt roads, especially in the winter, my father let me drive the car home. Over a period of a couple of weeks, this is where my father picked up my bed. My bicycle. The refrigerator that didn't work. The washing machine that didn't work. The television he stole because someone had outbid him. There were things we needed, but he had a habit of buying things he'd never use. Most Saturdays he would go to the auction barn and he'd spend all his money, and when we didn't have enough left for groceries, he'd get angry. At himself. At life.

He should have been able to have both. The things he needed and the things he wanted. Some people his age had their own farm, a cottage. They had families and dinner parties and friends and a future of some kind. They took trips. Money affords happiness, despite what anyone says. Throughout his entire life he had managed only a few used articles of clothing, and a used truck. He spent most of his time trying to find a way to make more money. Cleaning out horse stalls. Burying livestock. He worked harder than anyone else, doing jobs no one wanted to do for whatever someone was willing to pay. The winter before then he managed to save enough money to buy a snow plow. He was outside for eighteen hours a day, plowing driveways and parking lots, asking anyone if they needed anything plowed for a few bucks. He posted an ad on the wall in the town's general store, just inside the front door. It was in his handwriting. I can plow out your driveway, written in blue pen on lined paper. At the bottom of the paper he cut up little strips with our phone number on it.

A few weeks later the phone company cut our line off for nonpayment.

He was out all day again, door to door. Until the plow broke.

He left without me that Saturday morning because I took too long getting up and getting dressed. The door to my bedroom flung open and he shouted into my room.

"If you're coming, hurry up and get ready."

I climbed out of my bed and pulled an extra sweater from the box on the dresser. I could see my breath as I put a pair of pants on. I looked out the window and he was already pulling into the laneway in the car.

It was January and my father still hadn't done anything about the heat. I walked around the house with a coat on, and often the wood floors were so cold that we had to wear boots. Or layer

our socks. Nothing in the house worked properly. The shower didn't work because the water pipes were frozen. My father tried different things to try to get the place warmer. He covered all the windows with sheets of plastic. He stapled the large squares of plastic into the window frame and outlined the edges in duct tape to try to keep the wind from coming in. I walked down the stairs, through the kitchen and into the bathroom. There was a thin yellow layer of ice in the toilet bowl.

The television stopped working and I spent a lot of time watching the snow fall out the small window in the front door. An hour or so later, I saw the car coming back up the laneway. He pulled up to the house and I opened the front door.

"Get the keys to the truck," he said. His voice muffled behind the windshield of the car.

I took the truck keys down from a nail in the wall by the front door and I went out to him.

"You drive," he said.

I was nine.

I climbed up into the truck, and sat on the edge of the seat so I could reach the pedals. I pumped the gas. We pulled out of the driveway, and I glanced over at him. He reached into his pockets and threw a bunch of sweetener packets on the dashboard. Sweetener was expensive and he'd been warned to watch his cholesterol, so he'd take handfuls of sweetener every time he bought a coffee.

"I found something for you," he said, holding the coffee in his hand. He took the lid off and dropped it onto the floor. Some coffee came over the edge of the cup and landed on his jeans. He ripped open one of the packets and poured it into the coffee, then he stirred it with his finger.

"What?"

He took a drink from the paper cup.

"I can't tell you."

"Why did you need the truck?"

"Because I couldn't fit it in the car."

I drove into the parking lot and over to a tree he pointed out. It was an organ. He managed to get it out of the auction barn and over to the car. After struggling with trying to fit it in the trunk of the car, he pushed it beside this tree and hurried home to get the truck. It had a thin layer of snow on top of it. The plug was curled up and lay on the ground. I jumped down out of the truck and my father took the keys from me.

"I got this book, too," he said, handing it to me.

It was an introductory organ book. Maybe thirty years old. I flipped through it. The pages were stiff and yellowed. In the back there was a full page of stickers, letters that could be peeled off and stuck to the keys.

"What is it?" I asked.

"A piano."

"It looks weird."

"You need to learn something," he said. "Grab an end."

My father had been talking with the Nesbin's. I went to school with their son and they hired my father to frame their basement. Their son, Colin, was taking piano lessons at the church, and he played at our school assembly every Friday. Mr. Nesbin was showing my father where he wanted the piano room in the basement.

"It's good for a boy to learn something," Mr. Nesbin said.

They could hear Colin from the basement.

"How'd he learn that?" my father asked.

"We make him practice once a day, just for a couple of hours. It gets him off the couch. Teaches him something, you know?"

We managed to lift the electric organ onto the back of the truck. After we drove back home we carried it through the front door and sat it down by the front window. We cleaned the snow off of it with a dish towel and my father plugged it into the wall and turned it on. It was made of wood, with two rows of white and black keys. Above the keys were a bunch of white buttons. My father bought it with the money he had made before the plow broke. He brought a chair in from the kitchen.

"Sit down," he said. "Let's see what you've got."

I pressed the keys.

It didn't work.

The next day my father was burning it in the backyard.

ONE WHO SEEKS FAMILIAL PRECEDENT FOR EVERY KIND OF SUFFERING

Eric Foley

As a boy, a light wooden crucifix hung over my bed. It made me feel safe and right and good. Then at some point, there was a picture of my father on a beach in Portugal taped up there instead. September 17th 1980: grey sky, grey waves. He stands looking down at salt water washing over his bare feet. His jeans are rolled up to his calves and a green plaid shirt is tied around his waist. The wind lifts his dark hair skyward, hair that belongs on the cover of an album of ethereal folk music. There's a baby on his back slung into a brown carrying pouch: a blond head of hair, one tiny fist balled up, one leather shoe visible. Yes, it's me, and this is my favourite photograph. But the one in my mind, the one that used to hang up over my bed, no longer exists (it was lost in some move). A few years ago my mother had the picture reprinted and framed - the new print is much bluer - the sky a hazy blue, the waves caught in constant light blue motion, and my father's feet are cropped out, so you can't see what he's looking down at. I'll never know what the weather was actually like that day on Grifado beach, but what the older print lacked in crispness and colour it possessed in mood and nostalgic authenticity.

EXCERPT FROM MY LIFE WITH TOLSTOY

David Gilmour

Some nights, after a day of trooping around Sanibel Island with my two children, here for hamburgers, there to the video store, I experienced an inexplicable sense of agitation. Was this what Virginia Woolf was talking about, the zone where nineteenth century Russian writers were so incomparably *true*?

At four in the morning I woke up night after night. Standing over the toilet bowl in the house with only the ghostly sound of air conditioning, I felt as though I had done something bad, committed a terrible act for which I was about to be punished. But I couldn't put my finger on what I'd done. I had that teetering, out-of-time feeling you have in those first waking seconds the morning after a cherished lover leaves you. You know something is wrong but it takes a few seconds to remember what it is.

But what had I *done*? My children were asleep, safe and healthy in their beds. I had a job, a few friends, my ex-wives loved me, I didn't have leukaemia. I hadn't written bad cheques or, like the young Tolstoy, lost sickening amounts of money at cards.

What is this horror, I asked myself.

I wandered naked through the dark house. I looked in on my children, Maggie, her bony arm thrown over her forehead as if protesting; her brother, chin pointed slightly upwards; he had kicked off his sheets and lay sprawled in his blue boxers. I covered him up, up Jesse. Kissed them both on the forehead, first one, then the other. And the sense that I was there to watch over them, that they slept such untroubled, exposed sleep because they knew they were safe made the horror momentarily recede.

I slipped open the glass doors at the front of the house; you could hear the ocean from here; *boom*, a pause; then *boom*. I was going to go for a walk in the cold sand but just out beyond the jacaranda bush, I felt the presence of something that unsettled me.

What *is* this horror?

A horror of losing a life that I cherish? That someone will take it away? That circumstances will take it away? That I will do something to destroy it. (It takes years to build a good life: a long weekend to wreck it.) Or this an *inherited* horror? A scared-of-the-dark horror: a million years of things trying to eat you, a sensation, understandably enough, not easily dispelled by turning on the light.

Excerpt from My Life With Tolstoy | David Gilmour

The Russians (naturally!) have a name for this bout of middle-of-the-night terror. They call it Sparrow Nights. Turgenev mentions it in *First Love*; near the end of Chekhov's *A Dreary Story* a renowned professor wakes up after midnight in a state of inexplicable fear. But of what?

"I was possessed by unaccountable animal terror, and I cannot understand why I was so frightened; was it that I wanted to live, or that some new unknown pain was in store for me."

What could it be, I wondered, this *"unknown pain"* in store for me?

FATHER

Robert DiPardo

You look up
from the paper
just in time
to see me,

and I can't help
but see you:

the sun going down
behind you, throwing
bars across your back.

UNTITLED | Julia Breckenreid (vol. 123, no. 2 1999)

I BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER

Jeannine Pitas

I began in the month of falling leaves – golden, soft and warm. The plaid green uniform perfectly pressed; the Peter Pan collar that my grandmother had so lovingly starched. She'd been born to iron, it seemed. First grade with Sister Maurice, the ancient who'd taught you 30 years before, who let us draw each day after lunch, who played "The Farmer and the Dell" with us in the parking lot. My classmates snickering as I made The Sign of the Cross every five minutes. "She has a nervous habit," the teachers told you. "Try to stop that, okay?" I nodded in silence, but still crossed myself in secret. How could they know that this little prayer was the only thing keeping us safe from the flames?

First Holy Communion. The perfect white dress, my veiled golden curls, dearest Jesus, come into my heart. The pearl ring you gave me, the jewel I wore with pride each day until my finger grew, and I had to wear it on my pinkie, and I lost it somewhere in the mud on a Girl Scout camping trip. Years passed before I finally told you, my stomach churning, my hands quavering. "It's okay, but try to be more careful next time." I couldn't believe that you weren't really mad.

Children's Choir rehearsals: Dona Nobis Pacem, Whole World in His Hands. Sister Antonita, the music teacher. The question she posed when I turned 13: "Have you ever thought about becoming a sister?" For months I meditated. To be one of them – a big black swallow, praying with hands stretched up to the sky. I used to believe that they really were birds, that if I became one of them I'd finally grow wings. But then I discovered that they were just ostriches; wings present but useless, feet forever fastened to the cold stone floor.

Halloween costumes. Each year I was a Polish Gypsy, covered in flowers and jewels. "Mom, couldn't I be something different this year?" "You ought to be grateful for what you've got." School plays. The night before Alice in Wonderland (I was the Ace of Spades) when the eighth grade boys locked me out on the playground. It was snowing, and after two hours – after the show – the janitor let me in. Your disappointment – "Where on earth were you?" My thick, swollen silence. No answer seemed right.

I Began in September | Jeannine Pitas

Parent-Teacher Conferences. Report card night. The early-November day when I saw the list outside the office - the whole school ranked by average. My name at the top: 97%. Your measured words: "Good work, well done. . . But you still have three more points to go." Christmas concerts. Basketball games. From the last row your sharp ears heard every missed note; from the sidelines your stern eyes saw every dropped ball. The same old dictum. "You need more practice. A lot more practice." I nodded, then looked away. How could I tell you that I did much better, really much better on the days when you weren't there?

Unraveled friendship bracelets. Lost baseball cards. Nicole Malinowski, with the four younger brothers and the mother who cried. She never gave me her new address when she finally moved away. Eighth grade class trip: Washington, DC. Mother's fear: "She's too young; she'll get lost." Your response: "She's going, and that's that." The first day of kindergarten: my blue dress and green coat, my pink Barbie lunch box, your strong, heavy hand clasping mine. "Only as far as the office, Dad." You let me go, and off I went. I knew you were still watching, but I didn't look back.

A BIRD
A.F. Moritz

How soft and shining its head, how mild its eye
unless you look closely. Then the inert innocence,
never vanishing, will shift and flicker, changing by turns
to remorselessness in wait. She watches it watch,
tilt its head, and dive from branch to branch
and to the ground and back - driven, she's heard,
by hunger. But the freedom of its figuring
is clear in its glance: she sees that it could wait
rather than feed, could choose another twig, any,
to dart at, could chirp now, or now. She sees it decide,
it's a creature all will. And though covered crown to hip
in feathers, it's naked too. It goes through the day naked,
inventing whims, squabbles, poses of beauty. She's read
that many starved in the nest: the strongest, this one,
outgrew the others and more and more could seize
whatever the parents brought, until behind it
the weak ones were silent. But now it's antic and thoughtless.
It's had no trouble forgetting, unless the way
it welcomes spaces, throwing its body open in the air,
is a form of remembrance. She's fifteen. Later, she thinks.
Time enough later to be a doctor, a mother.

MURDER MYSTERIES

Misha Teramura

I.

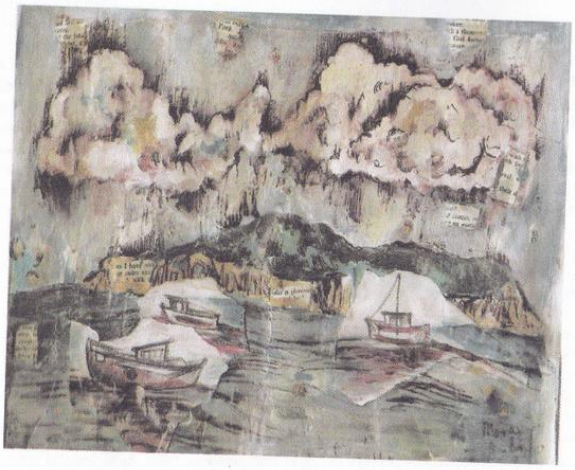
When we were children, we liked to play at murder mysteries. Hiding in the attic by candlelight, dressed in grownup clothes (black dress pants and long white gloves–too big) with stolen jewelry for the girls, and inventing knotty, broken histories of illicit love affairs, phantom pregnancies, aborted babies, and "a substantial inheritance". We'd draw chalk silhouettes and "discover" bloody butcher knives which we'd steal from mothers' kitchen drawers or fathers' basement toolboxes and record each other's fingerprints with marker ink. We'd play at evidence, at deduction, at interrogation and get into such tearful denials and violent fistfights that someone would knock over the candle and almost start the house on fire. Oh, what fun we had.

II.

Do you remember, love, the time we went camping up north that one July? How one night we took the path that went through the dark trees to the lake under the pretense of a late night canoe ride? The beach was bare and dark that night save for the quivering circle of our flashlight. I remember you had me half-undressed on the damp wood picnic table when I made you stop and look out onto the lake. At that time of night, all you can see is the tall black silhouette of the forest that encircles us in the nest of natural darkness, and at whose centre lies the vast, cold, black lake. On most nights, the lake is invisible, sometimes revealed by the dimmest reflection of stars across its skin of ink, though more often sensed only by the vague unseen threat of deep black water. However, that night, as we looked out onto the lake, we could see an electric light just below the surface, turning on and off. But it wasn't just a mechanical tick-tock flashing but an uneven, wild, desperate flashing. I remember, though I couldn't see your face, hearing the fear in your voice; the faint, idle questions asked almost for decorum; or, the unconvinced assurance that it was probably nothing while your hand never left my bare thigh. As we watched, though, the light faded more and more into the dark lake, so gradually that we eventually couldn't discern anything in the black expanse of water and trees and started to wonder whether we'd seen anything at all.

III.

"It was me," he said with tears in his eyes and holding the bloody knife in his hand and none of us had the heart to tell him we all knew it was a suicide. And now he says we did it? Oh, what a pity.



COMMISSION 1 | Julienne Lottering (vol. 130, no. 1 2005-2006)

A VERSION OF FIELD

Katie Jordan

for Justin

Bound by the elbows, they resort to the culprit
fog quieting the wet tongues of grass --
blanket of ether. Frost a distant concept

as they lay down their threaded story
adjacent to the brass bones of the goal posts.
Paying no mind to the dawn dropping

in a swan dive, mistaking the early morning
house lights for blinking stars. And the cars,
in them the buckled and faithful,

drive to Sunday mass - accidental witnesses
to the man with Achilles' hip, thigh, foot, heel,
clunky and naked, the small woman

with ribs like pines under snow.
A flurry of bloodsuckers catch
a whiff of abandon on their flesh.

THE CARTOGRAPHER SINGS OUR COUNTRY
Curated by Misha Teramura

THESE PARTS ARE
INTIRELY UNKNOWN

It is very uncertain
whither this part is
Sea or Land

There is not the least knowledge
of these Parts

A Nation Named
SERPENTS

[National Map Collection 116793, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa]

TASTING PAINT
Claire Marie Stancek

A man is painting the stairwell walls.
He breathes and breathes and sometimes coughs
a short cough. Inside the wide sound
of rolling paint are narrow sounds,
many tiny snaps. They
remind me of my own spit
snapping quietly in my mouth
against my teeth and tongue.

The milk that sits underneath spoons in old
bowls has grown a brown skin; this, and the
ketchup-glupped plate, and the
pot in the sink caked with rice, and the
stale banana bread, and its
loose saran wrap, and the
orange spill now dry
fills me with bland despair.

I ask the man painting the stairwell walls
if he would like some coffee. His spectacles
are perfect circles on his round face. A white sheet
with speckles multicoloured and dull
cascades down the stairs. The man stands
on this sheet, in white overalls and stained hands.

I sit with a chipped mug and tilting
coffee and listen to the man breathing,
the paint roller snapping.

BLISTER PEARL
Zachary C. Irving

I was ordered, in high school shop,
to smash the front window
from the resident junker.

I came at the pane, mind set,
with a short hammer
and the purpose of a young Achilles.

The shatter-proof glass cracked
like the skin of a blustered ocean
then buckled to my hammer hand.

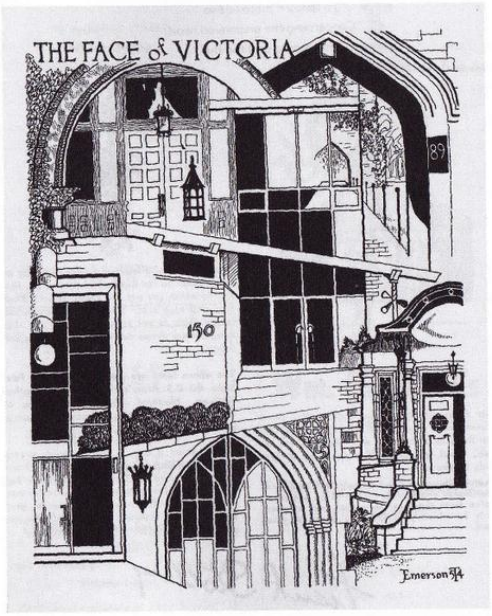
A shard thick as sand pierced
my finger and hunkered
down in warm flesh.

Years later the scar bubbled,
made like a volcano, and cradled
the glass in lieu of magma.

My body cased that foreign fleck
with a tough, white resin,
a smooth sphere

that I squeezed from the wound.
My skin opened, with the gape
of oyster chops, to reveal that the mess

of a billion flashes of evolution
has left that mollusk and I
to share the body that forms a pearl.



THE FACE OF VICTORIA | Unknown Artist (vol. 79, no. 1 1954)

CONVERSATIONS WITH PROFESSOR FRYE

Northrop Frye was both a professor at the University of Toronto and Chancellor of Victoria University. Born in Sherbrooke, Quebec in 1912, he received his primary and secondary education in Moncton, New Brunswick. He entered Victoria University at the University of Toronto as an undergraduate in 1929 and graduated with an honours degree in Philosophy and English in 1933. Following graduation he continued his studies; studying theology at Emmanuel College and was ordained in the United Church of Canada. He joined the Department of English in 1939 after receiving his M.A. from Merton College, Oxford. Frye went on to publish over thirty works, edit fifteen books, impact numerous Victoria alumnae and provide a great deal of support and encouragement to ACTA Victoriana editorial boards. Eighteen years after his death it is important on this journal's anniversary to remember one of its great influencers. In both 1981 and 1986 Prof. Frye sat down with inquisitive board members; the following compiles moments from these two interviews.

Sciences and the Humanities

ACTA: What is the role of experiment in the arts and how does it differ from experiment in the sciences?

FRYE: Well, the experiment in sciences, of course, is designed to be a repeatable experiment, that is, if it can be repeated by someone else then it becomes a basis for prediction and prediction is an extremely important element in the sciences. What [William] Blake meant by experiment was rather the attempt to make every work of art or imagination unique. Then it would operate less on Darwinian lines; that is, if the experiment had survival value then it would last.

ACTA: You are saying that scientific theories must be supported by the evidence of repeatable experiments. Is there anything analogous in art: can art be right or wrong?

FRYE: No, it can't be right or wrong, but as I say some works of art can have survival value. In Shakespeare's day most of the serious drama critics assumed that Ben Jonson was a much more serious artist than Shakespeare was and what happened was not that they were proven wrong, but simply that Jonson gradually faded off the stage except for one or two plays and Shakespeare

just stayed stuck in the stage and refused to budge.

ACTA: Why do the arts tend, as you out it, "to bring increasingly small areas into articulateness"?

FRYE: Well, that seems to be what has happened. The example that I give in "The Bridge of Language" is that there is no such thing as American literature, there is Mississippi literature and New England literature and Western literature. There is something vegetable about the creative imagination that needs a rather limited environment, and consequently you learn about America through its imagination, through its literature, by adding up these various regional writers, and the same thing has been emphatically true of Canada in the last twenty years. It's simply that the imagination can never be discarnate or dehumanized so as to take a sort of global perspective.

ACTA: You have said that the scientist *quantifies* his data while the poet *qualifies* his. Could you elaborate on this?

FRYE: Well, it's a matter of common knowledge, I think, that the work of the scientist may begin with the same sort of hunch or intuition that the work of the artist does. Still, he himself can't take it seriously until he has reduced it to some kind of mathematical formulation, some kind of equation. But for the poet or the painter the aim is to convey directly the essence of what was being seen, which is unique for everybody who sees it, and so can never be quantified. In science what you end with is something like a - b = 0; in literature what you end with is something like a = b. Although a and b are different things nevertheless they are asserted to be the same thing. It is that metaphorical imagination that gives you a sense of quality in the sense of the *whatness* of the thing.

ACTA: Scientific work is really a gamble; in the process of scientifically quantifying an institution it may happen that all of a sudden something works out wrong and you have to scrap years and years of work. Do you see anything analogous in the work of the artist?

FRYE: Oh yes. Yes. Balzac has a story called *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*, *The Unknown Masterpiece*, of a man who worked all his life on what to everybody else was just a meaningless tangle of lines. There have been all kinds of examples of that in the history of the arts; although Balzac wasn't consciously prophetic, he didn't realize that this was the kind of thing people would be looking at one hundred years after his day. But it is true that artists may mistake their own abilities and waste years and years trying to do things that the inner voice inside them doesn't want to do.

ACTA: In 1938 Einstein said that "Physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and are not, however it may seem, uniquely determined by the external world". Did Einstein's recognition of the fictional, or, if you like, mythical status of physical concepts open up a new common ground between the activity of the scientist and the activity of the poet?

FRYE: Oh, I think so, yes, and I think Einstein knew that. He was really saying that science is a mental fiction just as the arts are and that the question of what's *really* there underneath the construct we put on it is only a kind of work consensus. If a painter looks at railway tracks stretching out to the horizon he will see them meeting at the horizon. But, as Margaret Avison says, "a train doesn't run pigeon-toed". You wouldn't get on the train if you knew that was *really* true; so that what is really there is a matter of a working consensus. Similarly, you can prove mathematically the atomic construction of protons and neutrons and electrons inside an object like this desk, but as a matter of ordinary social working consensus you keep bumping into it.

ACTA: When you study physics you must first spend years and years learning the math before you can really approach physics. There is, so to speak, a language barrier to cross before your studies can begin. Do you see anything analogous for the study of literature?

FRYE: It seems to me that the human race has developed two languages, the language of words and the language of numbers. Mathematics is increasingly the primary language of the sciences so you can't study the sciences until you have studied the language of which they are written and with which the scientist thinks. Similarly, you can't write until you've studied language to the point at which you know what you're doing when you use words.

ACTA: Of course most people learn a language when they are two or three years old. Is there something beyond that which you must learn to prepare you for work in criticism?

FRYE: Oh yes. The reason why we have compulsory education and compel children to read and write and count is that we have to have, in this vey complex civilization, a world of docile and adjusted and obedient citizens. That is, you read *in order* to read traffic signs and you count *in order* to make out your income tax. But if you are going to use these languages with any freedom or any responsibility or independence there's a long process ahead of you yet.

ACTA: Some people seem to fear the intrusion of any kind of scientific ways of working into art or into criticism. Have you encountered this?

FRYE: Of course there's always fear, and the fear is more on the part of the people who have spent their lives with pen and pencil. There are certain aspects of literary criticism that you need a computer for and there is no point in running away from the fact; it doesn't make literary criticism dehumanized. In fact, the thing I've been attacking all my life is the notion that the humanities have a monopoly on what is genuinely human. That is an illusion by which certain type of humanists try to fortify themselves but it just doesn't work.

ACTA: You have said that literature, unlike history does not tell us what happened but rather what happens. That is to say, it reveals the universal forms of human experience in and through the representation of particular experiences. Now science also relates particular experiences to general laws. Does this mean that science mediates between the particular and the universal in human experience?

FRYE: Well, I would think that there was certainly something more than an analogy connecting the two things. From something that goes on in the synapses of a rat learning a maze you can learn something about the way the nervous system operates. Faulkner can confine his energies to an unpronounceable county in Mississippi and get the Nobel prize in Sweden because there seems to be a law of literature that the more particular and specific your subject matter the more

universal its appeal is.

ACTA: By the time a person gets to university he or she has either chosen to go into the humanities or the sciences. Do you think that it is possible or worthwhile to get a joint humanistic and scientific education today?

FRYE: I think that what it is essential to do is to get the feeling that wherever you happen to be is the centre of all knowledge and that no matter what it is you're not excluding anything else; you're right in the middle of it, you're right where the action is. One doesn't need to be in a hurry about establishing connections with things that seem most remote from perfectly normal for a person to devote their energies to the study of literature or the study of a science and realize that for the time being their knowledge of what they're not studying is a bit hazy but still relevant. It's when you start saying that it's not relevant that you've really had it. If you realize that it is relevant then there's nothing to stop you from branching out into it.

Popular Culture

ACTA: Some people would say that popular culture arises only out of its definition. Could you distinguish between popular culture and high culture?

FRYE: The distinction between popular culture and high-brow culture assumes that there are two different kinds of people, and I think that's extremely dubious. I don't see the virginal purity of high-brow literature trying to keep itself unsullied from the pollutions of popular culture. Umberto Eco wasn't any less a semiotics scholar for writing a best-selling romance. There isn't a qualitative distinction. It just doesn't exist. And I think that the tendency on the part of the mass media as a whole is to abolish this distinction.

ACTA: But most people see high art as having a more overtly instructive value attached to it.

FRYE: Yes, well they do. I don't know how one defines a classic except in truly pragmatic terms as

(in literature, for example) a work that simply won't go away. Shakespeare was a mixture of popular culture and high-brow in his day. That is, some of his audience was made up of courtly people or students at the Inns of Court, and some of them were patrons of the popular theatre. People like Ben Johnson were often regarded as more serious by the high-brow. But Shakespeare just sat down on the stage and refused to budge, and that's why he's a classic, he just won't go away.

ACTA: So you don't see popular culture as being distinguished by a certain transience - that it's what is here today and gone tomorrow?

FRYE: A certain amount of it follows trends, but there's nothing very sinister about that - it's just something that happens.

ACTA: Do you see any place in university for the study of popular culture? Is it something that students and faculty are made to recognize – or want to recognize?

FRYE: Of course you're talking to a literary critic. The formulas of popular literature are the same formulas which underlie James Joyce or Henry James. I've always said, for example, that an elementary school teacher does no good telling a youngster that the battered old movie he saw on television the night before is inferior to the kind of thing he's going to study now, That is, if he prefers the battered old movie, the better teaching technique is to point out the structural similarities between what he's interested in and what he's supposed to be studying. And you find out that they're much the same structures.

ACTA: Do you seen the media age as evoking a new mythology, one which helps us to come to terms with the advances of science and with our new conception of the universe?

FRYE: A myth is really a structure of human concerns, of human anxieties and hopes and ambitions. As such, it is not a science, so it really can't be set aside by science or have very much contact with science. There are certain types of myth that develop certain cosmologies which do come into contact with science and have to be replaced by scientific explanations. But the pure

myth is a literary structure - not pseudo-scientific information.

I see the media age as reshaping the old myths - there aren't any new ones. No matter what the mechanical devices employed, mythologies are transmitting words and picture which is what the human race has transmitted since Palaeolithic times.

PRO PATRIA MORI

Northrop Frye

published in ACTA Victoriana 1933

The number of letters received by the Editor, including a few contributions, congratulatory and condemnatory, on the result of Victoria's discussion of the Oxford Debate on their relation to Kind and Country have made it obvious that the University and its alumni look to Acta for a formulation of the undergraduate attitude. At the request of the Associate Editor, in whose hands this issue is, I shall as a contributor endeavour to bring out the leading indications of the resolution: "That this House will under no circumstances fight for its King and Country"...

What the motion signified, as I conceive it, was that there is a substantial group at Victoria who are ready to push a desire for peace to its logical and inevitable conclusion of refusing to break peace, and who believe that anything short of direct action in this regard is hypocrisy or moral cowardice. That a concrete statement should meet with such a roar of outraged protest, both here and in England, when the mouthing of pious abstractions in generalized terms meaning... the same thing, would have been greeted by unctuous approval, strike this group as absurd and vicious. (This group) gets down to brass tacks with its real opponents, who admit that war is an unmitigated and purposeless horror, but that as long as the status quo in economics, which implies a periodicity in annihilation wars, is kept alive by Fascist or other forms of dictatorship, there is always danger, and a war of defence probable for more peaceably-minded nations.

Now on strictly defensive grounds the pacifist argument begins to lack conviction... There is, of course, no such thing as an enemy. Even in the frenzy of 1914 people were only able to persuade themselves that they really ought to be fighting Germans by inventing an imaginary abstraction of savagery called a "Hun" and saying that this was a typical German. But while there are no enemies, any man or group of men who is in our country with hostile intent is a criminal, and has to be treated as such. That is, he must be shot down in cold blood. That this shooting down of a human life is a hideous insensate butchery is quite true, and that fact must be faced with set teeth, both in wartime and in peace. The soldier of another country in our own domain must be as calmly and cynically killed as a noxious insect. That attitude of detached calmness and total lack of either sadism or of patriotic zeal which has been retained by all the invincible military conquerors – Cromwell, Marlborough, Wellington, Napoleon – if adopted by a general populace, would be

similarly invincible. As no man of really high intelligence ever goes in for a military career, and as every army is well-known to be a masterpiece of inefficiency, a military attack, whether Japanese, French, German or Russian, could not stand up two weeks against a handful of people who were unhurried and unafraid and could keep their heads. The fact that England has always taken her wars so much more casually than France or Germany, due to her insular position, has been the reason for her easy supremacy.

But what has the phrase "For Kind and Country" got to do with such an attitude? A defensive war is fought for the safety of society, and follows the maxim "Greater love that no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." King and Country, however, represents a propogandic and deliberately induced hysteria which leads people, mad with the last desperation of fear, to calm themselves suddenly and then hurl themselves in front of a Juggernaut... in obedience to the high priests of the army and the state. Bright uniforms, a thumping rhythmic music, impassioned speeches from hundreds of recruiting sergeants, including the heads of educational and governmental institutions, blazing posters, a frothing press, all scream the ideal of "King and Country." To say that this is not an appeal to intelligence would be putting it mildly. No state would dare to attempt conscription on the perfectly reasonable excuse that the interests of the nation demanded a warm-water port on the Persian Gulf or some trade concessions in the West Indies. Still less would it appeal to the decency and humanity of individuals, as the maxim above quoted does...

War appeals to young men, because it is fundamentally auto-eroticism. That is why the reaction of the press to the attitude of students has been concentrated on emphasizing their youth and immaturity. We will leave psychologists to examine just how much hatred and envy of youth is concentrated in that reaction. We merely point to the fact that the confidence they express in our responding to another war springs, not from an attitude of despairing horror, as it ought, but from one signified by a wide and toothsome grin. Our task just now is to show that "King and Country" represents the screaming of the professional patriot who is a criminal in peace time, and more of a nuisance than a Hindenburg Line in war, as any Englishman who had anything to do with the late war can tell you. No (one) objects to dying for his friends, or even for a great cause, as a martyr or witness. But to assume that the call to arms of "Your Kind and Country need you" is imperative upon the highest ideals of humanity is an insult to the King and a sneer at the Country.

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori. The propaganda of the war was ample evidence that if the Horatian line as it stands is true, it would be equally true without the pro patria. The abridged form, perhaps, contains all the wisdom of the ages. But no Christian can believe that, and very few non-Christians are ready in cold blood to act upon its logical reference.

DID YOU SLEEP? | Blair Prentice (vol. 128 2003-2004)

ONIONS
Robert DiPardo

You brought her some tears
three bulbs and
you sat with her and she still talked
about how nice the lawn looks
since I was over
seven bags
at least

The cellar's cold, you said, and
onions keep nicely down there
six left so that
when I'm over
you can warm my soul
in the oven and
we can sit around
doing nothing all day and talk
about how nice the tree looks
and cloth birds whose song
is the tea kettle

that would be nice and,
in fact, so are a lot of things
so let's agree to stay alive
if only to hear real birds
while there are any and
hold on
to the rest of those onions
six
my God
that's a lot of tears
to be holding on to.

ROOT CELLAR
Walter Kmeicek

Waiting, in this root cellar, where
last season's harvest laid in store
for harsh desolation--white winter,
are dusty wine bottles.

The glass remains solid, upright, true
to form, amid a putrefaction of slaughter
of legumes wasted away, rotted into black
lumps of charred ash.

Winter has passed, it has cleansed earth
with a cruel white bridal veil, creating
a maid where there was an autumnal widow,
black to white to green.

A wasted surplus, in fear of calamity,
now comically lies like a house warming
prank steaming with fumes,
or else a skeleton poking through
a spring cleaning long overdue.

DID YOU SLEEP? | Blair Prentice (vol. 128 2003-2004)

THE MASTURB-IAN CANDIDATE
Chris Berube

My first campaign for public office could not have been more disastrous - in ways both foreseeable and not. Thankfully, it was for an office of little consequence, as political offices, I have come to appreciate, consistently tend to be.

I had just started grade seven at a new school, and was at a loss for how to make friends. Not only was I new, but I had imprudently chosen to attend an institution with students who had been there since kindergarten, and had already developed their own circles of friends, their own vernaculars, their own customs.

My first mistake was the assumption of the infallibility of my mother's advice. After finding out at a parent teacher meeting that student council elections were forthcoming, my mother decided that this was the best possible way for me to make new friends.

"Think about it! People will see your face on posters! Of course they'll know who you are after that!"

Little did she realize that, for one, when developing acne for the first time, having one's face literally postered around their school is the least desirable thing possible.

Also, unpopular people running for student government are widely held in low regard - slightly below kids that bring food to school with strange odours, albeit slightly ahead of those kids to whom Dungeons and Dragons was considered a suitable form of recreation.

As it had happened, my first two friends at this new school were seriously kickass at DND, meaning a hopeless run for student office could only help my stature.

Having selected a position - communications officer! - at random, and with no apparently applicable skills, I decided to put all of my puny energies towards becoming an elected official. In hindsight, I recognize four critical factors that truly sunk my campaign in its nascent stages:

My lack of interest, ability or even basic competency in communicating with other students. While I became excited by one part of the job description - I would be responsible for the morning announcements, an institution I had nothing but reverence for since a young age - the requirement to "engage students on a daily basis" was of no interest to me whatsoever.

My selection of campaign team. My mom became de facto campaign chairwoman thanks to her enthusiasm, and mass baking skills. While, she was, to say the least, out of touch with the

basic needs of pre-teens, at least she had some relevant skills. My sole buddies, Jacob and Suresh, were wildly inept choices as my top policy advisers. Being genuinely kind-hearted, they tended to endorse all of my terrible ideas, which might explain my strange disdain today for anyone who agrees with me. "A balloon! In the sky! With my name on it!" I would proclaim, as though a campaign blimp were a bold vision, instead of an impossible feature for a campaign with a fifteen dollar spending limit. And Jake and Suri would nod, and nod, and nod. And I would have to come to the heartbreaking, and eventual, conclusions on my own.

My mom served as the anti-Jake and Suresh, pushing my campaign in all kinds of practicable, but not necessarily smart, directions. My campaign slogan, "I'm Here For YOU", was her design, and solicited endless mockery from anyone I told it to. Similarly, my campaign posters - designed by Mom with love - were the object of physical vandalism, in no small part because they included my previous year's school photo, in which I looked constipated, cockeyed, or both. Suri and Jake loved her ideas, however, due to their general affability and their unwillingness to contradict anyone who provided the chocolate rice crispie squares for our campaign war room, which, coincidentally, doubled as my family living room.

The existence of a generally popular incumbent. While my other opponent - who was planning to step down from the prestigious title of Mathletics Team Captain if elected - matched, if not exceeded my own social ineptitude, the incumbent, a grade eight girl named Sarah, was miles ahead of me in every way. Aside from being a fixture among this school's social bourgeoisie - jocks, attractive people, et al - since kindergarten, her previous term had been marked by striking displays of mild competence, such as, you know, talking to people. Also, she was already wearing a bra, which certainly did not hurt her chances. It should be noted that, at several occasions, I considered voting for her, or rather, amending the ballot so that my vote was for "Sarah's bra".

But what most likely killed my campaign in its infancy was its general lack of purpose. While virtually all politicians have some semi-coherent reason for running for office - a compulsion to public service, or, more likely, a personal grudge - I had nothing but a vague sense

that my mom wanted me to run. When trying to quote-unquote "campaign" (i.e., hand chocolate rice crispie squares to strangers), I had no answer to the most basic question that ever came up - "so, why are you doing this, exactly"? Tragically, I found it perfectly acceptable to answer their questions of why with a resounding "why not?"

Needless to say, the campaign went poorly.

I spent the first four days of the ten day election cycle simply trying to secure the twenty signatures needed to appear on the ballot. My dreadful public demeanour did not sell a lot of new converts to my candidacy. My imbuements of candy and cookies were met with indifference by the ungrateful public, who could not get over my crippling social awkwardness when faced with even simple questions.

Example conversation:

"So, where'd you go to school before this?"

"Um, what? Oh, um...yeah...you know...in a classroom...a school with classrooms...you know how that is?"

"Do you have a speech impediment?"

"I don't know what that is."

For someone aspirant to become a communications officer, my inability to construct full sentences must have been a little galling.

The campaign dragged on until the final day. Assembly day. The day in which the candidates got to make their final impassioned pitch before the entire school.

That morning, I felt no hope that any speech could save my campaign. If MLK himself had run the kind of campaign I had just tried in his attempt for equal rights, I am confident African Americans would not have the franchise to vote today.

I arrived at school, certain that nothing could save me.

But then, as happens at these moments, providence intervened.

I arrived at school only to discover that Sarah's parents had pulled her out of the race, after her nascent smoking habit had become apparent to them.

Suddenly, I was a contender.

There remained a catch, however: in my despair, I had prepared nothing for my speech, thinking a contrite display of "sorry for wasting your time" could suffice. But now that the race was within my grasp, I had to whip something up.

I huddled with the campaign team at lunch, racking our brains about what was a "cool" thing to say.

I figured, probably correctly, that DND speak, or a discussion on the relative merits of "X-Men: The Animated Series" versus "Batman: The Animated Series" wouldn't do. I had to speak their language.

"I know!" Suri nearly jumped out of his seat. "You can tell them you're going to masturbate!"

"What's that?" I inquired, genuinely unaware of what havoc this new semantic nugget would wreak when uttered before a group of eight hundred pre-teens.

"Well, I heard my brother say it once, and I asked him what it was, and he told me it was a cool dance."

Unaware of the disastrous miscalculation I was about to make, I accepted the idea as a good one, and made it not just part of my speech, but the entire damned thing.

I attest, to this day, that it was an error of good intentions, a by-product of the worst home-schooled sexual education in history.

Sure, I knew what masturbation was through a glorious process of self-discovery, but the word itself was alien to me.

I do not fault myself for this stunning error in judgement.

I might be inclined to fault Suri or Jacob. I don't think they were trying to humiliate me. I'm confident they were just as clueless on the matter as I was. Either way, I was taking advice from the wrong people.

Later that day, though overwhelmed with nerves, I nevertheless stood in front of the school, and promised, I did not realize at the time, to perform a sex act in front of eight hundred people every morning over the radio.

Given this development, things went pretty well after that, considering.

As should be expected, I and my campaign manager were called to the principal's office to evaluate the situation.

Miraculously, the principal found room in her heart to allow me to remain on the ballot. Apparently, she believed my mother's explanation that "well, the boy hasn't learned many of these things yet", because, well, no one TRYING to say masturbate at a school assembly would then spend four hours crying in the principal's office after someone told them what the word ACTUALLY meant.

I stayed home the day of the vote, overwhelmed with humiliation. Certainly, I had said something that damned me to teasing and mockery far worse that what would befall me if I had simply apologized. I could not bear the social mockery any more than I could bear the idea of hearing that I had, despite an event of divine fortune, lost a popularity contest.

As I would find out, life has a way of rewarding our most cowardly actions.

Apparently my absence the next day prompted some students to speculate that I had been suspended for my public display of blue language, an idea that did not stand up to basic logic when one considers that I was somehow still on the ballot. The rumour quickly became an intersocial fact.

I had been suspended and, as such, was a badass.

I lost the election by seven votes, largely powered by my accidentally-cultivated maverick image.

It was, and remains, the most bittersweet day of my life.

DEVELOPMENT AS DEPENDENCY

Zexi Wang

on sunday mornings
we bury ourselves in smoke and cheap cane liquor
dirty flip flops and i have visions of
running in my underwear, through fields of desiccated maize
hot and sick under the equatorial sun

sometimes i'll go
put on my only dress
(the colour of spilled pomegranates
staining my thighs)
and walk, losing my footing in the
soft clay road, only to find myself

in a pew, staring
at the sweat-stained back of
jeremiah's good shirt --
the curve of his neck
estranging me from jesus

on sundays when
jeremiah asks for order,
in white lab coats,
on tarmac roads, and from
a house of cement
i dream of disorder, of
sinking my toes into the red mud
and being lost
in the hunch of his shoulders.

THE SOUND OF FOOTFALL

Diliana Popova

Across the water, a thousand lights burn
My dampened forehead
Across the water, the night aches for me.
I flicker like cold breath on a flame,
My hands clenching this heavy air

Across the water, the constant wave
Sends me its empty threat
My form in the sand
The shore is tired and like crumpled linen
It creases to the soft weight

I think back now to the ribbon red
Streams down the worn cobblestone
The whispered memory
Bathes my mind in smells

It has flown through you too --
Taking you in its current;
Making me remember that you were forgotten
We once burned together on this sand
Dancing to the songs of those ancient winds
Marching to the stiff drums of our chests

I warned you of the water
That it eats through rock but that it passes
It passes like pain passes when felt too much
You are on the floor amongst the tomes
Amongst the bookmarked words
And dog-eared histories

The wax melts on the gold and I
Can see the lips of future strangers
The nights of sighs that hold their
Meanings like cracked vessels --
Leaking slowly and imperceptibly
Becoming empty before long

I wonder how many like you
Will call me theirs
Will grow on me like green forest vines
And how many like you will be taken
Downstream to some salty sea or ocean
To some other shore and some other sand
What is carved in wood is not carved in stone
What is not blood is only water

I feel the warm steam rising from my skin
To the clouds
Taking some of me with it
One day I will come back here and remember
And then my wiser eye will fall
On that horizon
On the bloody pavement
On the sound of distant footfall
On a vast silhouette

And perhaps across the water
I will see not a thousand lights
But one

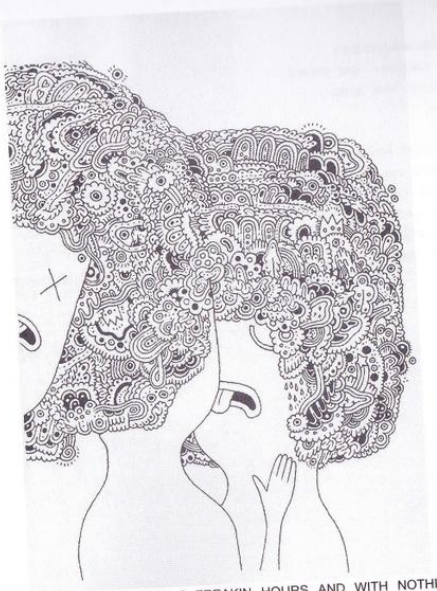
One that glows for my eyes only
One that only lights my night
One that only sees me burning

MATCHES

C. Maddison

30 Redbird Strike-Anywhere's
nesting in a matchbox, and printed
on the cardboard what looks
like a swallow,

turning as it might before
it dives, whisking the air
on its back and forth
across a field, quick
like wildfire, racing
as if scared it might
flicker out.



"ALL I DID WAS SIT IN A ROOM FOR 8 FREAKIN HOURS AND WITH NOTHING TO DO EXCEPT WATCH MEET THE FOCKERS OVER AND OVER AND OVER" | Michael DeForge (vol. 131, no.1 2006-2007)

Chris Berube

I was in an airport a while ago, and I had nothing to do, really, because my plane was going to be delayed another six hours, so I started flipping through a magazine about science and animals and things that were related.

The cover promoted an interview inside with a professor of physics from some university in New York. He said he knew something about the universe, which I was inclined to believe, since, isn't the process of having knowledge all about understanding your own, contained microcosm in the universe? I understood something, I thought, though this professor claimed that he understood everything.

The article said the professor was a heretic, because he believed that there was more than one universe. In fact, there was an infinity of them, where every possible existence was played out, ad nauseam, for all time.

If the universe was infinite, he said, then our perceived universe must exist, in its present form, with every possible alteration, somewhere else, out in space, beyond our reach. This was the logical conclusion, he said.

There must be a universe, somewhere, where I was a doctor, or a lawyer, or I had three heads.

If the universe was infinite, this must be happening somewhere. Every combination must be tried, at infinity, forever.

But what if one of those universes found a way to find the other ones?

Well, yes, he said, and there are universes where this plays out too.

The professor expressed the only kind of closure a person could have, really, when considering infinity.

"Trying to imagine what lies in these infinities will drive a person mad," the professor concluded. "It's not worth it."

I take a far more hopeful approach.

I had been working in an office at the time, an office where people filed papers and reports, and important somethings were accomplished. Every day I passed by people in the most contained spaces imaginable. Strangely, this is where I thought about infinity the most.

I delivered mail, and sometimes fixed the printer. I wasn't cut out for important somethings, I guess.

Throughout the neatly arranged rows, I would see people, hunched over their computers, in the square where their lives lived. The whole process was reductive, and tiny, and crushing, and sad. For me, anyway. Everyone else was turned inward.

The most inward of everyone was Andy.

Andy sat at his desk, or rather, filled his chair, and gawked. He never moved much. For a time, I thought it was a figment of my imagining, but I later came to appreciate that my observation was, in fact, correct - others verified it, and I probably would have guessed it anyway.

"Does he do anything else?" a person would ask me, and I would say I didn't know, and we would chuckle.

Every day, or so it seemed, but it seemed pretty likely, Andy would sit there, and, all day, stare at his own page on Facebook.

I had never seen him switch over to someone else's page, or another website, or anything else.

There he sat, each day, looking deeply into his own poolish eyes, and doing nothing, save looking. Not even looking, for that would at least require some level of engagement. He just sat, a mirror of himself, frozen in a smile.

My own temerity meant that I never engaged Andy, but I would pass him by, and once in a while, he would look over, and see me, and bring his lips together, as if he was about to say something, smack them, and then he would turn back around.

One day, the day I returned to work after I was introduced to infinity, I discovered a type of romanticism in Andy that only I could see.

I could start to imagine that his image was a ruse. As soon as I turned my back, as soon as everyone turned their back, I imagined that Andy would spring back into consciousness, and would do something, anything, with some ferocity of purpose.

Maybe he would write a love letter; maybe the greatest love letter ever written, of eloquence and poetry that no person could possibly comprehend until they have seen it. Like a new colour, it would shock their senses and open their thinking in a way they would never have before imagined.

He hid a typewriter, that he had rigged to a revolving fake desk. If he felt someone coming, Andy could rapidly flip it over, revealing a computer with nothing but his smiling visage and vacant eyes.

"Better they think I'm a dupe," Andy would consider, quietly, "then see my work before its realization".

The letter was intended for a girl, a girl he had known from his childhood, with light brown hair and auburn eyes, now so remote from him, that, one day, he planned to travel the world to find her again, and to present her with the letter.

Or maybe, he was a con man, sent here on a long-term mission by the most criminal of all gangsters, to understand the most subtle intricacies of our operation, before one day, with no warning, Andy would be gone, and the company savings with him. His lethargy was a front, as it was in all of my imaginings of what Andy did behind my back.

Or maybe, once every day, he would write something, poetry of such remarkable insight, that he shred it up as soon as it was finished, a flicker in the darkness, a lighthouse that blips on once every day, beguiling in its pale light, but always out of reach.

He would write a poem, as if his skin would come off and his soul would be on display for the entire world. He would write

Tho I am an artist,
I use not canvas, stone or felt,
I am an unproductive artist,
Tho my feelings deeply felt,
I feel something intrinsically,
Then feel it never more,
A flicker from the lighthouse,
Of a vast and different shore.

There was something so romantic to that idea, that he was creating for the purpose of creating, but then never creating for me or anyone else. He was creating for the world, who would never judge him or deride him or tell him he didn't feel what he felt in a "genuine way". There were crevices I would never fathom. And I loved that. And I loved that in him.

Maybe the only way to be romantic is to consider the complexities and the depths that will never exist in a particular person. A shaft of light that cuts deep into the core of a person and never stops moving, growing, expanding.

That's the best way to think about someone, I've come to realize. How their possibilities are constantly growing, and expanding, their light encompassing the entire universe.

TO THE EDITORS AT PENTHOUSE FORUM (SAPPHIC)

Rebecca Păpucaru

Brutal enough was the first. On the cold floor,
by my shortest hair, taking me square against my
coffee table, pulling and prodding came he
but in passion missed

by a mile my porcelain vase. Off the marble
it slid, cracking his poor pate open. Vowed the
next, "I'll enter via the terrace." If I
only had remembered to

open the gate. Wanting me to resist while
I was letting him in he pounced and jabbed
like a kitten. No time to warn him that the
railing had come loose.

TO BE AVOIDED

A.F. Moritz

A lie was told about you
by someone's heart that loved you -
that you were self-consecrated to sorrow,
promiscuous with fears
which tremble the leaves to a green duller
at the light's deepening every afternoon.
A girl to be avoided. The faithless one.

And so he let you go to whoredom
with the lap of waves, the vanishings
of all creatures, and the kiss of lepers
in stony mountains, and the famous
beaches of night penetrated you alone,
with their exceeding grains, original seed,
laying their black sides against you.

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

Mina Bani is a Literary Studies student at the University of Toronto. She wishes more people found Kafka funny.

Chris Berube
"C is for courageous
H is for humble
R is for rambunctious
I is for incorrigible
S is for smile!
C-H-R-I-S!
CHRIS!"

Eric Foley is a recent graduate of U of T in English and Literary Studies. He has traveled to over thirty countries on six continents, and is currently building a log cabin outside of Bancroft, Ontario. His work has previously been published in The Hart House Review, The Trinity Review, The Varsity, and Misunderstandings Magazine.

Robert "Gladstone" DiPardo was born 13 June, 1987 in St. Catharines, Ontario. He attended Humber College, earning a diploma in chemical engineering, and currently studies English part-time at the University of Toronto. His favourite authors are Hawthorne and Dostoevsky. His first published poems are in this volume.

David Gilmour was born in London, Ontario in 1949. He holds an Honours BA in French, a B.Ed., and did graduate work at Victoria College, studying Comparative Literature under Northrop Frye. He has two children, Maggie and Jesse, and lives in Toronto with his wife, Tina Gladstone and her daughter Amelia. He is currently the Pelham Edgar Visiting Professor at Victoria College, University of Toronto.

Zachary C. Irving edits the Trinity Review, the literary journal of Trinity College at the University of Toronto and is grateful to be part of the Philosophy department's Socrates Project. He has been published in CV2, Existere, The Hart House Review, ACTA Victoriana, and The Trinity Review, and has been privileged to workshop with Al Moritz and John Reibetanz.

Katie Jordon is in her fourth and final year at U of T, studying English. Her poetry has appeared in Quills, Other Voices and the Trinity Review.

Walter Kmiecik attends the University of Toronto, and is currently studying to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree as an English and Philosophy Specialist. He grew up in Mississauga, Ontario, but has been influenced far more by the countryside of north eastern Ontario, where he spent innumerable summer vacations and weekends during his formative years at a family cottage getaway.

Alanna Lipson lives in Toronto.

Adam Long is a fourth year Victoria University student, completing a double major in English and book & media studies. He has had the privilege of workshopping with David Gilmour. Soon he will spend a lifetime writing in a cabin in the North with his wife, Rachel, and daughter, Sloane.

Albert F. Moritz was born in Niles, Ohio, came to Toronto in 1974 after completing studies at Marquette University. He is an accomplished poet who has worked as a newspaper reporter and film columnist, an advertising copywriter and executive, an editor and publisher, and latterly as a part-time university teacher.

Rebecca Leah Pâpucaru's poetry has appeared in Prism International. Her poetry and prose will appear in forthcoming issues of The Antigonish Review, Existere, and The Nashwaak Review, and in the United States, Caesura and The Emerson Review. This is her first appearance in Acta Victoriana.

Jeannine M. Pitas can usually be found in the basement office of Victoria College pretending to read, occasionally preparing lessons for her Spanish 100 TA-ship, and playing the green piano. She is thrilled to be published in Acta Victoriana.

Diliana Popova was born and raised in Bulgaria, and moved to Toronto with her family in 1996. She is currently completing her studies in English Literature and Art History at the University of Toronto. When not writing short biographies in third person, Diliana walks down the winding paths of verse.

Claire Marie Stancek grew up in Tillsonburg, Ontario where there were many crickets. She admires Nabokov's skyscapes, Woolf's intuition, Stein's wit and Milton's enjambment. One day, Claire Marie hopes to be a swinger of birches.

Zexi Wang is in her third year of a double major in Anthropology and Peace and Conflict studies. She (sometimes) likes Foucault, but (always) hates colonialism.