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Acta Victoriana CXL I

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Although the names and numbers that appear on our screen twice yearly seem to dance and tremble in the hands of our capricious mistress, Fortune, the following pages taste familiarly of journals past. Always, new voices hover in the delirious spaces between absurdity and angst, the backward glance of nostalgia and the over-hasty premonition of death, emotional exhibitionism and the brilliance of pure, unmediated intimacy. This winter, we present to you an effervescent and luminous chorus of our favourites among these sensory and intellectual delights. We aim not to represent the singularity of Victoria College or the student experience, but invite you to encounter each piece, and this assembled whole, in its here and now – however that may apply to you.

Ella Wilhelm

It is now winter, officially and [seemingly] irrevocably. The cold is getting to the bits in our bones that hold nothing but marrow, the spaces between our ribs. So we offer you these poems and these stories, beauty defined, in the hopes that they give you warmth.

In this, the 140th year of Acta Victoriana, I am grateful for the legacy I carry and grateful for those who carry it with me.

Clark Thomson

Noon in the morning and for
breakfast you put all the scraps in your mouth.
It's another way to wash with the wreck,
the night past backhanding you against
unconvincing lust—to have been taken
by a boy like a series of drawers
emptied at dusk, like a lily in dawn
would bend to dew.

Your childhood was given to id, a hot brand burning
you limp but for the light from glass;
beachside, the tide would turn
oysters and cool stone upon volleys
of foam; your feet in play would touch to his
and behind your eyes the low long moan of the sublime
rose before you ever knew the word, or how to keep it alive.

Now your body is shucked against
an incorrect curvature of light,
flesh slab one half unformed and one
whole horizon of heaped sand,
waterweight, your angels abandoning you
in rounds to fly to tender pastures
as yet unmet
by thundering sin.

Bed on your back.
So the precision of your patience
wastes you to the hurried world.

The Shimmery Blued Line, Roshanak M. Heravi

I.

Bare feet on concrete flecked with dried oil paint
Outside the studio gravel, twigs, and glass
Would always stick to the soles of my shoes. Snail shells.
Everything here sticks to the bottom of things
Secretly hoping that if it attaches itself to you
You will not notice it and take it along with you.

There is the quiet misery of heritage buildings
And the taste of pizza with too much oil
Swimming on the dough like a soap bubble
Constant jarring between the specific and generic
I can't remember what your face looks like anymore, nor mine
Or where I parked the car.

The first time back, I introduce you to Sky,
To Bahá'í.

Say: All Are Created By God
You read aloud and you ask me if this is what art—what good art
Is supposed to be.
No, *art is not a monolith of anything*
Here, art is a song
And all of these suburbanite houses are notes on a staff
Waiting patiently to be played out.

Sky looks impressed and then unimpressed
And then nothing.
He scratches his head and invites us to dinner.

II.

You can buy a house here for a hundred and fifty grand, you say
And rub the joint of my thumb.
It's like a tender button you know to press when you want something

But I think of the line of cars in the drive thru for Tim Horton's, a long billowing cord:
They cut off traffic. Crescendos fail.

It is a simple quid pro quo: in this place there is no mystery, but all the answers
have been wrong
If we move here, I will be unhappy.

These cuts of dryness in the mouth sometimes become overwhelming.
My flute-lipped lies run the course of Fanshawe Street
Starting and stopping with traffic, I take a breath to speak and then
Close my mouth again
I realized I want to be more than a Jack Chambers painting.

III.

I am becoming Anne Carson becoming Emily Bronte
Standing there, a cathedral in the brain
Neurons singing arias as they deftly pass around information
Of this comprehensive scene:
Julie and Ella making baba ghanoush with pita bread, ginger iced tea
With little bits of mint thrown in.
I am helpful by being helpless, you tell me
Instead Sky holds your attention: you are so fascinated with these artist types
The smell of graphite glistens in the nose
Martha runs around with freshly sharpened pencils
Ready to spear leaf of lettuce.

This is their familial liturgy:
Shouting across rooms and scooping food into Levantine bowls
I see the look of quiet awe on your face
A wink with a crooked smile.

Out in their garden, Edward, the youngest, puts marigolds in his mouth
His young eyes full of aqueous light

IV.
Drug sleep is the best sleep.

I dream of walking from the moors to the fridge, realizing we have no meat
And that chicken doesn't count as meat, not anymore.
We are in a room: Chambers, Cunroe, Sky, Emily and myself
Wearing old fur capes
Sitting at a round table, a pitcher of beer in the middle
Five glasses and five plates of bark and venison in front us:
The final supper:

We go to the fridge at one am
A box of compressed desire and cool air
Grab the jars of jam to make toast
Everything smells dilled
I touch your naked back and everything is harbor calm
The food lying there, the furniture still not unpacked reminds me
We are sitting in the tinderbox, waiting for a match to be struck
As the years trickle by.

V.
Overcast day walking from the car to Sky's studio in the back of the machinist's lot
First Street is quiet rain pulses in the clouds
In the lot there are four cars
A black F-150, a dented minivan, and two abandoned wedges of metal
Grass growing underneath the hubs
The sound of crunching glass beneath the feet a dull reminder
Like a patiently unopened letter.

It made me look out across the fence, towards the train tracks and a blackening sky
I had no questions
I wanted to stand there and listen to the place where earth is cloud and the
leaves stay on trees.

Watching you get dressed
mad at me
as dust glitters around the room
hair still wet and dripping
coagulated masses of clean shower and product
falling onto bamboo-colored laminate flooring
as dust glitters around the room
you fumble with a belly-button ring looking down,
eyes always looking away as I stare at you
getting dressed, mad at me
both of us learning nothing but quietness
as dust glitters around the room
in the fingers of God that come smashing through the window

▲
decastich
Victoria Bigliardi

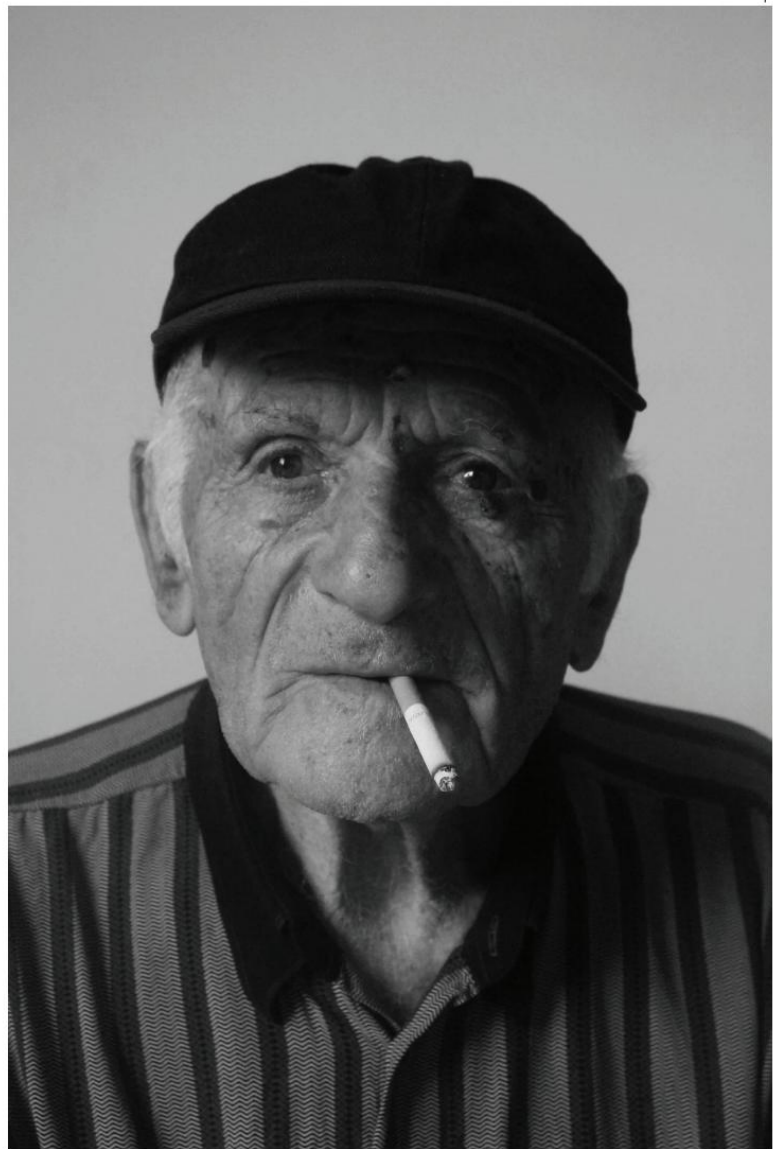
decastich for the celestial body

in crisis, who turned one evening across the bedroom
and said to her dying lover, what are you afraid of,
when the space shivered with a panic that betrayed
his terrifying strength, when she waxed brighter and
told him that he was not a victim of the universe,
and he after two years broke to reveal a fear
of all that is greater and unknown. perhaps he had
never loved her, or known her, been only afraid, not
realizing through misplaced trauma and affection
that she had always been the moon

coda for the astral god

in gold, velour – the sacred circumlocutor,
having once joined hubris with icarus on some
sun day, now shares his immeasurable light
with evenings that find themselves
glowing white and luminous

Smoking Away Sorrows, Lana El Sanyoura



"This your dog?" Ted asked.

"No," I replied. "She belonged to my old girlfriend."

"Why are you getting a tattoo of your ex's dog?"

"It's complicated."

"You must have really loved that dog."

Generally, all you ever heard from Ted's studio was the tattoo gun buzzing. He only indulged brief bursts of conversation, as if to reassure you that he was indeed human. He didn't even have a television -- too distracting, he said. Most people found him intimidating. He was a big dude, covered in tats, and totally uninterested in small talk. He didn't go in for the whole "tattooing as therapy" thing. He never asked what my tattoos represented or offered an autobiography of his own ink. Getting a tattoo just because it looked cool was good enough for him. And that's why he was my favourite tattoo artist in St. John's.

I was getting a rib piece done. I didn't mind admitting that it hurt like hell. I wasn't one of those guys. I've had my chest and arms done, but that didn't make this any easier. The ribs were particularly painful to have done. The skin is tighter here, not much muscle or fat, so there's nowhere to hide. The outline felt like someone stitching a rug on my skin, and the detail was like a cat scratching at a sunburn.

"My old girlfriend." I didn't know what else to call Jess. She wasn't technically my ex, because we never broke up.

#

I kept my hands stiff in my coat pockets, clutching my shirt and jacket to stop any kind of friction. It's important not to irritate scabs when a new tattoo is healing. I resisted the urge to scratch my ribs and gave them a slap instead. It was a chilly fall evening, which gave me some relief. I was looking forward to numbing the pain.

A prostitute was floating around near my apartment on Long's Hill. I often considered hiring one. Is that the correct term? "Hire?" I shouldn't say

considered; I amused the thought. I've never paid for sex before. I've gone to strip clubs, but I've never been with a prostitute or escort. I used to find the spectacle of strip clubs so bizarre, like being a pig at a trough. Now I was practically addicted. I enjoyed the voyeurism of it. And not just for the women, but the general seediness of it all. It was fun to roll around in the mud for bit -- didn't want to live there though.

I got a text from Nick. "You around?" I opened the door to my apartment and left it unlocked. "Drop by," I replied. I lived in a one-room upstairs apartment. The landlord lived underneath. He moonlighted as a fiddle teacher. During the evenings I was treated to the sounds of tortured cats.

I lay on my couch awkwardly, trying not to irritate my ribs. I opened a pizza box and grabbed a day-old slice. I took out my laptop and turned on Netflix. I browsed absentmindedly but couldn't decide on anything. I started browsing porn. I found a few clips I liked and unbuckled my belt. The door opened. I barely got my pants back up before Nick reached the top of the stairs.

"Hey dude," he said.

He looked around my apartment. The last time he was here, Jess still around. The place was a state now. It needed a woman's touch. Books, vinyl records, and pizza boxes were all strewn about haphazardly. I liked to think that it was all very tragic and romantic. Francis Bacon liked to keep his studio messy. "Chaos for me breeds images," he said.

"Have a seat" I said.

Nick tossed some stuff on the floor and sat down on the sofa.

"How was your session," he asked.

"Pretty good," I said. "Still another couple hours before I can take off the bandages."

"How long did it take?"

"Six hours. Ted did the outline and detail all in the one go."

"Damn. Good that it's all done though."

"Yeah."

"So me and Alison have been wanting to get together with you for awhile."

"Yeah, sorry I didn't respond to your messages. I've been really busy."

People I hadn't spoken to for years were dogging me. Facebook, Twitter, email, text: there was no place left to hide these days. To be honest, I had been avoiding Nick and Alison this past while. But I'd been avoiding everybody. Until today's tattoo session, I'd barely left the house except to get food.

"No worries," Nick said. "Are you free this weekend? Saturday night?"

"I am. Maybe we could go to the Duke, watch the Habs?"

"The Duke? You sure?"

"I'm working on the whole exposure therapy thing."

"Alright. Great. Good for you. Well, I got to go. I'll be talking to you."

"Don't forget to lock the door on your way out."

When I heard the door shut, I reopened my battery of tabbed porn. I used my left hand because my new rib piece was on my right side. But that wasn't a problem because I was pretty ambidextrous when it came to jerking off.

After I finished, I went to the bathroom and wiped myself off. I sat back on the sofa and turned on Netflix. I put on *Breaking Bad*, which I've watched in its entirety three times. I dozed off and woke up to the sound of a woman screaming. I looked outside. It was the prostitute. She was bleeding from her nose. Someone had messed her up pretty bad. Probably a john. I wanted to close the window and just ignore it. But then I thought of Jess and grabbed my cell-phone and called the police. Somebody had already called them. Help was on the way.

Had Jess cried out the same way? Was she ignored until someone called 911 too late?

Enough time had passed now for me to remove the bandages from my ribs. I went to the bathroom. I soaked a towel in lukewarm water then let it drip down over my fresh tattoo. The relief gave me goose bumps on the back of my neck. I used my hand to wipe away the dried blood and excess ink. My skin felt totally raw but I welcomed the chance to get air at it. I admired my new tattoo in the mirror: Jess's old dog Daisy held a bunch of daisies in her mouth. The word "Daisy" was written underneath. A daisy is a daisy is a daisy.

#

Alison and Nick were waiting for me by the time I arrived. They had a table near the TV. The game hadn't started yet. I walked over. Alison stood up and gave me a big hug.

"I guess I'll grab a pint," I said. "You guys want anything?"

"I got a tab going," Nick said.

I made my way to the bar. The Duke was the best pub in St. John's. All the staff could pour a proper pint of Guinness and their fish and chips was always on

point. It was a great place to watch a game if you weren't into lame sports bars that served microwave pizza. It was the type of bar that attracted pool sharks, puckheads, and post-grads.

Jess and I had met at the Duke. She was with some friends from school celebrating the end of winter semester. I was with my buddies watching the Blue Jays. She was into my tattoos. She confessed that she'd always wanted one, and had some ideas, but couldn't put them together. Her dog, Daisy, had died and she wanted to pay homage. She also liked Gertrude Stein's "A rose is a rose is a rose," but didn't like tattoos of words. I suggested she marry the two ideas. Have a picture of Daisy's face with bunch of daisies underneath with the word "Daisy" underneath. "A daisy is a daisy is a daisy," she said. "But where would I get it?" I convinced her to come back to my place and show her.

The bartender passed me a pint of Guinness and a shot of Jameson's. The best way to start off a night right. I hadn't drank since Jess died -- too afraid of being pushed headfirst into the void. I downed my shot and chased it with a mouthful of stout. I walked back over to Nick and Alison.

"How are you?" Alison asked.

"I'm OK," I said. "Every day it gets a little easier."

"I can only imagine how hard this has all been," Alison said. "At least Shane plead guilty right away."

"I'm surprised he didn't try to drag it out with a trial just to spite her family," I said. "I thought for sure he'd go for the insanity excuse."

"Have you tried writing about all of this?" Nick asked.

"Not yet," I said. "It feels a bit raw right now. I think I need more time to get perspective."

"Maybe the writing will give you perspective," Alison said. "You said writing gives shape to thoughts and emotions, right?"

"Yeah, you're right," I said.

That was good, using my own words against me. You can see Alison was very clever.

"You know, I, we, are here if you want to talk," she said. "You know that right?"

"I know."

The ref slid towards centre ice to drop the puck. It was the Habs' first game of the regular season. They were playing in Toronto. Jess never understood my love for hockey. She called it a blood sport, a modern gladiatorial spectacle. My Aristotelian hockey apologia was that it provided an outlet for our violent urges, a kind of catharsis. She wasn't convinced. That and Shane were about the only things we didn't agree on.

"You want another pint?" Nick asked. I reached for my wallet. "On me," he insisted. I protested. He moved towards the bar, ignoring my complaints.

Alison and Nick filled me in all the gossip I'd missed the past few weeks. They weren't the best storytellers but they made up for it with chemistry and conviction. It was actually endearing when they finished each other's sentences. Someone opened the door and a gust of wind sent a pleasant ripple of shivers up my ribs. I had a good buzz going.

Alison interrupted one of Nick's anecdotes. "Baby Guinnesses!" she yelled. Nick forgave this intrusion, agreeing that baby Guinnesses were a great idea. I volunteered to go get them.

My tattoo itched again. I gave it a few slaps while I watched the bartender. She filled three shot glasses with coffee liqueur three quarters of the way, then poured Baileys over a spoon so that it pooled atop the liqueur.

My ribs have been a nuisance to heal, but they weren't as bad as my elbows. Like most kids who grew up playing hockey, I had my share of dents and scrapes. Scar tissue was the worst thing to tattoo over. It hurt like hell and the skin got all enflamed. Each time my arms had swelled up like big tubes of bologna.

I brought the shots back to the table. We held up our glasses and made a silent toast. The Dropkick Murphys' version of "The Fields of Athenry" began to play. We clinked glasses and sang along. My voice broke at the chorus and my face buckled. Alison and Nick hesitated to intrude.

"Another round!" I said. "I'm paying."

▼
my yellow turtleneck and you
Malcolm Sanger

what words did you hide in my yellow turtleneck
on Friday night when we were alone on that
glassed-in porch three floors up and
the ground was three floors down.
we both leaned out, I with my back,
and you leaned out and said hmm I don't know

and then you ate my yellow turtleneck you
looked so good in it but it swallowed you and your
words; I looked for them the next morning under
the folded neck and in the sleeves but they've gone.
words belong not to my yellow turtleneck but to that
strange balcony on Friday - you facing out, and I, in, and
you



I'm sending you these things,
Like prehistoric flies encased
In amber, and other things too:

- The sight of wild dogs in terrace gardens
- The smell of abandoned underwear in my hotel room
- A view of this city where all the girls, long and blue, wear your long, blue skirt

So that you may imagine me,
A black silhouette against these
Backgrounds, your blessed alien,
So that you may excavate, from them
And from discarded skin follicles, what
I forgot behind in the space between my
Lips and your forehead

Is there something golden, like your gold,
In these things, and will I be able to
Care for them, for how they are
So chalkenly? I am asking you. Letter-

Writing is, after all, the archaeology of the soul,
Through another: the significantly other.

Hidden, Sebastián Benítez

▲

The Weight of a Blackberry Patch
Anna Shortly

▼

High bushes 'til the woods.
My weight and more in blackberries.
Wouldn't I eat them all

if I could. Hungry
from swimming all day. Hungry
from walking under no shade.

Hungry for my weight
in blackberries—that is, one-
hundred-and-thirty-five

pounds, in blackberries.
And here's craving for strawberries,
raspberries, blueberries,

them growing here too,
a stone's throw from the beach. Hungry
from swimming all day.

Hungry from walking
under no shade. For my hands,
picking comes easy;

and wouldn't I take them all
if I could: blackberries, strawberries,
raspberries, blueberries.

There are days I've wanted
to flee through cracks in the sunlight—
turn forgotten under

the soil of a pinus
ponderosa, finding room
among the worms,

and wait for it.
But then I remember
that there are berries

on this Earth, needing
picking; and I get hungry again,
from no thing at all.



This morning the shore looks
like an alien planet; wet sand
the skin of a breathing reptile, washed
over and over by the clarity
of the waves. Your bare feet
press with sloppy weight
onto the slap-sound of the ground,
and it is all light and darker shades
of grey; the lake in gentle fog,
erasing itself into a sky of blue
so gentle the colour fades. In
the distance, a golden retriever
becomes a splotch of sun before it
begins to rise, a struggling patch
on the pale expanse of the beach.
There is a man there, too. You can
see nothing but his silhouette.

Towards Mt. Arrowsmith, Anna Shortly

I was always confident in my literacy until now. One word written on your ribcage: Salt. I squinted at the fine-filigree letters to be sure. I even sounded it out. I thought I knew Salt.

When I was just old enough to start remembering, it meant a little tiny hand tipping the apple shaker on its side when Mom turned to check the oven. In high school chemistry, Salt was NaCl: crystalline, iodized, precipitated on occasion. Sodium chloride, if memory serves.

But now it's something to preoccupy myself with as sweater and undershirt slip away like wishes on dandelion fluff.

The East Coast. You'll probably never know this: she made a wish on a dandelion when we were kids visiting the shore. Her face concentrated as she exhaled with the ferocity of childhood hope – if she blew harder maybe the dream had a higher chance of coming true, she said to me and the ocean and any hermit crab that would stand to listen.

And maybe it did but it's not the smell of the ocean right now. It's salt, salt in handwriting, salt on your ribcage.

It may seem that I'm a true lover: ensuring not too much spit gets on the finer hairs around your mouth, tracing fingers along each natural curve. But it's all a con, really. I'm just trying to get the ink under my fingernails so that when I'm alone and covered in you, a little scent of that mystery will be caught on my fingertips.

Maybe it's the bait-and-switch, the portrait casually hung over the wall-safe guarding everything that makes you breathe. And I know you're breathing – into my ears and neck and hips. Whispering phrases that I will forget by morning when I'm already starting to forget you. All those words – doing-this, tomorrow, sunsets – just couldn't matter right now. Salt. Salt matters. I can taste it on your thighs and it's caught like sand between your toes.

Gulping blue a spore convulses, body-new,
flares radial into the tremulous surround.

A stone found, held fast.

The surging furrow of growth stretches like tides.

Hello deep scarlet of self, of flatness.

Laminae thrash in the roll of sun-high storms,

hooked papillae close inward,

guarding fish-holes, tears in the fabric

of the body –

even tiny things can rend irreparably.

Current-whorl, up-tug of pressure,

limpets besieging the stipe, fine silt

wearing through viscous pores, and

the loud wavering film of light:

A purplish-red seaweed of the genus *Chondracanthus*.

▲

**Cows. Dairy Cows. Replete with Udders and
Hard Hooves and Tails in Seeming Motion.**
Alaska Wilde

▼

We discovered a cow park in the middle of downtown Toronto. Big black cows, reclining among the softest grass my behind has ever had the pleasure of reclining itself against.

This is true, not a farce.

A grassy area filled with cows really does exist smack-dab in the middle of the Financial District. I told my friend. I dragged him along with me. He's good-natured, and despite his disbelief, he decided to humor me and allowed himself to be dragged along.

We had ingested and inhaled drugs earlier. He thought I was hallucinating and dredging up associations, aka conjuring this park from brief thoughts about these corporate types that litter the streets in their black and white garb.

I could see the apprehension etched across his face.

We walked, we marched, we galloped, the drugs making us do things we would never dream of doing in the streets, especially during the end of rush hour, when people were still streaming past in hordes. We did it anyway because after weeks of working jobs we enjoyed but not really, we needed this release. We needed to be kids again, to revert to that stage when we weren't shaped by everyone's notions of how "adults" should act. The drug makes you forget, and we reveled in this. Getting lost in the streets because everything was suddenly unfamiliar to our pumped-up brains made everything new. Notice how when you are lost, you suddenly start paying attention to your surroundings? Did I pass that trashcan before? Have I already crossed this intersection? That building is the very definition of familiarity, so I've passed this way already. Instead of worrying about this, I let myself go, and began to just notice everything. We got lost many times. We could've stopped and asked for directions, but ah what the heck. The flowers smelled too damn good. The world was aglitter.

Hours later, or was it days(?) we came to the park. The buildings once blocking our view slowly unveiled them.

COWS.

Like kids, we bounded. Like kids, we stroked the cows, petted them. It's unfortunate we forgot to name them and claim ownership. Or should I say fortunate. Zippo lit up, cigarettes followed suit, soon perching upon our fingertips as we made space for our belongings (including our bodies) in the empty field of grass. Comfort ensued. My friend and I talked of grand plans, like we do, reclining against the cows, the free green grass poking our bare feet but also consoling us. We'd been walking for forever.

We lay down, backs to the earth and faces turned towards the most wondrous sky. The tall towers of the financial district rose up from all four corners of our round field of vision and scraped the sky. But even they could do nothing to diminish the blue of it. If anything, the blue intensified in contrast to the grays and blacks of those fraudulent beasts.

My friend is a poet. A rapping genius. Words in motion, spewing out of his mouth. 54 mph probably or something like that. Mathematics is not my specialty. Then, let's be poetic, he said. With those words I recognized the shared feelings. He felt; I felt.

He painted lines so intricate, his words skittering across my mind and settling down in my shivers. Words so true. Just like the blue of the sky. I was lost. And I was home. The words wrapped themselves around me. The new world around me became even newer. He finished, and my vision blurred.

Your turn, he said and breaking away from the force that had bound us to the sky, he faced me, initiating a bond between us. I can't, I let out, That was damn

good. As my gaze fell upon the stately Trump tower, I let out: There's absolutely no way I can trump that. (doubt hiding in the crevices of my silly wordplay).

His eyes bored into me. I can't let him down, I thought. I closed my eyes, and willed words to mind. Instead of words, images arrived. Brooke, now a stranger but once my everything, was somehow willed (why do I feign ignorance. I know exactly how she got there; I let her) out of my subconscious.

I couldn't even form the words before they came out:

I came back home
And sat here alone

He turned back to the sky. I'd opened my eyes and they now locked themselves to the black tower rising in front of me, the yellowed lights from the abandoned (only for a couple of hours) cubicles arresting my gaze. No longer did I see the blue. I saw the yellow nostalgic light and I inadvertently saw her. How do I finish this, I thought. I continued:

And thought of the times

All of a sudden, a thought I'd never thought of, something I hadn't pinpointed before, never realized but now realized as the words came out:

When you would make me cry
And I would console you.

This time tears and anguish colored his voice. I am so sorry.

But then the drugs took over and we lay there, each dying of our personal torment.

People roll over and die. Yet when we rolled over, indecisively looking away from the sky and to the solid landscape of reality, we were finally revived.

Window Reflection, Sadia Awan



▲

Alaska Wilde hopes to be a writer when she grows up. Her previous short stories and poems have been published in 0 journals and magazines, including: . She is currently spending time drowning in the depths of nostalgia. Wilde is graduating soon, yet she still possesses the desire to be further educated/ enlightened.

Anna Moore is a writer from Vancouver Island. She has a BFA in Writing from the University of Victoria, and grew up spending a lot of time by the ocean.

Anna Shortly is graduating this year from Victoria College at the University of Toronto with a BA. In addition to (still) liking dogs, she has a beautiful Himalayan cat named Peek.

Brad Dunne is a freelance writer living and working in St. John's, Newfoundland. He works at Memorial University's Writing Centre. Brad's fiction has appeared in Paragon and the Cuffer Anthology. His non-fiction has appeared in Herizons, Dominion, and Rabble.

Carl Abrahamsen is a Victoria student from Copenhagen, Denmark and also Vienna, Austria and also McLean, USA. Apart from writing, he is on the editorial board of the Goose. This is his first poem published in English.

Claire Scherzinger is a visual artist and writer with a BFA in drawing and painting and creative writing from OCAD University. Her work has appeared in Writer's Digest, Carousel and The Hart House Review. She has also exhibited her paintings across Canada and is a winner of the 17th Annual RBC Painting Competition. She lives and works in Toronto.

Elijah Smith was named after Lord Byron. He is happy to be here.

Fan Wu is the rough estimate of an unsleeping intimacy. Doubly bound by feeling and thought, he lives as larva in the world of action.

Lucas Berman completed his undergrad in English and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. He is now a Master of Teaching student at OISE who still loves to fill notebooks with scrawls and scribbles: stories, poems, scraps of fiction brought to life by some seeming piece of banality.

Malcolm Sanger is studying anthropology at the University of Toronto and fully embraces Drake's ambassadorial role for the city.

Nika Gofshtein is a third year student at the University of Toronto, studying the various ways in which words are used to create meaning. She is also trying to use words to create meaning herself.

Roshanak M. Heravi is a 4th year Drawing & Painting student at OCAD University. She creates work that depicts an aura conveyed through her interaction with various aspects of everyday life, from the past through seeing family photographs, her surroundings from the present time and the future, to observe what can be experienced and therefore come to life through the visualization of an artist with the use of various mediums and techniques in the act of drawing and painting.

Sadia Awan is a photographer, a potential writer, and an inTrEPID explorer situated in this urban jungle we call Toronto. She likes to photograph inopportune moments, since they prove to be the most challenging to capture.

Sebastián Benítez is a Toronto-based artist born in Caracas, Venezuela. Benitez explores issues of memory and identity through photography and installation. His recent works explore the role of objects and images in the construction and maintenance of notions of identity. He has been part of exhibitions in South Korea, China, Japan, Finland, the United States and Canada.

Victoria Bigliardi can tell you a little bit about a lot of things. She is a Victoria student of linguistics and semiotics who enjoys good words and good museums in equal measure.

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