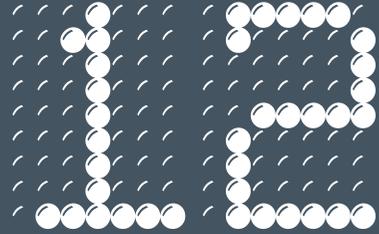
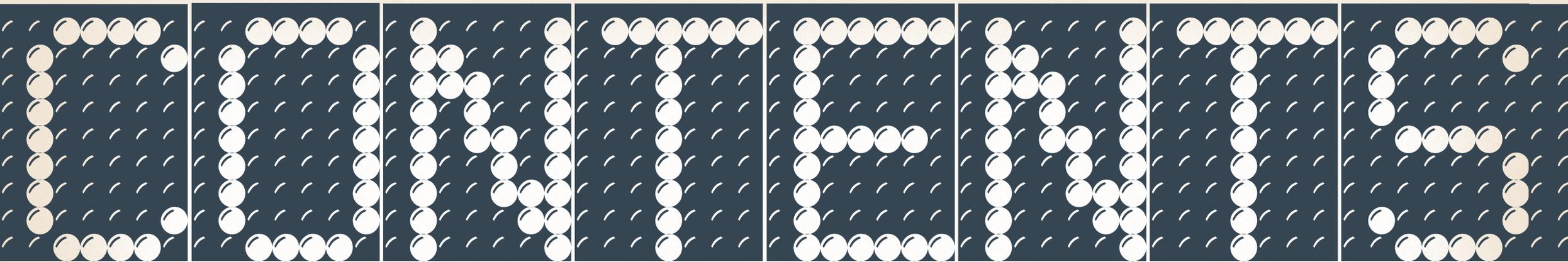


O2HO

ottawater

edited by: rob mcLennan | January 2016
design by: tanya sprowl





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COVER ART BY: ALYSHA FARLING
WANDERLUST 2014
PDA GALLERY

SYLVIA ADAMS

MORNING SONG

Night arrives absently.
You hang up your robe not realizing
one sleeve still holds an arm
not needing it after the light dims
into a smoky nothingness,
then profound black,
then patterns of colour running
blue and plum and lavender
beneath your eyelids.

You don't know the people inside your
head,
are vaguely aware of them writing
feverishly through the night,
like the shoemaker's elves fashioning,
repairing.
You stand by sometimes watching,
sometimes
listening transfixed as they read their
diffident poems
or talk about their mothers, how this one's
a nervous driver, that one has started
dying
her hair, hoping to hide her age.

It takes you years to realize these
nocturnal scribes
wear many earnest faces all of them the
same,
are constantly starting over, walk on the
graves
of others, leaving tight little bundles of
words
no longer needed, shaping what's left into
poems
weak and unpalatable as hospital custard
or once in a happenstance bearing the
badge
of jaw-dropping inspiration. No matter:
last night's flotsam and jetsam not worth
scooping up into your morning latte.

Perhaps the dream goes on but you have
left it.
Dawn seeps under your eyelids, you start
greening your way into consciousness;
the cat nudges your shoulder, calls you
forth
to an empty dish, to books unread and
a trip to the farmer's market.
You are dumb in wordless sunlight. Your
robe beckons.
There are spiders on the walls. The cat
looks up, transfixed.



Susan Roston
Actiniaria
Nub 6, ceramic sculpture, 5" x 1" x 7"
photo by: Danuta Sierhuis, for Studio Sixty Six. From *Actiniaria* (Dec. 2015)
www.studiosixtysix.ca

EUGENIE J.
ATKINSON

When You Find Yourself Alone in a Surrealist Painting

that sound you don't recognize

it's the trees whispering, watching sun curl orange
around your skin. Trees bending heads close

telling tales to the neighbours. You are alone, but would
probably join the chatter if you spoke their language.

Further around the bend, grass lies still and silent, not interested in gossip.

You swallow autumn, scarlet crunching in the gap
between lips

and teeth.

A black dress floats through air, long and thin like a ribbon,
but it's not a dress, it's crows flapping toward trees, called by the rustling

that you don't understand. Nothing makes sense but the blue of sky
the way it always was, on outings, when you picked apples, everything

tasting of sharp red, souring the tongue, green shading of not-quite-ripe in the basket
and everyone posing for photographs, white-teeth-wide-smiles

no room to be alone.



Susan Roston
Actiniaria
Manic Thistle 1, ceramic sculpture, 5.5" x 3"
photo by: Danuta Sierhuis, for Studio Sixty Six. From Actiniaria (Dec. 2015)
www.studiosixtysix.ca

JOHN BARTON

A PARROT'S LIFE

The floral cosmos of clicks he chortles

Won't replant Eden inside his absent
Keeper's ear. Perch to chair he flits, settles

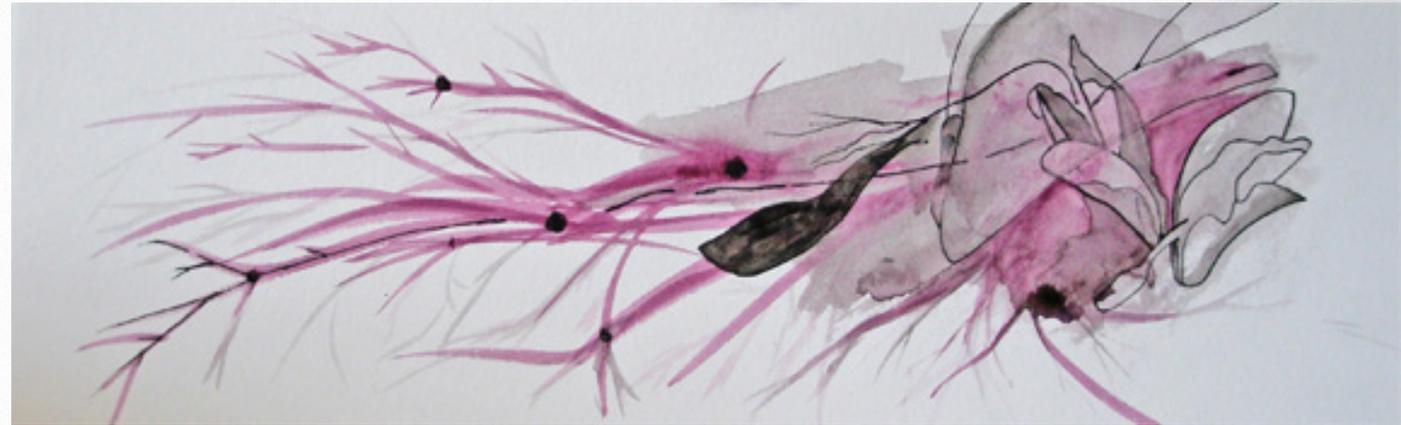
Again lifts, no other mortal his. Scant
Chance he'll lark for someone else, his descant

Plucking lightning bolts from his jilted flesh
Beaked blurts ripping him featherless, his mesh

Of phonic selfhood rent fetishistic
Sharp atonal scales set to avalanche

God lonely without his flock: autistic.

ABABBCCDCD



Gail Bourgeois
nodes+lines
www.gailbourgeois.ca

FRANCES BOYLE

Tied tropes

Avocado is love, ripe
and ready. The skin insides itself
out, turns acquiescent onto cutting
board, releases flesh. It smoothes
into sandwiches, glides tender in chunks
for salad. Almost crunchy when not
quite ripe, it needs spoon leverage,
you must scrape the scaly inside
of the green skin shell.

Apple is like driving a car, power
in hard casing with luxe of fluidity
—motion in taste and colour. Deceptively
simple, its roundness is how the car handles
curves, takes corners smooth. Red
or green or yellow, mottle stop
and go and shifting gears. The sphere
the fleshy purpose of the fruit.

Paper is jetstone. Glossy smooth, faceted
when worked by a tool, the pen. Polished semi-
precious, waved to glassy gleam
of deepest black. Can be carved or
lathe-worked, takes a good shine. High
carbon content with layered structure. Your
mourning brooch, your amulet.

Spiral impulse *

Waiting for our steps on the gravel
graphic dance of the breath
enclosed earth of enclosed space
where the forest is darker
by ornament, by jewelry, by chains

Perfume, yes, perfume, chains, jewelry
a descent towards our ancestors to extinguish the candle
in the reflection of speech, several voices
renascence, like a phoenix
after the mark they have left in me.

Writing that breathes differently,
memory as part of the body. It is very corporeal
wounds, ornaments, breath. Breath. Song that returns.

Even the terror is ludic
at once lyric, ornamental and cruel
in the development of its discourse.
A discursive sliced by space where breath appears
now I only wear a chignon. Because hair, for me, is sumptuous.

* All lines taken (with some alteration of punctuation and capitalization) from work by Anne-Marie Albiach in *Crosscut Universe: Writing on Writing from France* (Edited/Translated by Norma Cole)

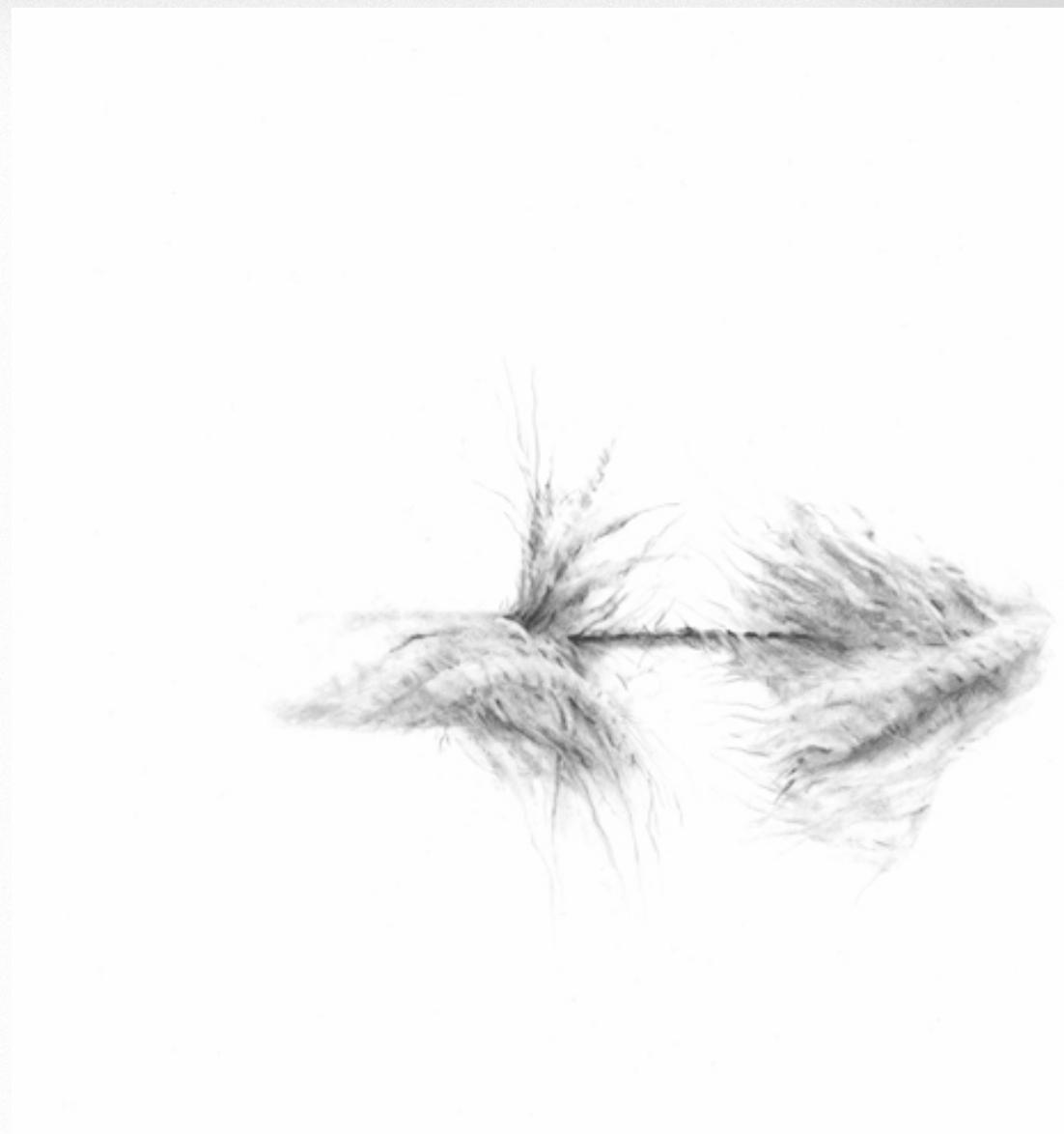
STEPHEN
BRACKWELL

Overhearing

For a second I thought
you were listening—I stopped
speaking—I smiled in
the old way—mouth

wide face full
of teeth—hoping your
eyes would greet their
matches at my table—

start intimate conversations
we would overhear.



CAPPELLIN BOOKS

Did You Die Last Night?

Wake up. Did you die last night?

Welcome to the age of fears. Sharks in the water? No sharks, I say, sticking to fact. It's too cold. Useless to say so, useless as my

parent's might,
that once solved everything. Scorpion sting. Mummy trailing tapes. Real skunks under the bushes on the dark walk home. They only attack when cornered, I explain, when dogs sniff them out.

Speck of spider dangles before door. The girls shriek, cower, even the twelve-year-old. Mommy. I rise against their fear, snip spider web with fingers. There. Make it briefly safe again.

On the tiny ferry she loved,
huddled now in sister's arms. I'm scared of the water, she tells her. I'm scared too, her sister says.

You are going to die soon, she tells me. You and Daddy. Daddy is old so he'll die first. You'll die, she explains. Everyone will. I

confirm
the monstrous fact she is learning
for the first time: that such
is our inevitable fate and we spend our
waking hours pretending
otherwise. I wish I could tell her
she will stay alive forever.
But that would be a lie and
I also pretend I never lie.

24

She walks home cradling an explosion of peonies
in the crook of her arm, dragging one foot
behind her as she goes. Are you going
to have another baby, inquired her daughter
this morning. Leapt
onto her belly. Does this hurt,
Laughing,

Yes, she said,
not paying attention. Then: No. Sweetheart.
I know you want another baby. Explains carefully
the problem, can't take it back to the store
when you get tired of it, etcetera. Logic,
pointless,
to a four-year-old.

The peony heads, already unfolded,
pull at her shoulder with the quick sweet weight
of pink things. She remembers the ache
that settled in when she carried the child:
slung round her torso at first, then later lifting pale
stalks of arms, piping. Carry me, carry me.

She will rise tomorrow
To find the flowers collapsed, all that promise
Blown, one day of
Splendour and done. The softest
Compost she ever made, pushing the petals
Down into the muck, unable to forget
their lingering, infinitesimal caress.

Pretend

Play pretend, she says, and I say Okay.
Pretend we're fairies, pretend we're butterflies. I'm the momma butterfly.
No, you are. Now you're the little sister. Pretend we're leaves, and we're jealous
because you're changing colour and we can't.

I pretend to cry. I sob and sob as we pace out the steps
my hand tugging hers, slow but never stopping, towards our destination.

I get angry. I sneer. That's all you can do? I tell Cinderella.
My dress. I pretend to rip it from her. Now I'll be the mean stepsister, she says.

It's Christmas and we go shopping for trees. I'm devastated
'cause she gets to pick. I whine to our mother. She promises next Christmas
my turn will come and suddenly a year passes in a blink and we're back in the lot.
Now I'm the dad, she says, lowering her voice.

I stamp my foot and scream It's not fair!
then twist to avoid her smack of my bottom. I'll spank you, she threatens, delighted,
as our feet measure out the distance to daycare, restaurant, hairdressing school.

You're the baby flower, she tells me.
I'm a rose, and you're a lily. That's impossible, I tell her. Roses can't have lily babies.
Flowers don't even have babies, come to that. Rose is the prettiest, my favourite flower,
she says,
ignoring me.

Homeless men lurch by stained and muttering.
Speed freak ladies pass hip jut speed walking.
Monsters, she cries, watch out, there's a big monster
behind you! I turn, thrust her from harm's way, slay it with a ray
from my dangerous wrists. Another one! she cries.

This one's a nice monster, aren't you,
she says, reaching up to stroke my nose. There you go. Nice little monster.
I make contented
baby monster noises. Want a snack, she asks me in her
reasonable voice, the voice she uses for the mommy
I'm not. Want something to eat? I always do, take the nugget
gently between soft lips. Lower my unicorn horn
so she can see how it catches the light. Look, I say to her, over beep from reversing
truck, bus tires crunching pavement grit,
walk signal chirp-chirp, sudden fire engine wail.
The moon, I point, and sure enough, there it is,
Pale disk in the sky, so faint you'd almost think it imagined.

To Market

I ask the farmer if it's true that each vegetable he grows has a personality. Oh yes. I
remainder

my shift imagining them:

shy yellow squash, less assertive
than its brash green cousin in that
fat-fisted zucchini gang

cheerful bumbling of blueberries
beets' buttery truculence when bunched
the arrogant tomato, drawing slightly apart
powder dusting sunshine-reddened skin

the farmer stops to talk to anybody
who demands to know how he can grow
plastic-wrapped cucumbers so patient, stately, and remote.

Tell me more, they say,
until he goes into detail
about the regulations from Agriculture Canada.

Dreaming over my cash box I
Take the love-lorn raspberries, always so hopeful
and fragile, from customers' hands. I nestle each box
in a plastic swathe and place it in their cloth bags myself. I remind them
a third basket only costs an extra two dollars. If they can use it,
I say, shrugging. Wondering who couldn't eat
another basket of doomed scarlet, tiny hearts.



Erin Robertson
Sorrow
Oil on canvas
erinmaur Robertson@gmail.com



ERIN ROBERTSON

Cat

Two years it has roamed the rooms of my home
teaching me to know one thing:
I do not know her.
I know a little of what she needs: to be let in, to be let out.
And when she is poised on the banister
I no longer think, *my, how well she balances* -
she balances well, yes, for a person.

Once, angered, I shook her a little, as if
she could be something other than what she is.
I accused her of stupidity
and she stared back,
uncomprehending.
Things shifted: the cat is stupid, yes,
for a person.

There are times the cat looks beautiful to me.
Then she stands and shakes it off.
Beauty is effortless control, I think,
knowing immediately that by my thinking
I have lost beauty's thread.

She is not as lucky as she might have been.
After all, someone unharried
by children wailing for a dog
might have chosen her, on purpose let's say,
and would let her knead their lap, or laugh when she
struts across the keyboardlkmfuck.
But most of us aren't as lucky as we might have been.
Though luck is always in reach.
(The secret is not to expect it.)
I have begun to imagine
what it is to not be a person.

Erin Robertson
Fleeting Sorrow
Oil on canvas
erinmaur Robertson@gmail.com

Oiled burlap

Your face opens, takes on more light
 as you and your friend reel in the old names,
 the scantest of details enough: they aren't forgotten
 Love a brine, or smoke.
 Later, I read to you from a magazine,
 about a farmer who, drafted to fight,
 wrapped his tractor in oiled burlap and buried it.
 After the war, he crossed his land with a long pole
 until he met resistance, evidence
 of the man he still might be.
 Oiled burlap. Lowly, ingenious material, like forethought.
 You remember hearing of an English man
 who sank his walking stick into a bog and – *zing* –
 struck a helmet: his childhood landscape
 a flooded battlefield, literally.
 So death is preserved, too.
 We are in the bathtub, talking through the steam,
 sitting in such a way that when I reach down
 my hand cups your buoyed genitals.
 The water cools. We pull the plug, sink
 together into our bed, where I hold you
 more carefully, more hopelessly, than ever before.

Synapses

"I believe in spirituality, in synapses, like *déjà-vu*."
 – Carol Shields

We still take leaps together, my mother and I.
 She once told me, when I was little, "I think
 of my mother every day." I imagine
 that her mother once told her the same thing,
 And I have planted the self-conscious seed
 in my own children, so this connived fidelity runs
 across centuries, oceans, pressing flat storms, edges:
 swaddling. My mother also taught me that to think is to do,
 and to do can be to think, so that when I rock
 two knives across pastry dough, I am thinking
 of my mother (who thought of hers, etc.)
 or when I put my hands on my waist,
 which remains smallish while all else goes,
 or light a fire (ashamed by the excess of kindling)
 or tend the plants (weekly rotation in their saucers)
 I am thinking of my mother, slotting my bones
 into her joints, into the world's joints, as it
 will have them, will have us, together.

Under the Plum Tree

1

The plum tree's an umbrella of endless leaks.
 I tilt my head a part of a degree
 and a thousand new windows open.
 My son, squatting on the stones,
 reading *1001 Facts*, announces
 that our atoms are vast with space:
 squished to matter, each of us
 is no larger than a grain of sand. We never
 touch anything, he says, we hover.
 Ants meander across the courtyard gravel,
 nibble at fallen plums.
 My husband's unusually quiet, reading
 his novel. His silence is unnerving, as if
 he has fallen between the words.
 A typographer friend tells me whitespace
 is gaining ground these days.
 Yes, he has fallen asleep. He is elsewhere.
 I make of my book a tent over my heart,
 find a thread of light through the labyrinth
 to the sky, and try to reflect.
 More than being here, the plum tree is not here.
 Pain like iodine lingers on my ankle where an
 ant
 has taken a bite.

2

Still dozy from his nap,
 my husband runs the hose;
 places its mouth in the dirt
 and then - afternoon heat,
 children out, glass of wine -
 we go inside for a spell, the big O.
 The earth moved.
 I step over the tree's highest branches
 before I understand: the plums, heavy
 from watering, the roots losing their grip
 in the muck - the tree has crashed.
 Onto my empty chair.
 My husband is beside himself.
 He wants to stake it, bind the halves
 with tar.

3

Easy pickings!
 Our hands, labouring, shield our broken hearts.
 Birds touch down beside our wrists.
 Every vessel in the house is filled. Pots, bowls,
 cups, vases.
 The abundance nearly outweighs loss.
 The leaves remain supple, the fruit soft.
 The tree still fills the courtyard,
 though more densely, the labyrinthine
 channels, the windows, closed.
 Darkened by other things at this level: the wall,
 other plants, me.

4

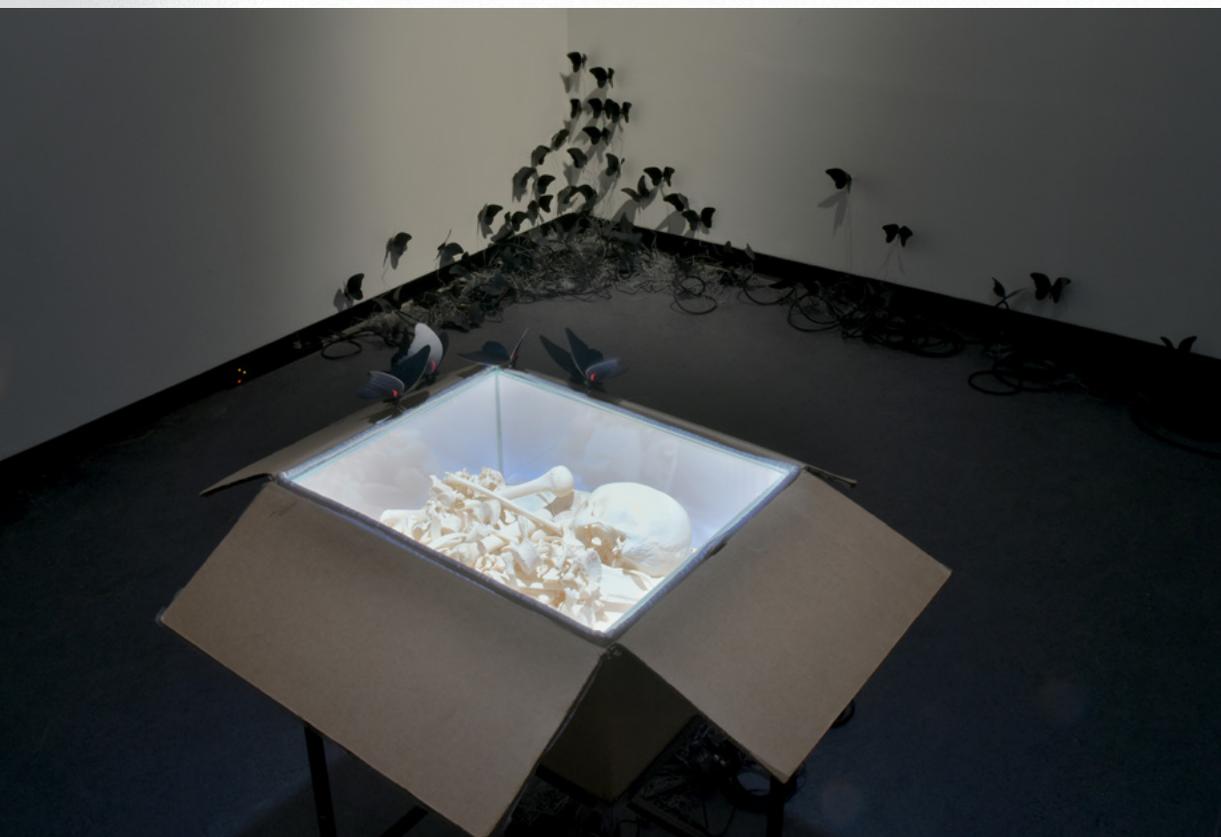
My neighbour beats his dog,
 yells *son of a bitch! son of a bitch!*
 the stick in his hand glimmering,
 guiltless, bleached by moonlight.
 The man is exasperated by the dog's
 howling, and by, I do imagine,
 his own violence, which has never
 not failed him.
 We made jam late into the night.
 The dog, chained in his yard,
 would have heard our singing,
 our spoons like shovels in the sugar.
 I climb over the fence,
 undo his collar, leave red fingerprints,
 set him free to mourn the shade,
 the trembling shadows that always
 forgave him.

Fair

I'd run into him about once a year,
 usually at the fall fair, him with his children,
 me with mine. And against the backdrop
 of Ferris wheels and champion pigs
 I'd be energetic, interested in his work, and his family
 (questions are clever, I was learning, how they
 both hook and repel).
 Sometimes we'd trade news about the others –
 who had split up, who had launched a business.
 Then, a tidy *good to see you*,
 and I would turn, let out my breath.
 But one year, he broke through the calculated mist
 to say, *I'm sorry*.
 Perhaps his marriage, to a woman far more
 austere than I had ever been, had called on him to
 face his ghosts.
Well, it was a long time ago, I answered.
 And that was my final whistle in the dark.
 The next time I saw him, by the tractors, say,
 and the next year, trying the blacksmith's hammer, maybe,
 I didn't see him.

The pros arrive

Able as deer,
 and human by the counterfeit green
 of resort jackets, the mountain's name
 stitched high on the sleeve, someone else's tattoo,
 removable, never mind.
 Genuinely guileless smiles, teeth
 like snowcaps, skin burnished by speed.
 I've heard that their goggles
 disarray sunlight.
 They swoop in at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.,
 and raise those goggles, revealing pale
 hourglasses, heroes' masks.
 They lean toward our children:
Well, Bud, where do you want to go? they ask.
 And as we blink into the high-pitched light
 they lead our sons and daughters
 to a chairlift, celestial high-chair,
 toward a peak lost in sleet.
 We turn away, trusting the pros
 who have not yet been blinded by love.



Nichola Feldman-Kiss
between here and there (2015)
kinetic installation
100 simulated butterflies; plastic; programming; electronics.
photo by David Barbour
www.nicholafeldmankiss.com

Nichola Feldman-Kiss
Game of World Domination 2011-2015
illuminated text
Duratransparency chromogenic digital print; aluminum; LEDs; acrylic; electronics.
photo by David Barbour
www.nicholafeldmankiss.com

GEORGE ELLIOTT CLARKE

The Destruction of the Indies

By Bartolomé de La Casas¹*

Expanding it,
Christophe Colomb disfigured our atlas,
for he gave Satan new fields to despoil,
fresh peoples to desecrate:
Our gold and silver bullion trail blood.

Look at “la Florida” and New Spain—
territories south of New England, New France
(and far south of New Scotland)—
all these lousy seaports of loss.
(Each is surplus *Value* and surfeit of suffering:
Superior *Profit* won at supreme costs.)

Wrecks encumber the littoral sandbanks;
sea-going cockroaches—
pirates/capitalists—
harass and havoc Britannic shipping.

Moreover, bitter storms,
stridently biblical,
situate unfortunate mariners
waste-deep in ruins—
splintered fortunes,
flotsam,
only kegs and casks surfing.
(Liquor is lighter than water.)
Unlucky sailors dry off (out) early in Hell. . . .

At times, mudflats hamper navigation,
and we cannot override th’arrest,
but must watch gold sink into the muck, molten,
as our keels founder in th’element,
until wood is only dead branches,
canvas serves shrouds,
ropes go to weeds,
and metals rust,
and we seafarers sink back to bones,
and our blood seeps into seawater,
strains to salt and/or coral dust.

Sailors moonlight as butchers;
butchers double as bankers:
Our bullion is as cumulative as an avalanche,
but our solvency is dissipative—
like an avalanche—
in our Catholic fiefdoms—
th’Americas, the Indies—
where *Magic* and *Terror* thrive
as tandem.
Our gold-plated *Diplomacy*—
Machiavellian treaties and Damoclean swords—
tarts up our silver currency.
Our Scriptures tap hemlock and rue.

Yet, unacceptable is Spain’s murderousness—
as evil as the rollcall of shipwrecks
(a catalogue to challenge epic bards).
Spy the dismal cargo abob and aghast
among the thrashing sharks,
joyous in a fiesta of biting and gobbling—
the tedious salvage—
heads rolled up on beaches—
amid the coinage of our *Carnage*.

Okay! There is a plus-side:
No unemployment in *Slavery*,
no bankruptcy in *Piracy*,
and moral alarm goes unheard
because it seems unfulfilled.

We’ve learned to take sugar
(it has an infallible appeal)
as we have learned to hold slaves,
and we take to the wash of waves
to take up precious commodities
and to take the Gospel—
at swordpoint—
to face-value heathen.

(Do we not love cochineal?
Our Spanish ladies covet cochineal for red dye.
Yet, it takes 70,000 cacti-juice-sucking insects
to produce one pound of cochineal—
a telling, no-count math:
If as much killing is necessary for dye,
What won’t we do for bricks of bullion?)

¹ * This priest (1484-1566) promoted the African Slave Trade as a *humanitarian* answer to the implicit genocide against Aboriginal peoples, then perishing in the millions, throughout the Americas.

Witness:

In the conquered Aztec and Inca realms,
our trigger-prone merchants preside over
coal-coloured machinery eating up the very earth.
I euphemize African ingenuity:
Their muscle is our machinery;
their brawn is tantamount to technology.
The Negro is nuts and bolts and steam—
primordial—
geared to our pleasures.
His lot digs up gold, digs out gold,
and smelts metal into smart smithereens,
splashing the molten brilliance onto soil,
where it cools into indifferent discs.
Next, our Adam-Smith-styled smiths—
brandishing Bibles, swords, muskets, whips—
order the cold coinage plucked up,
to pocket a goodly portion
and tender the remainder to the Royal Treasury.

True:

We chain and massacre the *Injuns*,
but the backbone of bullion extraction
is black.
Thanks to their naked, heaving backs,
our Christian aristocrats wear gold-lace to prayer.)

New Spain—

the Western Indies—
is mines
or torture chambers.

(*Torture* prefaces *Treasure*.)

Silver services soldiers, armouries, banks;
gold pours into bars, bricks, coins, chains, and teeth.
(Oaxaca coaxes up silk, sugar, silver.)

Our homeland booms.

Even our guiltless cannonballs gleam gilt.

Our Holy Roman Emperor

Carlos V^{2*}—

Lord of Africa and the Indies (East & West)—
that admirable criminal
(the noun is an irony)—

is enthroned atop an economy of *Booty*—
shipments of loot—
traversing the blue topaz ocean
under a gold topaz sun
unto every sunset transfixing
and bleeding his overseas provinces.

Yes, we're a theological people:

Our Church treads barefoot

a thorny path,

the ways of *Plunder*.

We don't save souls:

We purchase em; we sell em;

we lose em even as we profit.

We cash in like any entrepreneur

because our *Reason* deems it right:

What gold appraiser need poison rats?

Open again Colombo's unholy atlas:

From the Western African Province
(West Sahara to Central South West Africa
to the Canary and Cape Verde Isles)
to the Caribbean Province
(Bermuda to Florida
and south to Brazil),
New Spain (Mexican) silver finances
cotton bloom and salt flat.

Plus, we maroon "Moors" everywhere—

Peru, Cuba, Nova Scotia, Corpus Christi,

Xamaica, Grenada,

even Granada

(back in the homeland),

because black sweat mints sweet silver.

We see that competing traffickers

vampire Africa

and vulture America:

A shipment of blacks and bullion

equals instant cash—

a jackpot.

Faced with this raw logic,

we outfit our vessels with *versos*^{3*}
(swivel guns),
pivoting on gunwhales,
and flush with stone or iron or lead shot,
but also metal shards and glass
(stained glass preferably).

We patch drizzly hulls with used tar,

old sailcloth, thin lead sheets,

iron nails, and Bible pages—

all to keep our economy buoyant,

afloat *Bloodshed* as plain as dirt.

(*Shipwreck*, *Sabotage*, *Sickness* beset us:

Miracles only float home

our armadas of slaves, mules, and hides,

our heaps of salted beef and gold bars,

our beloved chocolate, vanilla, and rum.)

Our state competitor,

Great Britain—

schleps iron, guns, and salt to Africa;

next plunders Africa of Africans;

then dispatches the black muscle

to the West Indies,

and to New England, New Scotland, and New France

(parts).

The Indies' plantations remit sugar, fruit, molasses,
and hot-cunt negresses and broke-dick slaves
("servants")

to England;

and vend sweets and spirits and slaves

to Britannic America

(the piney realm).

This latter province ships salt fish

(ex Newfoundland and Nova Scotia)

and lumber

to the Western Indies;

and pine, apples, cod, and beaver

on to England.

(The rodent pelt is *chic* in Paris

and London.)

2 * 1517-56.

3 * Piss cools off a hot gun; it hisses.

The atlas *appears* neutral, pacific.
 Different lands materialize in different tints
 (taints)—
 gold, pink, rouge, green, etc.—
 all bordering on the leviathan-rich azure
 of the Seven Seas.

And the whole of it is placid,
 save for where artists speculate
 dragons and mermaids sun themselves....
 This cartography is simply *Art*—
 pastoral, pastel shades that obscure
 the ravages of cannonades and musketeers—
 our fellow travellers—
 from Mexico's mines to Spain-bound spoils.

Yet, so constantly do we war—
 with Britain, France, Denmark, Holland—
 it's a good thing our cannonballs
 can't reach the sun,
 or we'd shoot it out....

No crop wins us more cash than sugar,
 and the backbone of sugarcane is—
 you guess right!—
 th'African.

Not to be improperly frivolous,
 but the *Sugary*
 licenses *Savagery*,
 thus, all the white sugar, brown sugar isles,
 propagate polychromatic peoples—
 very nappy, very raw, very "Cuban"—
 while our high-church satraps
 pose for private, off-colour portraits
 with sultan-beloved odalisques—
 bronze—
 swelling in their clutches.

(If these black-besotted gov'nors are miserable,
 they are deliriously miserable.
 Too, as I can recount—
 and I do not recant—
 the tropic harlots' gold skin
 show genealogies unintimidated by disease.)

Too bad our enterprise in sugar, molasses, and rum
 seeds maggots in flesh,
 and lets blood blush rivers.
 Our sweets are septic.
 (We import sewage.)
 Our overseas esquires,
 to ship home cattle, swine, avocado, and rum,
 remake their chartered estates
 as apostolic abbatoirs,
 swamps of sanguinary crimes,
 blessed by serenely ugly priests,
 whose machete-rife scripts
 okay wrongs as pungent as coffee
 (or cyanide).

So many, many, many *Injuns*
 have withered to gristle, bone, feces;
 so many, many, many, many,
 have been ground down,
 perennially refined by grass:
 Our lays should be as sombre
 as any obituary.

Agreed:
 The crucifix signals *Civilization*;
 it encourages us to laugh off
 the stagnant darkness of the grave.

Yet, I reckon our European interloping—
Interference—
 in Africa and the Americas
 is no sin for the squeamish.
 Our ventures afford living proof
 of Satan's reality,
 even as the church-garden—
 (i.e. the cemetery)—
 expands,
 gobbling up our Church.

There are no two gods the same colour:
 Who's to say which one, for sure, is "white"?

I write under the sun-mimicking moon—
 that minstrel of light, that mime—
 knowing our Empire is ephemeral,
 already crumbling piecemeal—
 slow, slow, slow—
 like Pompeii, like Atlantis, like Sodom and Gomorrah—
 into *History's* black abyss.

Useless prove the carts of books
 (scriptural or economic).

Oh Lord!
 Spring us as free
 as April

(crocus bustin snow crust):

Clean off our chains!

[Copenhagen (Denmark) & Helsinki (Finland) 6 mai mmviii]

The Assassination of Julius Caesar

By Cinna the Poet

The Senators club him with fasces—
the bundled rods.
Beat him so bad,
feces shoots out his backside.

Excited by his surprise weakness,
they whack him, thwack him,
till all his fecal matter blasts out;
he dies, lookin like a sewer.

Damn! The fasces come down hard.

They hit im on the crown.
Him a bleed a gusher!

That pretty boy quick gets a pummelled face—
an ass-ugly face,

like he be a bum in a boxing ring.

Blood goes everywhere:
His bald head is practically all blood.

The Senators stab im in the gut.
They jab im in the spine.
They stick im in his face.

Fuck right off!

They slaughter im, okay?

Well, he bring the stab wounds into himself!

Puttin the crown on his own head
was like impaling himself on his sword.

Still, the Senators are evil:
They took the axe off a fasces
and struck the blade in his asshole!

No joke!

The murder was lookin like a massacre.
Nauseatingly grotesque;
as vivid—stench-wise—as vomit.

The Senators tore open Caesar's toga
to ensure the axe blade
could wallow in his asshole.

A dismal torture.
Damnably asinine stuff.

Real shitty!

[Ottawa (Ontario) 14 septembre mmxiv]

Of Saint Paula, a Virgin

By George the Aryan

Some plantations are circuses of Rape,
and wenches trenched so vehemently
that sperm squirts out their eyes....
But bastards are whelped as consequence—
the spoils of fisticuffs,
I mean, that profitable Screwing
that shames the debit Coitus of aristocrats.

It is hard-currency Economics
that sprawls negresses agape.
But indulge no Remorse.
The lewd survive and their pups crowd out priests.
The blacks are no-nonsense,
all-or-nothing, at rutting:
In them, there's no Incontinence or Fainting,
as they are bedded,
unlike our blanching belles who weep and shout
as they are penetrated.

So, Paula, a Virgin, stokes my Lust.
Her spank—
her polish, her ass, her swank—
the unpredictable flutter of each ass-cheek
as she moves her backside,
to pluck down apples,
insinuates her thighs are wells of honey,
poised to slake a man's whims.

A colour-scheme Romeo,
I love Paula's peppery sweetness.
I'll take her naked, break her scruples,
as her pussy slides my finger.

My passions be furious as a heretic's!
Thus, my legal wife is no match.
I'll have warm gold in my bed,
and incense in my parlour.

For a white lady's shallow body can't appease
my Pleasure—
to have a female face-down in ditch.
or face-up, mouth open.
That role is regularly Paula's,
and there is none like her in all the colony
(though Halifax boasts superb whores),
to indulge my innocent, ribald measure.

An alpine tingle thrills my nostrils.
Gusto, conspicuous, moves our bodies together
as acrobatic as perfumes,
this refreshing autumn,
apples taken in
(some pressed into cider or Calvados).

My wife—white, dirty, cold,
who exists as invisibly dirty frost,
makes my bed a rude acre of thorns.
Save for one carnal shadow,
the odors of two soldered bodies,
and two dark legs unfurled in Lust,
I have no Pleasure,
just as cold, intractable Winter sets in.

[Edmonton (Alberta) 26-27 Nisan /avril mmxiii]

Ntshingwayo kaMahole4* Outlines Strategy (1879)

Subtlety is diabolical *Courtesy*.

Urbane first, next hectic,
we'll toilet the "Royals,"
so Brit blood fecundates our fields.

Drive your spears through mouth and ass.
Treat scruples with playful *Contempt*.

Anglos ain't, from *Death*, exempt.

Our Azania welcomes a gory deluge,
bodies dropped like red leaves,
white troops turned unmixed wounds.

Each collapsed steed, steel
shrivelling its guts,
brings us a general:

Personally, I'll tear out his eyeballs and tongue,
while his smelly vomit outs,
and his felled comrades sprawl like cut-up cattle.

Hear the Anglos croak Shakespeare,
as we shake spears—
and they croak.

Men, make these fields a plain of skeletons,

so impudent dogs feel our dreaded points,

the white throats hurtle blood like ink,
blurt awkward puddles.

I demand a lovely *Extirpation*.

Our gracious necessity?
To hear each white corpse groan
like creatures unenlightened.

I want each foe to feel the agony
a man feels,
when a bamboo thrust in his ass
grows rigidly up through his flesh
and then screws through his brain,
while the jackass blares.

The Anglos swear I'm a cannibalistic blackamoor.
Fine, fine.

Thus, render our foes abominable meat—
carcasses sprouting hostile perforations—
disgusting even to maggots.

(Each cadaver is as public—
and private—
as a garbage can.)

The slain whites become bouquets of feces.
Dogs and vultures guttle the gentry at will.

Our Zulu *War* is to deter and damn,
to reduce Anglos—
they ain't angels!—
to scraps of soil.

I do trade any Browning poem
for a Browning gun:
To see the Brits fall like checkers—
red and white—
on a green baize field.

I am a chainsaw economist!

Thus, the enemy wavers like the sea's
wobbly surface:
Our grievous lances
pin down aristocrats.

Let storms of black flies, black dogs,
black vultures,
scour their bones.

They topple like frail, indecent statues.

[*Stockholm (Sweden) 13 octobre mmxiii*]

Marie d'Égypte's Autobiography: A Preface

A showy wine
propels out jism,
so it streaks white
a cunt's dark hairs,
and the *bouboun*^{5*}
looks zebra striped.

Screwing sluices sweat
cheerfully down the backbone's gutter,
while the man's sticky, colourless emission
helps Negress whelp a creamy child.

I was said to slink about,
stinking, sluttish, and (fuck all),
giggling, wild, brutish, and braying loud
at slapping squish of genitals—
the sloppy, happy conjunction—
as I cashed in on goatish, loutish coitus,
revolting as fish guts,
preferring "Triple X" to the "True Cross."

Yes, I evolved a *carte-blanche Négritude*,
and was touchy as sunlight,
while suckling on vineyards,
and dreaming of the lavender sea,

and uncaring about penitents flocking bout—
to see "a dusky, dirty slut" transform

into a saint,
pledged to comfort whores and sailors.

But my beauty is light, arousing, arousing.

Beauty is also a blessing, *messieurs*.

[Windsor (Ontario) 5 octobre mmxiii]



Alysha Farling
fecund (thelandofanal) 2015
www.alyshafarlingart.tumblr.com

5 * Haitian French: Pussy.

ANITA DOLMAN

Argument

Dwelling a sorrow of stones,
no weathers but the rain
to misery us past the broken point.

Rage house and drag lawn and
all the time spent,
every moment's wasted
me's/you's/your fault/mine,
what differences there
could be between us,
the spaces

Anger fibres from the carpets
fills the voids, each empty room still
brimming with furniture and clocks;



NINA JANE DRYSTEK

still afternoon

after Maria de la Torre's *Overkill*

i.

watch her slip
heel off one & the other
slide them back
on again & again
count the times he adjusts
his belt, watch around wrist
swirls ice in the glass
lose track

someone pays the bill
& I stay
clutching a new napkin
a new number
forget about you
leave

ii.

always think in threes, in a pinch choose
odds over evens
count out from the solid
centre & always find your way back

in threes a triangle, nines a square
seventeen is the year everything happens

we know what the other is thinking
we all think we are beautiful, step
intentionally
cracks to break a lover's back

say it with me *bingo*

that's the trick
& she flips the coin between her thigh
guess where it goes? one, two,

iii.

waiting the afternoon
cast dice on the counter
snake eyes
evens screw you
sipping tequila like it was Oaxaca
instead of the Ottawa, it was raining
remember? the bar
you poured me another, I marked
a line on a paper napkin
////

iv.

roll the dice again, eleven
leopard skin stockings
legs crossing onto the next stool
& I mark another

v.

leopard orders vodka rocks
try to speak but feel lettuce in my teeth,
petals in my throat,
sliding the dice over the counter
she asks do I want my fortune
cubes in hand she
blows them softly
& release

*carve windows out to be
rhombus, trapeze
picking up the shapes again
paint stained hands, a single ring
clack, clack, clack
& release*

*depending on you afternoons unfold
into bridges, rivers
taking mine
a small penumbra over hers
she reaches to*

clop of a man's boot, coins against keys
an arm around her shoulder
takes the seat next to
the centre



Sarah Dobbin
ceramics

Sarah Dobbin
ceramics

CLARA
PARLEY

Soft Geometry

autoroute 40's circumference slides,
wide-circles *citoyenne en loop*

long these headlights search, pull
congregate

down the off-ramp into Friday's
Sainte-Catherine

I've come
to inhabit the coming

to match the departure, the fractal
gesture that is this city's magic

I look long putting on
makeup in the terminal bathroom

let this advent be the curve of my lipstick stroke,
gentle composite of a passenger landing

Mossbawn

Antrim Coast gorse salutes
in brief & fiery explosions

his Whinland yolk-seed charred to bone

Propelled from mad dance at the sea,
clutching curling tail of ammonite, tourists

drive North, drive
circles around Heaney's grave,
stand in the road where his brother
was hit & wonder

about death & the National Archives

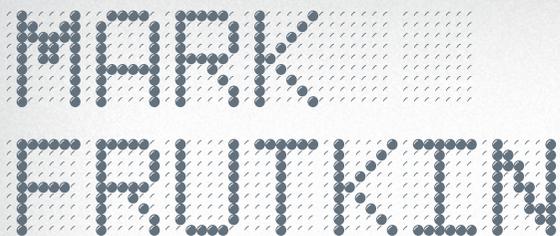
about botanics & the public imagination

about Bono at Heaney's funeral

about space & the procession of cellves

about the headlines about Bono at Heaney's funeral

about whether to roll down sleeves or get a jacket from the car



Gehry Origami

The way a butterfly flickers
 back and forth across
 the backyard
 all kinda spastic like
 but soft, as if
 a small cloud's flapping its wings
 as if a suede glove's cut up
 and reassembled
 according to the wacky
 rules of Gehry origami
 a tiny opera house
 planet in its own eccentric orbit.

Listen

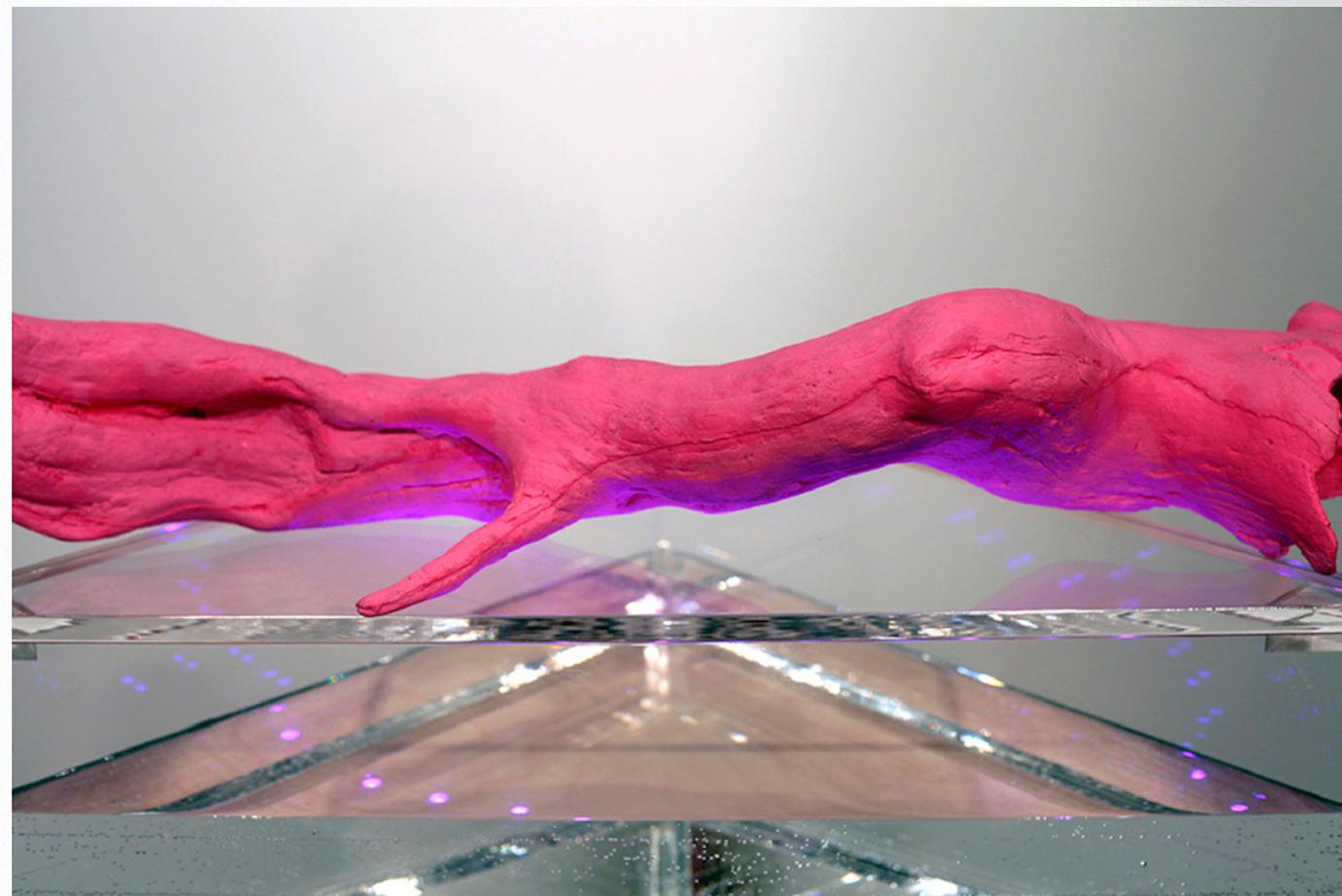
The Greek oracles seduce the future
 from a confusion of daily events:
 the passing of birds, ripples of water,
 the speaking of words that make little sense,
 the shiver of leaves, sneezing, the churn
 of entrails, the angry faces of storms,
 contours of clouds, the way a halo turns
 around the moon, and the kettle-drum
 crumpling of thunder, mirrors and stars.

In my office, the multi-faceted mirror ball
 throws ovals of sunlight around the room,
 the computer hums knowingly, in thrall
 to a future I dare not assume.
 I hear a crack of lightning and wonder
 if the words I'm reading are prophetic,
 I see a dragon cloud as I wander –
 will the future prove catastrophic?

Sachets of snow in branches of spruce
 outside my window resemble strange writing
 in a pure language, a likeness of truth,
 far off in the distance a crow flashing
 under a mute blue sky, the sun and clouds
 send us signs and signals but say nothing,
 the world remains silent, muffled, guarded
 in its mystery, yet whispering, whispering.



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LESLEY
GANZ

strangers.

you'll never know softness again,
salted skin, your body a crack we left

with the rest of our damage in ice

if i can offer you one thing that
thing would be feeling, something
forgotten as sand drifted slowly to glass

now you are shallow
and tasteless, and we who are left
are a stranger like many: hardened, alone

as the sky drifts apart from the sea

fibres.

in fibres they're still here
to speak through drops of sweat, your

voice seeking safety in song, stale breath
past the paleness of my teeth is

held by dust, powder on my
face; my bitten mouth, dyed red,

masks lips chapped by the cold. so
send your scraps of paper, woven pieces:

i'll collect them with the lyrics you
left steeping with your tea
Shoshannah Ganz

Basho and the Pilgrims

On the Camino de Santiago pilgrims complain about ruined lives, abortions and addictions, sore feet and the weather. Basho's pilgrims write poetry about nature try to become one with everything visit shrines and pay homage to great poets and the seasons. Everything is a reminder of mortality.

Contemporary travelers on the ancient pilgrim paths wear designer outdoor gear and get blisters. Basho was given money

for new straw sandals and writes about his disciple wearing his discarded paper raincoat.

Christian pilgrim paths are littered with complaints while Japanese poets never mention bleeding feet in their travel accounts and even the lice from a guest house visit are honoured and have a proper place as part of the journey in the communal renga poetry of the ancient Buddhist poet-pilgrims.

The Way Home

We find ourselves in strange lands by accident or design called to worship in temples to foreign gods lost always in language silent ignorant of custom searching again for shelter and food the way home

Offering at Adashino

There is a proper place for everything in Japan even for grieving and giving an offering for the death of your unborn child. This is my offering.



false teeth futures

eli is planning a trip to portland and someone who's been to nihon chimes in that the japanese garden on murray street is quite authentic. i think why don't you stick the eggplant emoji at the end of your fucking recommendation? eli said i left my smokes at her other house, the one she lives in during term, like the world conspires to keep me around. it is what it isn't. eggplant doesn't contain egg, but eggplant does contain nicotine. in january i didn't go to karaoke. karaoke is me screaming at american craig that do you see what i see is about the atomic bomb. in august my office got sloppy drunk on midori after calling kitsilano all evening. i took the bus by eli's house in between, but spring's deciduous jungle overgrew, elided the sleepy place. caffeine's a pesticide and coffee was a pretense. i pictured pierre elliot Trudeau and offspring headed to judo practice in an unmarked RCMP car.

crabapple flowers

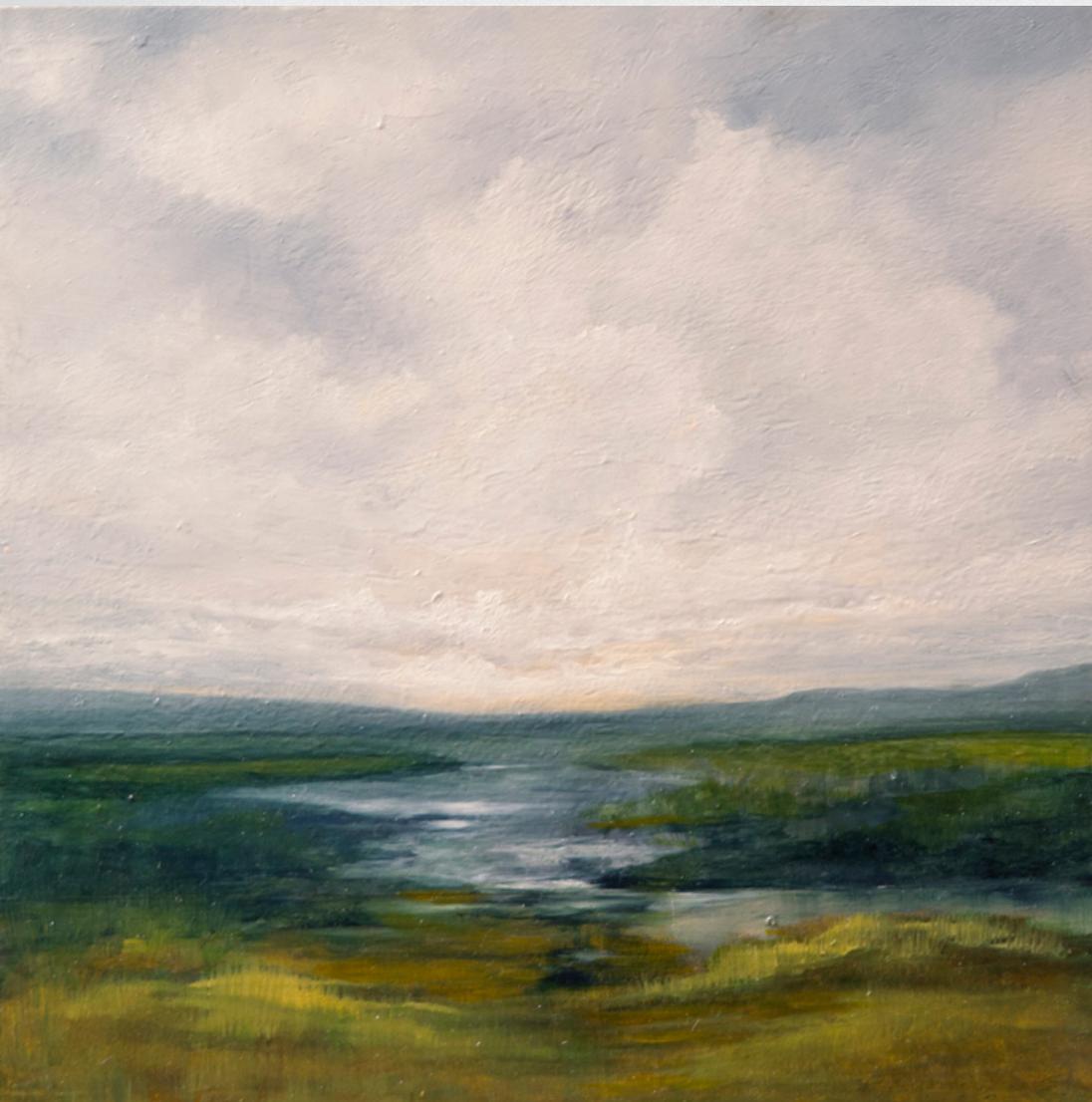
make-believe cherry blossoms

crush under flip-flops

chinatown remixed

an unsettling cross sulks at lebreton and somerset. maybe it's a feeble drying rack, or a faux-anglo street sign to spite cartier and hideyoshi. this is chinatown remixed: little saigon's wartime blocks lined with pho places, little italy's churches against the nagasaki prohibition singing ave marias in deadlight before the black cat downroad revives.

god impelled me go
forth build a makeshift haibun
fifth mediate gloom



EEN
 LADOUCEUR

Corktown Common

And we passed the Imperial Oil Opera Company
 after giving the park at the underpass our
 all, still dizzy from swings whose parabolas don't

have our enormous bodies in mind: I almost barfed
 on the woodchips they use instead of sand now.
 This was very east of here. I'd never paid mind

to the company's name, but even the mezzo-sopranos,
 we supposed, need dough. You only
 really discover your love for things after you know

you might be in a position to miss them soon.
 I was happier to barf at five years old: pursuits
 were worth the sour loss. Patrons were forming

a line, wearing actual tuxedos, eager for Pagliacci
 to make them reassess their stance on the clowns,
 and the whole quality-of-life situation there.

Eye sockets pinched around monocles. Not really –
 I'm painting a picture. Those men did not have
 things I wish I had but they lack things I wish I lacked.

SEEMA MADHAVAN PLEASE

Still Life with Tapers

for Grandpa Ted and Grandma Helen

They weren't my grandparents. Even if mine were alive, they'd have been half a world away, in India. My friend Katherine's grandparents lived just an hour out of town. We spent a few weekends there each semester, leaving Boston behind but taking our books to study in their floral upholstered living room overlooking Nantucket Sound. She never called to tell them we were coming. We walked

from the bus stop, six lefts and four rights, and always found her grandfather working in the garage while her grandmother rested inside after lunch. They never let on that our visit surprised them. We settled in as if we'd both grown up in this house; we knew which rooms were ours. I graded chemistry problem sets lying on my belly on the living room sofa, my arm hanging down to the papers on the floor.

I called them Grandma and Grandpa, as if they, too, were mine. She cooked, and he loaded the plates into the dishwasher afterward. He checked for emails while she typed letters on her typewriter, though it was getting harder, she said, to find replacement ribbons. At supper time, she laid out his pills on the edge of his placemat and lit the tapers on the table, the one on her left before the one on her right. I can still see,

as if from my place beside her, the embroidered cloth and the twin glass candlesticks, the candle on the left always shorter than the other. Her hand sure but trembling.

Seamus Heaney

It was early morning, a Saturday in summer,
when I learned he'd died, and all day—
while I walked in the park,
made puppets with my children,
discussed finances with my husband—
I heard his voice in my head, clear as water in a deep pool
where I could see all the way to the mussels
resting on rocks at the bottom.

I was twenty-one when I heard him read.
I ran straight from the boathouse after racking my oar,
took the T to Harvard, and ran again through the Yard
to arrive at the standing-room-only auditorium. My legs
too tired to stand, I sat on the floor, leaning against the last row of seats
with my back to the stage. I never even glimpsed him,
just heard his quiet brogue that reached through the hush
to all of us in that room. I can't say how long I listened—
All I know is a door into the dark—but I can recall, anytime,
the sound of his voice: bottomless, humble, and unafraid.
It was a fall evening, the world outside was dark,
and his voice, the light.

—
Note:

Italicized line is the first line of Heaney's poem, "The Forge."

In Holloway Prison, 1913

In the official version,
no pain is caused by forcible feeding.
Why, then, the stifled screams,
the shouted commands and scraping of chairs
as women are tied down? Clamped teeth are pried
open with steel, jaws winched wider
and wider apart. The mouth's stretched corners
tear and bleed. Milk
is poured in, then the tube withdrawn.
The parade moves on.

In a quiet cell, a woman sews
steel nails into her petticoat.
Her official weight is unchanged.
She sews in her wedding ring,
which slips easily
from a shrunken finger.



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KAREN MASEY

A Mother Comments on Quantum Entanglement

The unknowable half-life of cobalt eyes,
 their sea-blue refresh rate The red neon
 of sunset on his hair How he compels
 toward you, thoughtful, then away and again;
 his hand holding yours with his surprising presence
 When you walk together, you can hear
 the indigo thump of his year-ten heart
 through the ectomorphic cage of his body: enthusiasm
 Some days you spy in his irises the strange skyline
 of the netherworld he travels in, creative and lithe, easily,
 as ideas collide and spin on his slipstream--
 Tonight he's plotting a pixel dimension,
 you nod and flick two questions aloft
 and hear every way possible
 to reach the *Druinn Corridor*,
 with or without the full moon temple pool reflection bonus
 Here comes his latest methodology
 of strategizing on the run,
 although you admit your missteps on cobblestones,
 curved thoughts careering into your sudden flash grasp
 of what is necessary to know
 about quantum entanglement,
 simply catalyzed by softly touching his far shoulder
 and listening
 while you both plunge
 magnificently
 through a galaxy wintered with fallen blossoms
 in what at T-40 minutes you had believed to be
 a gentle evening in May

Marginalia

Once upon a time, you wrote in soft pencil
in tidy margins around your thoughts.
Now, your fingers cramp around an ergonomic pen,
could never return to even one arpeggio on ivory keys.
Distracted, your thoughts rest abraded,
the hallmark of a disease
that fuels your future by consuming
the myriad versions of your past; there goes
the natural, unsung order of things, a royal barge
that has lost its pageantry, being pulled by ghosts along
dim shadow canals in darkness. I don't argue now,

but it stings to hear you tease or change details
unwittingly, befriending the wolf, sending pigs to meet
Goldilocks and Little Red, who are suddenly my sisters.
Horses run back into burning barns, still harnessed
to their marriages. You pause,
your story locked in images your words
no longer unhasp, the lost name of your childhood
dog, the colour of your father's
eyes, the word for their colour
an indecipherable tag.

Like yours, you resign,
then decry the brute betrayals of the body;
aging, an infection in your sciences, your elderly sister
with diabetes, going blind with immaculate degeneration.
All my life, I heard how much I look like you, and now,
some days even you cannot tell who I am.

I rise to fetch tea and biscuits. It's fifty years to reach your kitchen,
and before I return, your chin has dropped to your chest in the prayer of sleep.
Your wall clock insists. I recall a day you drove me to high school in the rain,
and the car smelled like herbal shampoo and the downpour of our
argument about the clothes I had on. I remember

how eventually, every poem becomes a love song to the moribund,
sung by an aging chorus, or played on ancient lyres with different timbres.
My childhood fizzles,
anything it might mean to you
drops away like the spent booster from a rocketship after lift off.

Hazel, you declare, when I return with tea,
emerging from some unlocked corridor
of failing memory.

Your dad had hazel eyes, I say.
Of course! you answer, looking, really looking at me.
Like mine, I submit. You seem happy,
probably thinking of your father.
What a coincidence! you say.

We are laughing now,
embracing this putative order of things;
forging the signatures of genes,
the dominant chord
playing against the haunting minor
of the recessive.

POEIN

MC LACHLEN

Three untitled poems

1.

the wind,
 minute rasps made roar in multiplication –
 leaves,
 as if in number could ever EQUATE,
 be borne unto ear

as unit,

as sound,
 both,
 and sound effacing

2.

birds,
 an unraveling flock –
 like flurried and brown debris
 at the business end of a leaf blower –
 as if wind bewildering the intensity of shine

3.

streetlights swim through gutter streams,
 shiver and bloated worms
 reflecting



COLIN MORTON

My first memory

My first memory is of
remembering.

Early one morning I knelt
at the kitchen screen door
(having climbed from my crib
and crawled across the floor,
though these things I do not remember).

I knelt at the kitchen screen door
looking out at
dark fender, bright chrome,
and thought to myself
We have a new car.

Later, my parents packed the trunk full
and drove us away from that house.
We kept moving
from town to city,
province to province,
laying down strata of memory
unearthed haphazardly by time.

Beginnings, changes,
discarded cribs,
awakenings, missed chances,
middens
of old lives abandoned for new,
forsaken but never quite forgotten.

My first memory is of
remembering,
one I nurture now,
write down in case
memory itself goes dark.

PETER NORMAN

We Are the Better Part of Awe

after "Morel," by Pearl Pirie

Stripped the curmudgeon bare, exposing mud,
and in the lab concocted lullabies.

Toiled in filth a thousand hours or more
helping St. Francis calm stampeding steer.

Wield more power than our ad admits;
see in clods of mud the mustard seed.

Together we are greater than I is.
We heed the signals from our id side,

saw the belly of the ark with sharks'
serrated fins. U strokes let us

flee the scene. Our tees show Che. Our chefs
make war on boredom. We don't lose our wars.

Our era's known for weaponry, for high-tech flesh-erasers.
Tread carefully. We own the means to bring you down.

Poisoner / Victim

after "The Provost Responds," by Anne Compton

The poisoner's hands are long and beautiful.
He crumples the verso page and smooths the recto.

The victim's throat has turned a soothing blue.
Blue mist billows in the cranial dome.

The poisoner's preferred career would be in clockworks
but sometimes in life a dark door opens.

The victims are motley and mottled, cyan, ragtag.
Mute audience, they don't exhort he take his bow.

The poisoner can't do this anymore.
The only thing he gains is guilt. Remuneration's nugatory.

Sometimes a voided victim will renew
her strength and twitch. Then slip back to anonymous.

Poison can enliven for a time, inebriate.
The victim thus affected may ventriloquize.

A victim took the poisoner's voice one evening,
mumbled mumbo-jumbo, stilted hoohaw.

The poison's in a vial on the glassed-in shelf, right there.
Go on. Knock yourself out. He says you're welcome.

How We Do

after "what makes you 'organized'?" by nikki reimer

Loitering with crew & co.,
 doing as the alpha does
 or doing what you feel
 you want. Getting laid in a manger,
 getting quarts of sense
 knocked from your head. Who doesn't
 crave the big-ass novelty cheque
 given by grinning suit-n-tie men
 as PR bulbs go off? Fuck it every way, all ways.
 The cheque goes through, but man, the cash don't last.

Writing After

after "Postmodern Literature," by Erin Mouré

Diurnal slog. Triumphs ever fewer.
 Garbled edges of palimpsest proofs
 proving nothing. I work so cheaply
 I should pay these wages back to you.
 Forgive this violence.
 The day has waned. Don't know how I spent
 the bulk of it.

Why can I not sit still.
 I chisel out a line occasionally.
 Sidle off, do washing,
 try some other
 task. Try belonging to a suburb.
 Such polished mirrors to pose against:
 neighbours' many unsmudged windows.
 Hose/mower/wacker, such deft moves.
 Here is your dream. Why ever did you dream it?

Bundled a clutch of poems into snowsuits,
 sent them downslope on an ailing sled. Carry
 your freight with pride but do it shyly.
 The most expensive vase again stands empty.
 I had sophisticated drinks, the finest meals,
 bonded with my shadow over whisky.
 Deliberately misspelled the names in greeting cards,
 choked on champions' medallions.

A dripping faucet no one fixes.
 A blind that slants and simply won't come down,
 the slats of which resist all forms of washing.
 Did you want another drink, or...?
 Not to worry. We can talk from anywhere.
 There's electronics now. Maybe we could
 talk with pics. App czars will surely thank you.
 Carry your maximum safe load, but shyly:
 safety first. The future is the children,
 pure as not-yet-fallen snow.
 Skilful at outliving adults too.

Forgive my voice. All flus possess me. Caught 'em mall, a
 meta-plague. Felt the night's first gale dressed
 in snowflakes, drifting, laughing, pulling
 into perfidy the snowsuit and its wad of literature.

5.

dear daphne marlatt

dear ana historic

dear

i liked the part where you said:

i learned that history is the real story the city fathers tell of the only important events in the world. a tale of their exploits hacked out against a silent backdrop of trees, of wooden masses. so many claims to fame, so many ordinary men turned into heroes. (where are the city mothers?) the city fathers busy building a town out of so many shacks labeled the Western Terminus of the Transcontinental, Gateway to the East—all these capital letters to convince themselves of its, of their, significance.

i'd like to take this moment to apologize for being clumsy with my feminism for blushing when i say the word vagina for sometimes forgetting to fight the patriarchy for loving foucault derrida fanon deleuze mcluhan soja marx zizek sartre lacan agamben barthes jameson (and i should stop there) too much

& de beauvoir butler kristeva irigaray luxemburg atwood cixous greer woolf wolf braidotti stein hutchison (& i admit it's hard to think of more)

not enough not more

i am a classic third wave apologist

& i understand this is how feminism is embodied now?

today in the university we spend far less time thinking about counter-hegemony than hegemony.

speaking from experience

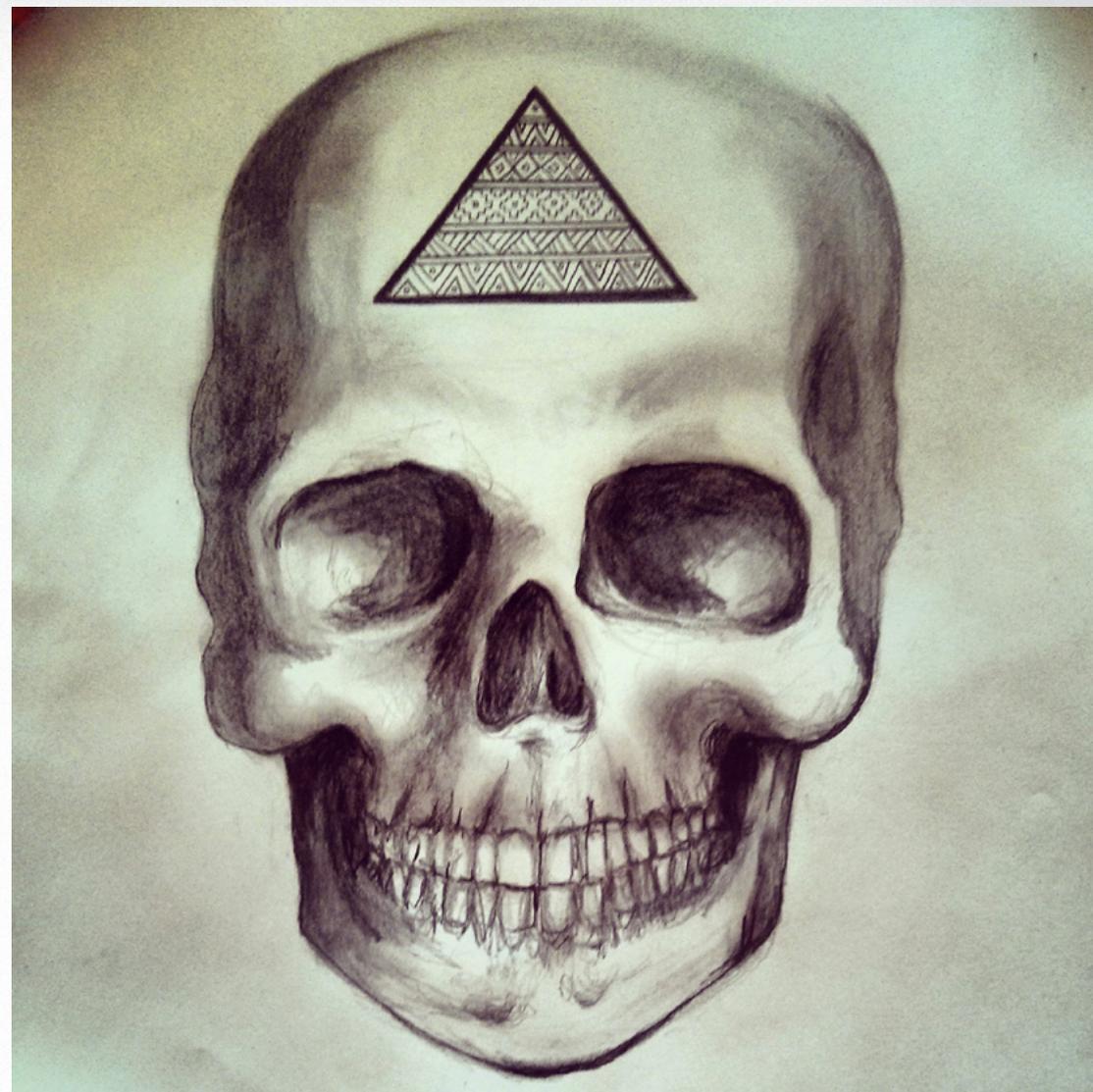
daphne marlatt is on to some thing

the his story professors

i have had the dis pleasure of knowing

are dis appointingly

with out self reflexivity



Verbal

+

graphite on paper, 2014

instagram: @verbalstreetart

POULAND PREUOST

Amnesty

Bruises & scars
in a shallow ghost limb nightmare

When the time finally comes around

That's ok, as I've more than once
done worse to others

Apparently, it's sweeter to grant amnesia
than to give in to amnesty or need

Mental Freezer

Artificial ink among the journal pages
we're diced & spliced into circles

Faces fold away to fictive voices –
nothing intrinsic at the core of finality

Now remaindered as merely imagined

Valentino

Ambling casually
elliptical in my orbits of you

From oceanic depths
abundant flora & fauna
intricately drapes over
our quiet undersea mountains

Wonder always wonders
whenever you ask
if I really

In d'Act

Caught in the basking heat of desire

Red glyphs on hair-raised skin

Animals vital & ghosts ecstatic
yes, you're welcomed to join

Or else next time, just... maybe knock?



Jeff McIntyre
Untitled no. 5_Fields and Fences Collection_9x5 feet_mixed media on wood panel
jeffmcintyreart.com

TIM

MOCK SANG

highway of tears

highway 16, the eight hundred kilometres
cutting through northern BC like a failed cesarean

this is winter: a straight razor shave in a truck stop restroom
tap water lather with a bar of hand soap

young, unwed girls want to leave the city
their fathers' callused hands can't hold them

around here there are roads right off the highway that won't be used for fifty years
not until the trees grow tall enough to be cut again

waves wash out on the shores of the Skeena
and retreat, their marks like victims

a wave washes out on the beach
beach-goers chase it back into the sea

you fell asleep, the pine forest, new snow
don't forget there are some places where you can still get lost

Tottenham Alleys

They look the same as any other alley –
narrow and cobbled and there's no way out.
They haven't changed since Milton. But these ones
are littered with leftover chicken bones,
mostly from tourists.

The bones are being licked clean by dogs
whose own back limbs are gone,
amputated with the surgical precision
of sub-Saharan kids playing doctor,
making condoms from discarded plastic.
It's an offering of abject bait
from the alleys' residents, enough
to fetch almost no sympathy.

LESLIE STRAUTT

Dandelions

Marinade on fresh meat, dandelion greens
 and sweet sap from my neighbour's tree
 last spring I dipped my fork in squid's ink tasted
 blackened shrimp, Gaudí's curves, his saffron
 strangeness my mouth shaped dragons too where
 old stones vibrate inside the city walls austere carriage-worn
 whether I agree or don't agree doesn't matter
 deer leaps forward just around the bend motorcycle splits it in two
 driver flies forty-five feet to rise again on legs that tremble
 what needs years we forsake in minutes
 and still
 everywhere spring weeds dew damp
 yellow heads like love strewn on the table



Anna Griffiths
 Look Up
www.facebook.com/AnnaGriffithsArtwork/



Anna Griffiths
 Tripping
www.facebook.com/AnnaGriffithsArtwork/

D. S. STYMETIST

Tidal Pools

1.

Rust spreads from season to season;
 it spreads along the rotten chassis
 —a blossoming of red corrosion,
 until with a gentle nudge
 it gives way and becomes a hole.

2.

A clump of grey hair rests
 on the threshold of a doorway,
 announcing the loss of body
 in this hotel of slow dying.

On the floor of careful finality,
 a man cannot raise himself
 from his bed of odor
 without the hands of others.

3.

The face in the mirror,
 disown it how you may,
 thoughtful now, knowing.

The tide is coming in,
 it is always rushing in.

ANNE MARIE TOOK IT UP

The public staircase in Toronto now named the Baldwin Steps

Looking back
made the climb add up
to something like fact
or revelation: the world
worlding as CN needle,
reimagined lakefront,
Lego-mapped blocks laid out
with the fabulous detail
of anonymity.
Below the escarpment
a dairy fleet hummed,
ready for the night run
from a sticky city
with a sweet tooth.
(pigeon, staggering
on a hot-mopped roof)
Any vantage is enough
to reposition history:
some hold it close
as a stone's throw,

a Tonka-toy catastrophe
(asphalt miasma
rising like thirst)
and it may be true
that fear of heights
has less to do with falling
than the making-strange of scale,
unless it's just the raising (aha)
of possibility that tilts you
off-plane, like van Gogh's chair,
precarious in the third dimension.
(chainlink pinned
to the faulted earth)
I couldn't tell you now
what I was leaving or going to,
up the zigzag
of those stairs or what,
if anything, we called them.
The risen land.
Ishpadinaa.
(the birdshot sky
releasing starlings)

DEFINING YOUNG

Baptist Luncheon

At fifteen

silence drawn like drapes
around the table

when the father
of the girl I'd befriended at school

whom I'd clung to in loneliness
and whose name
I now forget

turned to me

*Tell us, dear,
how your Christian walk is going.*

How the Sounds Carry

Out here on a cloudy night
the dark is complete.

Not a film of light
to tell what's in the room.

To be held in a closet,
hand over your mouth.

Someone or something

must be over at the property
on the Coursey Line.

The dogs are angry
or excited, throwing themselves

at the chain-link limits
of their cages again.

What Voice

What holds me stiff
In fright, what shakes me.

What takes me by the shoulders
And warns, *Don't tell,*

In a whisper—what makes me.
What steers me

Toward the cellar door
Where none will find me, unheard

Down in that well.
What calls from across the field

With lies
Of my son and daughters.

With its hooked
Finger, what draws me like a sheep

Toward a deep hole.
What breaks

My leg, my spirit
And leaves me to suffer.

What voice
Stands over me in the night.

CHANGMING YUAN

Would Or Wouldn't: the Variations of the Wing

If every human had a pair of wings
 (Made of strong mussels and broad feathers
 Rather than wax like Icarus')
 Who wouldn't jump high or become eager to fly
 Either towards the setting sun
 Or against the rising wind?

Who wouldn't migrate afar with sunshine
 And glide most straight to a warmer spot
 In the open space? Indeed

Who would continue to confine himself
 Within the thick walls of a small rented room?

Who would willingly take a detour
 Bump into a stranger, or stumble down
 Along the way? More important

Who would remain fixed here
 At the same corner all her life
 Like a rotten stump, hopeless
 Of a new green growth?



Anna Griffiths
 Bear
www.facebook.com/AnnaGriffithsArtwork/

AUTHOR

BIOGRAPHIES

Sylvia Adams is a poet and novelist whose work has appeared in Canadian, U.S. and British magazines. A workshop facilitator and founding member of Canada's Field Stone Poets, she is the winner of the Aesthetica International Poetry Award in both 2012 and 2013. Recent poetry appears in Queen's Quarterly, Mindshadows and online as First H.M. in Room Magazine.

Susan J. Atkinson: I was born and raised in England, but now make my home in Ottawa with my husband and four daughters. After thirteen years working in the Toronto film industry, I turned my passion for reading and writing into everyday life and now spend my days playing with rhythm and rhyme and making up stories and songs for my Kindergarten classroom. At night I write poetry and co-write with my film director husband. We have recently seen our first script produced into a made-for-TV movie, which aired in the summer of 2014. I have had numerous poems published in both Canadian and U.S. journals. Some publications include: The Antigonish Review, The Dalhousie Review, Room of One's Own, Bywords, The Pottersfield Portfolio, The White Wall Review (2011 and 1994), The Carleton Arts Review, Tower Poetry and Green's Magazine. In 2015 I was named one of The Hot Ottawa Voices with the Tree Reading Series. I have also had several children's poems published, with appearances in both Ladybug Magazine and Pockets and I am the author of the Little Witch Press children's picture books.

John Barton has published eleven books and six chapbooks of poetry, including *West of Darkness: Emily Carr, a Self-Portrait* (third bilingual edition, BushchekBooks, 2006), *Hypothesis* (Anansi, 2001), *Hymn* (Brick, 2009), *For the Boy with the Eyes of the Virgin: Selected Poems* (Nightwood, 2012), *Balletomane: The Program Notes of Lincoln Kirstein* (JackPine, 2012), and *Polari* (Goose Lane, 2014). Co-editor of *Seminal: The Anthology of Canada's Gay-Male Poets* (Arsenal Pulp, 2007), he lives in Victoria, where he edits *The Malahat Review*.

Frances Boyle is the author of *Light-carved Passages* (BushchekBooks, 2014) and *Portal Stones* (Tree Press, 2014), which won the Tree Reading Series chapbook contest. Her poetry and fiction appear, among other place, in *The New Quarterly*, *Vallum*, *ottawater*, *Prairie Fire*, *CV2*, *Fiddlehead*, *Room*, *Moonset* and anthologies on such topics as form poetry, Hitchcock, and daughters remembering their mothers, as well as the recent assignment: *zero* (above/ground press, 2015). Prizes she's received include This Magazine's Great Canadian Literary Hunt, and Arc's Diana Brebner Prize. **Stephen Brockwell** is an Ottawa poet and small business owner. He is currently cultivating two very slow growing manuscripts of poetry and two seedling novellas.

Carellin Brooks is a writer and instructor at the University of British Columbia and Emily Carr University. She has published four books, including her most recent, *One Hundred Days of Rain*, named a best book cover of 2015, and edited two collections. She is a member of the Writers' Union and a trustee of the Vancouver Public Library. Her hobbies include performance art (viewing), donuts (eating), and the sea (standing in).

Sara Cassidy lives in Victoria, where she teaches and edits and writes. Her seventh and eighth books for children will be published later this year. You can find out more about her at www.saracassidywriter.com

Once the Poet Laureate of Toronto (2012-15), **George Elliott Clarke** is an Africadian (African-Nova Scotian). A multiply prized poet, his 14th work is *Extra Illicit Sonnets* (Exile, 2015), a sequence of erotic poems. His forthcoming title is the epic poem, "Canticles," whose subject is slavery, to be published, over five years, beginning in Fall 2016. In January, 2016, he was named the seventh Parliamentary Poet Laureate.

Anita Dolman does a whole bunch of things, most of them in Ottawa. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Bywords.ca*, *Grain* and the Phafours Press mini-chap *Glass Studio*. Her short fiction most recently appeared in the anthology *Triangulation: Lost Voices* and in *On Spec: the Canadian magazine of the fantastic*. Anita's second chapbook of poetry, *Where No One Can See You*, was published in 2014 by *AngelHousePress*. Stop by and visit her on Twitter @ajdolman, where she'll pour you some hashtags and talk about poetry things.

nina jane drystek is a writer and poet living in Ottawa. Her work has appeared in *In/Words Magazine* and *Small Talk*. She has studied literature, writing and theatre at various institutions.

Claire Farley is from Québec's Outaouais region. She is the co-founder and editor of *Canthus*, a feminist literary journal. She has writing in some mark made, a limited edition publication considering hybrid, material literary practices, and the chapbook anthology assignment: *zero* (above/ground press, 2015).

Ottawa author **Mark Frutkin's** novel, *Fabrizio's Return* (Knopf, 2006), won the Trillium and Sunburst Awards and was a finalist for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Canada/Caribbean region). His 1988 novel, *Atmospheres Apollinaire*, was a finalist for the Governor General's Award (fiction). His most recent novel is set in 13th century China (*A Message for the Emperor, Vehicule*, 2012). His most recent poetry collection is *Hermit Thrush* (Quattro Press, 2015). Altogether he has published fourteen books of fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Website: www.markfrutkin.com Blog: www.markfrutkin.blogspot.com

[jesslyn gagno](#) [formerly [jesslyn delia smith](#)] lives in Ottawa, ON. poetry can sometimes be found on her blog at [jesslyndelia.com](#) or you can follow her on twitter [@insidethevan](#).

[Shoshannah Ganz](#) grew up outside of Ottawa and completed her graduate work at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. She now lives in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, where she teaches at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University. Much of her research and writing is inspired by Japanese literature and her travels in Asia. Shoshannah's forthcoming scholarly work, to be published with National Taiwan University Press in 2016, looks at the influence of the East on Canadian women writers from 1867-1929. Her current writing, both scholarly and poetic, is mostly focused on the effects of industry on the environment in Canada and Japan.

[Jenna Jarvis](#) is a writer whose poetry has appeared in such publications as *The Puritan*, *In/Words*, and *Keep This Bag Away From Children*. She received an honourable mention in *The Puritan's* 2014 Thomas Morton contest.

[Ben Ladouceur](#) published his first book of poems, *Otter*, through Coach House Books in 2015. It received a Type Books Award, and was included in the *National Post's* year-end best books list.

In 2015, [Sneha Madhavan-Reese](#) won *Arc Poetry Magazine's* Diana Brebner Prize, was shortlisted for the Montreal International Poetry Prize, and won the Editor's Dad's Choice Award in the CV2 2-Day Poem contest. Her debut poetry collection, *Observing the Moon*, was recently released by Hagios Press.

[Karen Massey](#) lives in Ottawa near the historic Rideau Canal. Her writing has received prizes and been published in print publications in Canada and the US, and in the UK, in *Inky Needles*, and in anthologies including *Decalogue: Ten Ottawa Poets*, and *The Bukowski Erasure Poetry Anthology* (Silver Birch Press, 2014). Her erasure poetry has appeared online at *The Found Poetry Review's* PoMoSco and *Là Bloom* projects, and elsewhere, and is forthcoming at *subTerrain* and *Experiment-O*. Her second chapbook is *Strange Fits of Beauty & Light: Erasure Poems from Archibald Lampman's Sonnets* (above/ground press, 2014).

[Robin McLachlen](#) is the author of *Turn* (2009).

[Colin Morton](#) is a co-director of the Tree Reading Series in Ottawa and coordinator of the Poetry Views review site at [poets.ca](#). He has published ten books of poetry, most recently *Winds and Strings*.

[Peter Norman](#) has published three poetry collections, most recently *The Gun That Starts the Race* (icehouse, 2015), and a novel, *Emberton* (Douglas & McIntyre, 2014). For more info, check out [www.peternorman.ca](#).

[Julia Polyck-O'Neill](#) is a critic, curator, visual artist, writer, and co-curator (with poet Craig Dodman) of the Border Blur Reading Series in St Catharines, ON. She is a doctoral candidate in Brock University's Interdisciplinary Humanities program, and her SSHRC-supported research examines historic and contemporary conceptualisms in Vancouver visual arts and literature.

[Roland Prevost's](#) first trade poetry publication *Singular Plurals* (Chaudiere Books, 2014) came out in the fall of 2014. He has been published by *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Descant*, *The Toronto Quarterly*, *Ottawa Arts Review*, among many others. He is the author of five chapbooks. The latest one, *Culls* (above/ground press, 2015), launched late this past fall. He won the 2006 John Newlove Poetry Award, judged that year by Erin Moure. He loves to take colour photographs of deep-sky astronomical objects.

[Tim Mook Sang](#) is a school teacher currently living in Ottawa. For inquiries, please contact tmooksang@gmail.com.

[Lesley Strutt's](#) roots in the Ottawa Valley are deep. She is the descendant of William Pittman Lett, a pre-confederation poet who was known as the Bard of Bytown before Bytown was renamed Ottawa in 1854. Lesley has a PhD in linguistics from McGill University. Her poetry has been published with Leaf Press, *The Literary Review*, *The Canadian Woman Studies Journal*, *ottawater*, *Bitterzoet Magazine*, *Bywords*, and more. She is winner of the 2015 Tree Chapbook contest.

[D.S. Stymeist](#) currently teaches poetics, Renaissance drama, and aboriginal literature at Carleton University in Ottawa and has published poems in *Dalhousie Review*, *Prairie Fire*, *Steel Chisel*, *Ottawater*, *In/Words*, and *ByWords*. His work recently was featured as the Parliamentary Poet Laureate's Poem of the Month (February). His essays and reviews have appeared in many journals, such as *Studies in English Literature*, *Mosaic*, and *Genre*. He is the editor and founder of the micro-press, *Textualis*, and one of the organizers of Ottawa's VERSeFest. He grew up a resident of O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation and is presently revising a collection of poetry entitled *Dead Reckoning* that explores the intersection of language, culture, and history. He recently attended the 2015 Sage Hill poetry workshop conducted by Don McKay.

[Anne Marie Todkill](#) is a poet and essayist whose work has appeared in *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Canadian Notes and Queries*, CV2, *The Malahat Review*, *The Winnipeg Review*, *The New Quarterly* and *Prairie Fire*. She received *Arc's* Diana Brebner Prize in 2014.

[Deanna Young](#) is the author of three books of poetry, including *House Dreams*, published by Brick Books in 2014 and nominated for the Trillium Book Award for Poetry, the Ottawa Book Award and the Archibald Lampman Award. Her writing has appeared in journals across Canada and received numerous prizes and acknowledgements, including the grand prize in the 2013 PRISM international Poetry Contest. She co-directs Ottawa's Tree Reading Series.

[Yuan Changming](#), 8-time Pushcart nominee and author of 5 chapbooks, grew up in rural China, began to learn English at 19, and published monographs on translation before moving to Canada. With a Canadian PhD in English, Yuan currently edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Yuan in Vancouver, and has poetry appearing in *Best Canadian Poetry*, *BestNewPoemsOnline*, *Threepenny Review* and 1109 others across 37 countries.



O₂(H₂O)

The End