



Issue 15 | On the Record | Fall 2024

*Bare* by Daniel Cheung

## *from the editors*

The written word, in all its forms, is forever tied to physicality. The record holds onto the past with clinging hands, allowing all other memories to slip through the cracks into obscurity. To harness the power of words and their longevity is to mark your existence. But what about those whose voices are left unheard and unanswered? What about the burned books, the letters destroyed, the poems never published? Who controls the narrative? What part do we all play in upholding one version of reality? As Orwell describes in his infamous dystopian novel, “The past is whatever the records and the memories agree upon.” It is a structured, controlled process in which the physical record plays an integral role. Over and over again, fiction that explores dystopian futures depicts literature and art as dangerous, as needing to be destroyed and burned. Over and over, voices are smothered and words are unwritten.

With this fifteenth issue of the Lyre comes two opposing forces that struggle - the power of permanence and the certainty of the liminal. Things come and go, they are created and they are destroyed. Art is a way to assert one's right to exist and be recognized, solidifying our truths within a minefield of complex opinions. Within waves of uncertainty, misinformation, and the denying of truth, the vulnerability of human expression becomes a troubled path to navigate.

It is easy to overlook the intricacies of our world in favour of a black-and-white narrative. Here at The Lyre, we believe that literature and translation have the unique ability to interrogate these ideas of opinions and records. The Lyre's form as words and images on bound pages limits the ways we interact with the works. Thus, we invite our readers to interact with the text in new ways. Read it aloud to friends. Sing it. Do further research on the content you do not fully understand. Don't just agree with the words on the page; engage critically with even the most basic of facts.

As a magazine run by students for the students, our mission is clear. We lend our pages to those with voices deemed not loud enough to be heard, but who deserve to be listened to. In this vein, we would like to thank the authors and artists who have opened their hearts to us, filling these pages with their vulnerability in all its brilliance and creativity.

We would also like to extend a warm thank you to our executive team for all their hard work this past year. They have stepped up to the task time and time again. Great thanks must also be given to our Associate Editors for all their hard work, made even harder by the sensitive subject matter. As the first eyes on all our submissions, their dedication and enthusiasm are integral to *The Lyre*. Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Maria Barraza for her generous support, as well as the World Languages and Literatures department. This magazine is nothing without the people who continue to believe in it year after year, and we hope to continue inspiring people for years to come.

Sincerely,  
Daniel Cheung & Isobel Sinclair  
Editors-in-Chief, *The Lyre* 15

tric humming of fluorescents beneath the tape's soft default whirring. Diane didn't usually listen closely.

*"Hoping this is all wrapped up and over with sooner rather than later. I'd be bouncing off the walls if I was allowed to get out of bed."*

A long silence. Diane could feel the beat of each second, like twenty-one stones filling the hourglass of her rib cage. Her heart knew the rhythm too well by this point.

*"Miss you. Love you. All the things. I don't want to switch off, but I'll kick myself if there's nothing left after this. Bye, Diane. And...I'm sorry."*

Click.

Diane laid the tape recorder back in its box and slotted its lid into place. She tucked the box into her bag and drew out a bundle of pine needles from the hidden inside pocket. With the gentlest of movements, Diane tugged at the snippet of twine around the bundle's middle—just a loose touch, to allow the needles to splay slightly outwards. She let herself smile as they bounced into a flowering formation.

The wildflowers nestled in the little dip atop the headstone were bone-dry; they crumbled at Diane's touch. She swept them off carefully, watching the dusty particles waft away in the brumal breeze. With the divot cleared, Diane arranged the pine bouquet in the old flowers' place. A few pebbles here and there at the base to keep it steady against the wind, and it was done. Diane shuffled forward on her knees to press her mouth to the headstone, biting cold as it was.

*"Alfie, it's twelve fifty-two P.M., December 2nd," Diane murmured against the stone, her breath warm and damp. "And, just in case you forgot from last year...it's okay."*

*Abandoned* by Daniel Cheung



# Flag for Review

Christopher Pastulovic

My voice is muffled and [REDACTED]  
Says so many things but nothing  
Bent by eyes that watch, [EXPUNGED]  
Tell me what to say and [PROVE IT]  
Never [QUESTION] my [AUTHORITY]

So I write it here, directly  
Make my mind up [INCORRECTLY]  
Tell them what I think [UNLAWFULLY]  
Before another bill [PREVENTS IT]  
[DATA BLOCKED] and [NOTE EXPUNGED]

Privacy is but a [FOOTNOTE <sup>1</sup>]

You'll censor this? Okay, so tell me  
What should I be saying, really?  
[CONTENT WARNING: ALTERNATE FACTS]  
[REDACTED] words [FLAG FOR REVIEW]

Just hit it with the brand, why don't you?  
Put the mark of [HATE SPEECH] on it  
You won't keep me from [REDACTED]  
Even if you try to hide it [FACT-CHECK]  
Truth burns brighter than a [FOOTNOTE <sup>2</sup>]

And you can strike me on that, try it

The age of apathy is over [FACT-CHECK <sup>3</sup>]

And you cannot hide forever

[ERROR]



*(Un)seen* by Daniel Cheung

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<sup>1</sup> Please see our updated ToS for more information. Your privacy is very important to us.

<sup>2</sup> Usage of the word "lie" is a violation of our community guidelines.

<sup>3</sup> Community fact-checkers confirm that this phrase contains alternate facts, which violates our community guidelines.



**Afterhours**  
by Stephen Nganga



**Building**  
by Daniel Cheung

My body became a cage in the December of eleventh grade. Or maybe it was the summer of tenth grade. Ninth? Anyways, we were at the cabin, and my back became very sore. I kept having to crack it. Flies buzzed all over me day and night and the hot dry sun scorched my bones. When I tried to sleep my eyes felt stuck like they didn't belong in their sockets. And when I woke up I would check my teeth because I knew they were rotting, I knew they were bad teeth, I knew I was disgusting. I had never had a cavity in my life and all of a sudden I had eight and needed a root canal, because of the radiation treatment. The cancer I had in childhood was one from which there was a sure and speedy recovery. My parents and I both knew that I wasn't going to die, but we all still felt uneasy. There is no quick fix to a parent's worst nightmare. My parents were both medicated on my account. It was during this time that I began to read the text messages off my mother's phone and listen intently at her door to hear the bitter truth, to feel the hurt I knew I should feel.

'David and I will never be the same.'

'Both of us have had to be medicated.'

'Fiona is not well.'

'The stress is too much.'

And then the guilt would make sense.



# *Twelve Suspended*

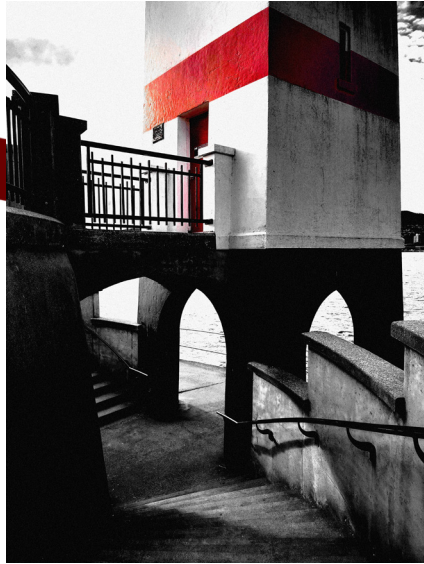
Isobel Sinclair

Twelve suspended, yoked, strung up at a liar's altar  
Bared, soul or otherwise, with entities arousing an arrow's blood  
—with wine at the endless feast.  
A dozen sheep are sacrificed to the god of greed  
And lust and shame. Husband, I shall call him your name.  
“Villainous shroud” the creatures clamour.  
Virtue goes unrewarded,  
Agreement discarded  
In favour of twitching feet  
Soaked in blood.  
White tunics dyed; callused hands wetted  
With the lather, scrubbing their ‘lovers’  
Brains from between the tiles.  
Penance, salvation, redemption,  
In the ruddy hands  
Given to the task of the goddess.  
Helen bares her breast invokes the ships  
To make me wait.  
But a falsified union, taken,  
Leaves them high and swinging.  
Twenty years too late,  
I am forced to grieve alone  
But you are forced to stare at what has become undone.  
Dare to cut them loose.  
Twelve to one.

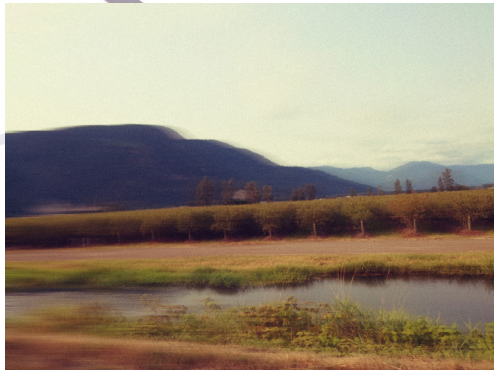


*Up* by Daniel Cheung





*The Place* by Daniel Cheung



*Pastoral in Motion*  
by Daniel Cheung

disuadirlo, dibujaban abominablemente la figura de otro cuerpo que era necesario destruir. Nada había sido olvidado: coartadas, azares, posibles errores. A partir de esa hora cada instante tenía su empleo minuciosamente atribuido. El doble repaso despiadado se interrumpía apenas para que una mano acariciara una mejilla. Empezaba a anochecer. Sin mirarse ya, atados rigidamente a la tarea que los esperaba, se separaron en la puerta de la cabaña. Ella debía seguir por la senda que iba al norte. Desde la senda opuesta él se volvió un instante para verla correr con el pelo suelto. Corrió a su vez, parapetándose en los árboles y los setos, hasta distinguir en la bruma malva del crepúsculo la alameda que llevaba a la casa. Los perros no debían ladrar, y no ladraron. El mayor-domo no estaría a esa hora, y no estaba. Subió los tres peldaños del porche y entró. Desde la sangre galopando en sus oídos le llegaban las palabras de la mujer: primero una sala azul, después una galería, una escalera alfombrada. En lo alto, dos puertas. Nadie en la primera habitación, nadie en la segunda. La puerta del salón, y entonces el puñal en la mano, la luz de los ventanales, el alto respaldo de un sillón de terciopelo verde, la cabeza del hombre en el sillón leyendo una novela.

*Towering* by Daniel Cheung



*Somewhere* by Daniel Cheung



*Memoirs of Spring* by Zeyna Al Gutani



*Just Awake* by Daniel Cheung

# Lost in time and land

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I spend my time on a cloud  
This is not the right way to exist  
If I had fame it would have already been death  
If I had life I would have lost it by now  
What is the life of an artist?  
I'm looking for the right answer, but all the places are quiet  
I would answer my questions,  
but the ink from my pen disappears on the paper  
every time I try to write  
In the moonlight is where I find comfort  
I'm just a stranger in a land of the familiars  
Sadness is a constant  
Every day seems like the past and the future  
I wonder how long this will be?