

# LYRE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 4 - 2013

LYRE MAGAZINE



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# LYRE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 4 □ REGENERATION □ SPRING 2013

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*Anosh Irani*

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## from the editor

Dear Readers,

As many of us may know, four years tends to be the traditional lifespan of a new friendship at the undergraduate level. However, I feel privileged to still personally call "friend," the previous two editors-in-chief, Daniel (#1, #2) and Brittany (#3). More so, we were colleagues and motivational forces in our aspirations to be writers, editors, and publishers. With that in mind, I believe I speak for the group of us when I bid farewell to the accomplishments and good times our generation of World Litties brought to SFU and the Lyre. We leave in capable hands the future of this publication and what it means to make permanent our literary creations.

On that note, I also congratulate all our published writers on their respective submissions during what has been our most ambitious issue to date. With three times the amount of published content, our editorial design has adapted to accommodate this growth. My sincerest appreciation goes out to the two game-changers that made this happen. Likewise, I wish to express my thanks to Professor Anosh Irani for the leadership and profound wisdom that has fueled the apprehensive fires of our student writers. Finally, a resounding "yea verily" belongs to our department head, Ken Seigneurie, for his everlasting passion for our education, upheld yet again this year by inviting Nuruddin Farah to visit our campus.

In closing, I have dedicated a special area on my bookcase to the rainbow spines of our literary legacy. Like the golden shimmer that borders this fourth issue of the Lyre, let us writers and artists enjoy the time we are but stars among the daytime sky.





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## Rotary Dial

by Daryn Wright

It was one of those nights that called for bourbon and an intimate phone call. The hotel bar was long and grimy and the best place to wallow in self-loathing. I swirled the liquid in the short glass and considered the last time she and I spoke. I believe her last words had been precisely:

“Don’t forget to grab laundry detergent, dear.”

And that was two months ago. I don’t know quite what had happened. I had stuffed my hands into my trouser pockets and walked down the street, eyes skipping from light post to light post, meditating on the way the laundry detergent bottle would feel when I rescued it off the grocery’s shelf, and whisked it off in the Maytag awaiting in our basement. Next thing I knew I was buying an old Cadillac with the urgency of a heart attack, and speeding south.

The stain on my shirt collar loomed large and invasive. I thought of the shape of her lips and coffee mug rims and cigarette burns. I fingered the few dimes I had left in my pocket – the ones that would have gone towards clean socks and underwear - and held them hard in my fist. The fellow beside me wore his fedora tilted down over his large pockmarked nose and smoked profusely. I watched him for ten minutes as he continued to pull cigarettes out of his pocket, smoke them half-way, and then grind them savagely into his empty glass. I had the sensation that I knew this man; not that I’d met him before but that I knew him in a deeper, more profound way; like we had been Buddhist monks together in the year 890 CE.

Eventually he saw me looking and offered me one. I declined. I felt like I had smoked those cigarettes, and I had had enough.

The phone on the wall seemed obtrusively mounted, like anyone walking to the restrooms would undoubtedly walk right into it. I staked out my bar stool, set my eyes on the narrow hall, fully expecting to see the next person run into it nose first, blood spilling down the front, black like wine.

It had been the freedom of moving my feet forward at first, like the fantasy of driving a car off a bridge: the exhilaration of the fall. There was no plan, there was no next step.

It had been purely instinct all the way through. I worked as a ranch hand for thirty days, long enough for it to feel normal. I wandered around the streets of New Orleans, long enough to get a taste for proper bourbon. I barely spoke; I entertained the thought of never speaking again. Maybe I’d be one of those monks who wore white robes and shaved their heads and kept their eyes downcast. I would wander through the brick alleyways and study strangers, and never say a word in response.

I didn’t know what she thought of it - of me, but I’m sure she loathed me. I’m sure she remained at home like the dutiful wife and mother she was, bathing our daughter in soap that smelled of bubble gum. I’m sure she continued to make lunches, just in case I’d sneak in through the door late at night, snatch up the paper bag, and head to a regular day at work. I’m sure my tie and pale blue shirt were laid on the bed after she’d made it in the morning, as if she expected me to just saunter in with the laundry detergent, nothing out of the ordinary.

I thought of movement as I swirled my glass. I thought of the way smoke wafts above, not below.

After my second glass the feeling had gone. The feeling of falling, of aimlessly groping had evaporated. I was now just holding an empty glass and wearing a stained shirt.

It happened the way it would on film: the tunnel vision, a frame of black around that damn telephone. Still no one had walked into it. Perhaps I had inaccurately gauged its distance from the wall. The perfectly circular limitation of view was unnerving. Was it the bourbon, was I going blind? Is this what extreme cataracts felt like? I looked away. The bartender was looking at the phone too; my spirit-animal chain smoker was fixated on it.

I had to take a piss. I blinked twice and shoved the glass away, groaned, walked away from my stool, avoiding eye contact with the fucking telephone. Looking down at my rounded brown shoes, I walked towards the men’s room, but stopped just in front of the phone. Picking up the receiver, I just wanted to feel the way the rotary dial clickity-clacked. I just wanted to feel something cold in my hands.



DARYN WRIGHT

I dialed home and listened to the dial tone, timing my breathing with each pause. “Hello?” The jingle of a voice I hadn’t heard for two months, voice asking for white bread and non-homogenized milk.

“Ah, Alice, it’s me. I couldn’t find the detergent you like. I’m coming home now. I love you.”

“What?”

“I said I love you.”

“What?! I can’t hear you, it’s loud in here.”

She shouted over the loud jazz music in the background.

---

## Zacapu

by Alex Anaya

High above the teeming city  
Lays a stretch of battered ruins,  
Hollow sockets forever focused on its heir.

Cobblestone streets now coil through a silent cemetery,  
Still carrying the weight of the occasional mourner.

A single pyramid still defiantly stands,  
The lone monument of an expired age,  
A still heart strangled by weeds.

Long ago the ruins thrived;  
But time crawled on.  
People covered from the endless sky,  
Preferring the earth's solid embrace.

The city died in labour,  
Its bleached corpse splayed across the mountainside,  
A forgotten ornament of an ignored past.

---

## The Becoming.

by Leah de Roy

Lonesome – that we are.  
The city taunts us from slick square windows,  
glittering with the malice of a million  
watchful eyes.

Strolling down streets  
on a patrol-gray winter afternoon  
memories tick in my skull. You hear them, too,  
in shriller frequencies.  
There's the hotel café, and the two-fifty stop on Georgia,  
the station where the tidy traincar boxes  
gulp and wretch  
all flavors of farewell.

Love dropped us  
to that inescapable eastward pull  
of transition.  
We are the dissected, the left-behind,  
the forgotten who fail to forget,  
pressing thumbs to our lids to blue away  
those unceremonious flashes  
of defunct  
longing.

These are the stars nailed  
to our sights, though isolated  
we are  
not.

We've got those embryonic dreams, our thick words bloated  
with tears and blood and rain.  
The New Year's in its dazed bloom,  
and loitering round the corner of January's musty alley-mouth  
are love's less cruel semantics.

With one last fond parting glance,  
we will utter, soundlessly –

Good-bye, au revoir, good-night.  
We are busy, becoming.

---

## Murano

by Alex Anaya

I wander these foreign streets  
Heading for an adopted home.

The city conspires to tempt me;  
Derail me from my path.

The wafting scent of unfamiliar recipes,  
Delicacies never tasted,  
Stirs the snarling beast within my belly.

Sounds spew from every sake-soaked bar,  
Laughter,  
Conversations I cannot understand,  
Reminding me that I'm alone.

The hypnotic glare of flashing neon  
From a gaudy gambling parlor,  
Perfume desperate hope with feelings of leisurely  
indifference.

The final obstacle passed.

Then;  
The road narrows,  
The streetlights fade,  
My steps stop,  
The only sound:  
The muffled clatter of a distant train.

At my feet, stars lay ensnared within a puddle.  
My shoe jars their prison  
A heavenly shudder,  
But the stars remain trapped  
And I am nearly home.



---

## Les Larmes de la Lune

by Alicia Blimke

The moon fell from the air followed by the sea.  
I watched as the white-hot orb jumped from its celestial world  
And blazed a trail down to the mundane.  
Its pock-marked face cried as it descended,  
igniting a downpour of the ocean.

The droplets sizzled as it crashed into the ground, bursting  
into millions of tiny explosions,  
Petit worlds splattered on concrete  
Framed by the midnight light of the evening sun.

---

## Coffee

by Daryn Wright

I like the way it makes me rush  
through things  
makes my hands shake.  
I like when I wake up  
and my eyes are crusted with sleep  
still  
and coffee rushes and wakes them up.

I like when it becomes softly brown  
with cream  
and sometimes  
a teaspoon of sugar  
if I'm feeling mean.

I like that it's good hot and cold,  
not like me,  
not like when my moods shift  
from hot to cold.

Coffee is good when you need  
something  
to say  
and it reaches  
for your hand with quivers.  
It is especially good when  
it's in that large mug  
in your large hands  
spending time  
with the morning paper.

I like coffee most  
when it is in a white mug  
one of the ones from the 60's  
(the ones in small diners)  
and I'm sitting across from you.  
I like watching the cream packet  
swirl and mix with the watery brown  
liquid that is almost always  
bad coffee.  
But this is my favourite kind of coffee,  
the coffee I have with you.

---

## Sudden

by Carousel Calvo

On the stairs my mother,  
a look of quiet expectation,  
sat silent. On her lap, a white sheet with  
words: immigration, possible entry,  
permanent resident.  
Of course  
after questions, medical tests,  
a quiz on how much  
we know of seasons,  
of a place 10,741 kms away.

I saw her face  
and the roads to my home  
changed: Mambaling Elementary School  
across from San Roque Parish church  
Taboada open market, where they sell fresh milkfish.  
I take a short tricycle ride and stop  
at my front gate, rusted from wind and  
rain, peeling nondescript paint.

She saw me.  
I asked: "what about here?"  
Aling Marta made the best  
ampaw, tamarind candy,  
buko juice with lychee.  
I skipped stones  
played under an illuminated  
street lined with water marks  
gossip and first kiss, second, dropped  
love letters on my lap. Here  
where a boy touched...  
The mud after monsoon rain  
smelled of rot and gumamelas  
The heat of familiar bodies  
around a lit kerosene lamp.  
Brown out days, despite  
the darkness, despite the smell

She said: "Next year, you shall see snow."

---

## For Elsa, in Sweden

by Emily Peters

I was born with 1000 pound eyelashes  
and fists behind my eyes  
wired with malice to rot my brain or push  
through my face,  
whichever seemed easiest.

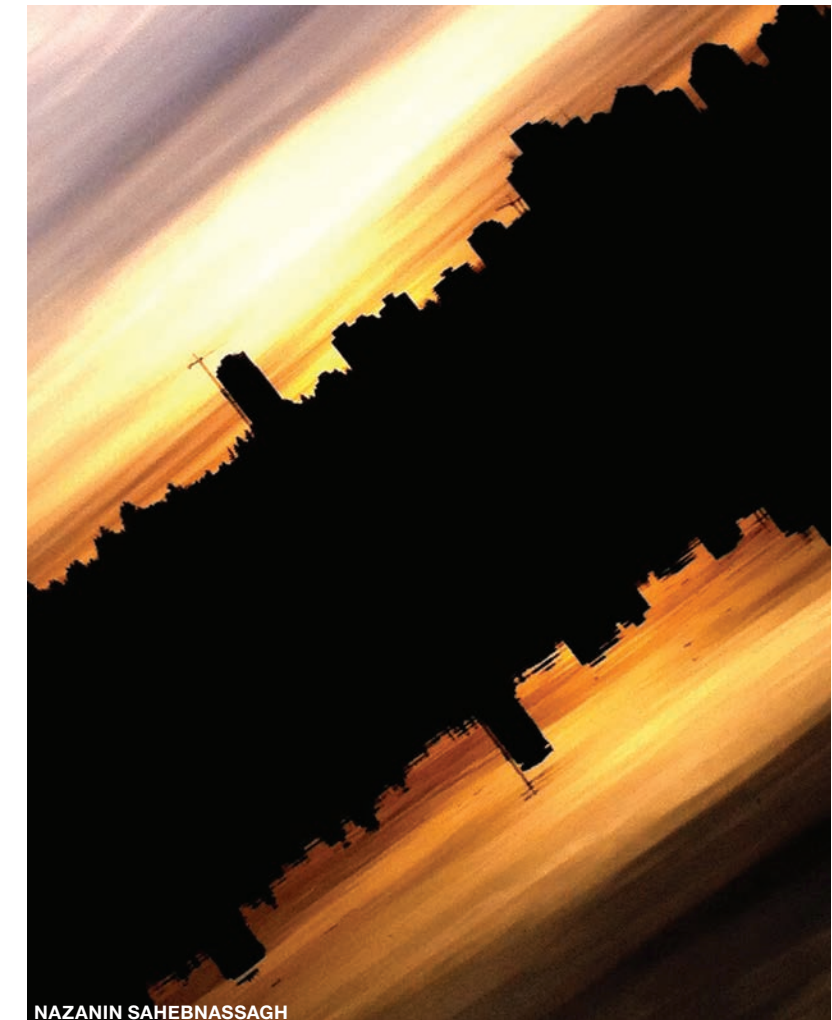
Its own fingernails embedded in my sockets proved trouble  
so seagulls and seagulls and seagulls  
called my name and rotted my brain

right through its own palms,  
blood and crook'd bone,  
it completed both tasks  
and pushed through,

fell to the floor  
in 19 pearl drops,

and left my hands,  
attached to my wrists,  
attached to my arms,  
my shoulders,  
me,

holding an empty strand.



NAZANIN SAHEBNASSAGH

---

## Madness

by Daryn Wright

Water running down an alley way  
Seeps into an old cardboard box.  
Brown and full.  
Black blood,  
running through  
generation after generation.  
Alfred Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson.

My coat got caught under the tires of the bus  
and my sigh froze in midair.



---

## The Crooked Tropical Plant

by Jacqueline Parsons

My crooked tropical plant contains the entirety of earthly existence. Therein can be found all the crucial elements of life- hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, nitrogen; elements which have been perpetually recycled throughout this planet and its atmosphere for billions of years. However, apart from its chemical composition, it shares many other similarities with all living things. Its entire skeleton is comprised of multiple kinky, twisted little stems with no discernible structure, which seem to record history itself. A series of ridges mark each stem, which serve as the tombstone of a broad leaf that has lived and died.

Before this plant was given to me by my aunt I had never owned a house plant. Being a stereotypically irresponsible teenager, it was the first living thing whose survival depended entirely on me. Often, I would forget that I owned a house plant and I frequently forgot to give it water. The neglect would show in several wrinkly brown, weakened leaves. Wracked by guilt upon seeing this dying creature, I practically drowned the poor thing by dousing it with too much water and almost poisoned it with too much fertilizer. I even tried forcing the fallen stems back into the earth, hoping that somehow they would grow new roots and prosper in this newly moist environment. Despite my efforts, the shrivelled leaves died anyways and the entire plant suffered from excessive moisture and nutrition.

After orchestrating this accidental drought and flood, I disciplined myself into watering her daily and feeding her in moderation. Nevertheless, sometimes old leaves die off naturally despite my attempts to save them. Each fallen leaf leaves a kink on its mother stem, a notch that forever marks its brief existence. Meanwhile, new leaves continuously flourish.

Originally, when I placed this potted plant on my windowsill, I had envisioned that its leaves would rapidly multiply, that its stems would lengthen and thicken, and that I would one day behold a monster of thick green foliage. However, it appears that leaves die and others replace them at a more or less stagnant rate. Time only allows the stems to become more mangled, limited by mortal restrictions.

---

## Neverland

by Rosalie Morris

Because we're very forward-thinking and generous  
and we believe  
in decolonisation and calling it  
Cosalish Territory instead of Vancouver  
and especially because we like your story about the turtle  
and the raven  
and those people who come out of the clam shells,  
you can be Lost Boys and we'll be Redskins.  
Just for the day, though,  
so you can get back to your tipis and your trailer parks  
and all those other things you like  
and we can get back to not growing up.

---

## Eastern Wind

by Laura Smit

Eastern wind, take me far  
Away from here, hold me fast  
Bring me back the hardened scar  
Of our time and make it last

Bring him back once more to me  
Promise that he'll longer stay  
All the things he couldn't see  
Take your charge, make him sway

Eastern wind, blustery rain  
Ran through us that autumn morn  
Strip away the deadened pain  
Our fickle past, wane and worn

The leaves they float without an end  
The promises, all past away  
The things I wished for us to mend  
Are all deceased, black, white and grey







HILLARY HODGSKISS

## Before Arrival

by Carousel Calvo

I told my neighbours that I was moving to Manila, Ilo-ilo, Davao; we were leaving for school, my father's new job, my mother's promotion. I did not want to say. I felt. They felt. Relieved.

I said: I still wanted to see Francis across from my house, air-guitar like Slash. Bundoy melting pounds doing jumping jacks, 2 mile runs after sunset, and 3 cups of rice with chicken gizzards. I still wanted Janice to pout, chalk the streets with "roses are red, violets are blue..." Jopal shouting, ASTIG!

I wanted to see sunset, but we drove away, crates and luggage taped and bound, at sunrise.

## On the Italian Riviera

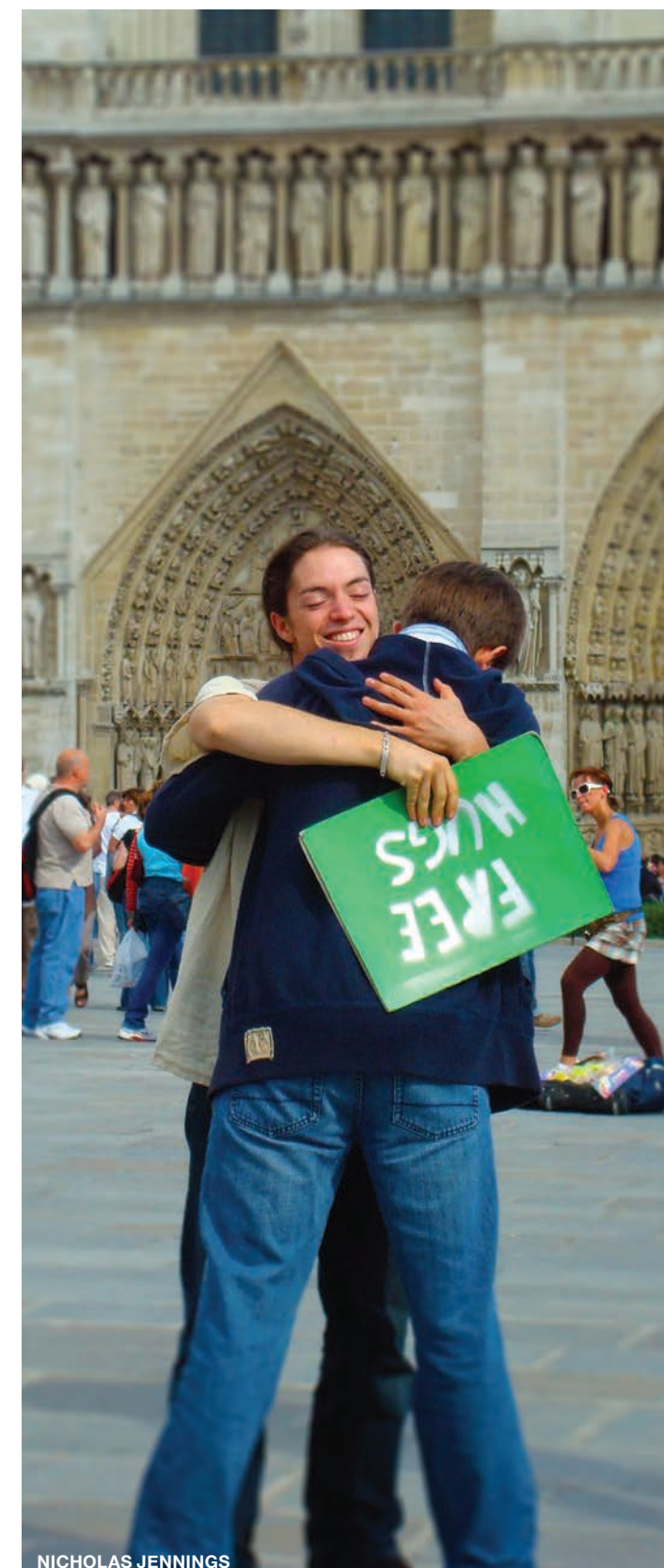
by Emily Peters

Sitting on the fine jagged sand with crashing waves and fading sun

I talked with Allen Ginsberg - my visions -  
 Searching for meaning he pointed away from the sea, turning  
 my eyes to clouded concrete pillars, rusting orange bobcats,  
 consecutive housing and the dying river

I thought of the sunflower, the locomotive, the sunflower that  
 never was a locomotive,  
 but it left me with little more than depression  
 a pigeon walked past - bobbed, jaunted? - so I stopped  
 thinking and  
 shut down all the gears, all the rushing blood and flowing  
 water to listen to the surf as well as my soul  
 while I listened to the slosh of new and old waves, a  
 mower grumbled in the background, stealing my ears and my  
 peace  
 the dust of locomotives, the grumbling of the machine and the  
 complacency of people angered me so it seemed I could no  
 longer hear the water

It had become silent like our leaders, silent like our parents,  
 our teachers, our frightened politicians  
 Is this what the world has become? A beautiful shell with  
 waves, caves, brick, cement, poles, assholes, fear, noise?  
 waves with promise - like the soul, like innocent flowers,  
 turned towards the sun, squelched by mankind, so oblivious  
 and painfully modern  
 I asked Allen - how, why, could he explain to me the razor  
 sharp artifacts, could he point me to my life, and he held up  
 his sunflower



NICHOLAS JENNINGS





TARA NYKYFORIAK

## How She Nos

by Sydney Vickars

Your hold on her peace has too many pieces  
for enlightened whining  
about labels for leases  
on hearts that are pining.

Can I touch said you when you felt  
eyes exponential  
beyond the storms she had dealt:  
the purest and poorest potential.

And said she can she touch  
sitting staring at hearts  
so in lust with this much  
correspondence of parts.

You: she feels like she is with someone  
who deserves to be for her.  
And who accuses those no ones  
she doesn't remember

of not being you or being your words  
which, when lapsed from your mouth  
in the slickest of thirds,  
carry her south? I am her.

## Drunken Sailor

by Valerie Miller

Oh I hide  
In the darkest of places

One with the wind  
Hiding my faces

Oh I've tried  
To think like the others

Never winning,  
And I am so tired.

Are you there, singing sweet sweet melodies in my ear?  
Dance around like you don't give a care  
The dead man's song will never tire  
I've decided to set your ship on fire.

Let down your flag  
Oh drunken sailor

Have you become lost  
Finding the treasure

Follow the sound, follow the sirens  
All that I said, have you forgotten?

## Unsent Drafts

by Katya Kan

From: mccartier@hotmail.co.uk  
Saved: April 9th 2009 21:02:12  
To: sanhka@hotmail.com

We met through a language exchange,  
And then danced salsa for a change.

I tortured my feet in high heels the whole night  
Only to watch you dance with another in dim light.

You left for Peru  
To join your crew.

No reply from you the second time:  
Hacking your Hotmail account, I made you mine.

My make-believe e-mail to your girlfriend  
Began the vengeance trend.

Insulting my desperate admirer,  
You tried, unsuccessfully, to be viler.

You bombarded my contacts with junk mail  
For two delectable months, you were on my trail.

What a narcissistic fool!  
Understand that beauty is but a tool.

You deserve what you beget  
When my expectations are not met.

From: mccartier@hotmail.co.uk  
Saved: August 18th 2011 09:03:05  
To: merlinheintzmanhope@gmail.com

You said: "No strings attached" -  
I thought we were well matched.

You left in a hurry,  
But kept approaching me in a flurry.

I started ignoring you,  
You copied that too.

I almost stole your painting,  
That would have left you fainting.

You're neither here, nor there:  
About to tear.

From: mccartier@hotmail.co.uk  
Saved: December 22nd 2011 17:12:07  
To: pierre.eric.baumann@gmail.com

I approached you at the Melbourne Museum -  
You seemed to be without a seam.

We discussed Aboriginals,  
And surveillance criminals.

I invited myself to Sydney with you for New Year -  
You didn't even cheer.

Making love on the beach -  
You had little to teach.

"Thanks for being my bitch,  
Although you never made me come, you cheap kitsch."

You're nothing but a clichéd fad,  
Fashionably clad.

Just "Somebody That I Used to Know":  
With no power to grow.

From: mccartier@hotmail.co.uk  
Saved: January 30th 2013 19:29:27  
To: mccartier@hotmail.co.uk

Futile memories:  
I give you leave of absence.

In my eyes  
Despised.

Goodbye -  
Do me a favor and die!



---

## Stay One More Night

by Ketan Jogia

My hand gripping her face,  
then mouth,  
then neck.

“I like the smell of cigarettes  
on your fingers,”  
she said.

Candles begin to burn  
the edges of her pillows,  
but we won't walk out from these flames  
together.  
No need for that.

I don't have the confidence to forget her past.  
She has the confidence to forget mine.

We'll set fire to this bed  
and spend the better half of an afternoon putting it out.

The apartment has gone up now  
I hate being too warm

---

## Gone

by Laura Smit

Darling, darling, come my way  
Sing to me the songs of our youth  
Days gone by, spirits faded,  
We are left alone

Cans of beans and rotted bread  
Fill our house and home  
We aren't as lovely as we once were  
We are left alone

Promises made of eternity  
Of which cannot be kept  
Perpetual darkness covers my eyes  
We are left alone

Silence is what we listen to now  
No records sound with music  
We are old and the days are forgotten  
We are left alone

---

## Words Under Pillows

by Cheyenne Berghenegouwen

The greatest failure is when one does not speak.

Closed mouth, holding onto words like teeth  
hidden beneath pillows, the fairy seeks.

Wouldn't it be easier  
to leave them where she can see?

REESE IRWIN





## The Fall of Waves

by Emily Peters

I can remember yesterday like it was ten years ago, and looking in the mirror, I certainly aged a decade overnight. Today is the day –today the clouds will burn and the daytime nightmares will stop. Today I will rip out my eyelashes and the spiders will think I killed their brethren. The folds in my face have rotted into canyons overnight and so my spontaneous eyelash threat seems fittingly ugly.

The sun doesn't deign to welcome me when I finally step out: it's teaching me patience. I won't work today –today is the day. I pulled one eyelash out during my oatmeal (to distract myself from the texture) and another one opposite it while habitually locking the door (that one was to kill the nicotine craving). I don't know where to start, my feet tell me they know the way but all they know is work and debauchery. No, today I disobey my limbs and walk with my eyes. This would be easier with fewer eyelashes.

When I run, I feel foolish, but my eyes don't run like they used to so it is necessary to ask the wind for help. I ran into a pinecone and a corpse in my hurry but my gaze was seeing only the ocean. The washed out road and long-dead "RV" sign was useless. The flowers wouldn't have smelled like a cigarette if I'd stopped to see and the only cars on the useless road were beaten and driverless. The world, my world, had become irrelevant (and irreverent for that matter) when I was born. I've witnessed only death and decay to the point that I rub my skin raw in the shower. My mother told me I was cursed, and I trust her - she had a monopoly on curse words. Until I was four, I thought my name was Shit. I miss my name, my mom, and my two eyelashes. My craving won't leave me alone so I pluck more lashes to miss, one more from each eye.

I've almost found the seaside, lost in my thoughts. It's not as you'd remember. I've read of its power and beauty and the mysterious creatures it held. Now it holds the colour orange tight in its waves - it's become pathetic. It's the closest thing I have to ignorance though. After the Last Day, I came here and closed my eyes and pictured it blue and gray. I turned down my heart and breath to make it louder and let it seem proud. It's weak to pretend, but who's judging me? God left this place long ago - my generation was to be called the "Genesis Generation" and he hated that. Humanity fucked up and no one paid the price besides the planet. The spiders love it and, despite my hate for oatmeal, it could be much worse for me too.

The day before the Last Day was the last time I spoke. I was 21 and no longer Shit. I had all my eyelashes and a surprising amount of class (considering the world was ending). My last words were Chinese expletives but no one understood because the spiders had already begun to enter through their ears. Next they targeted the mouth - usually open with a scream. I never got used to watching them stick a leg under the eyelid, then another, another, another, and it would disappear.

I'm not at the ocean to remember, I'm here to forget. On the Last Day, the world died but I didn't. Since, I've been atoning for my survival but guilt is my shadow. The ocean will fix that, just as soon as the clouds burn. I go to brush a spider off my finger but it's another eyelash and a mate. I used to make wishes on fallen eyelashes. The sea makes me ignorant but not so naive as to wish. It looks worse than usual (the sea, that is) –haggard, a jilted two night stand. It mimics the sky above, covered with ash, too proud to rain and commune with the other.

I've found what I'm looking for without my eyes (they're proving more and more useless in this fog). My feet are more trustworthy than I'd believed. I reward them with a sacrifice from my lashes: two by two like Noah's animals. I've come to a structure built of cots and house planks. A prized record collection with children's music hides under mattress and wood. The hippies made this fortress the week before the Last Day for one last outside orgy and joint jamboree. Now it resembles a too-comfortable mill, decomposing, derelict and the colour of rust, from the rise in the tide no doubt. I came here near the end, seeking shelter until the spiders finished their work.

"This is our fort," the hippies said.

"Please, I will not be a burden to you."

"You will eat all our food and ridicule it at the same time."

"How can you make that judgment? I merely want shelter and..."

"–No, this is our fort."

"That mattress looks like one I slept on last week and the wood wants to return to the forest. You cannot claim it."

"We built it and we will die in it and make love in it, even when our bodies have died."

"Can you not let in one more soul? I will not disturb yours, even when your bodies have died."

At this remark, they looked at me with great unease. I was the grim reaper promising to leave them alone in exchange for a bed, promising an eon in limbo, if that's what they wanted. I never did understand the hippy type, even less so now that they're extinct.

I walked away of my own accord but had no sympathy when the spiders nested in their brains and their corpses required moving.

This doesn't matter anymore. I knew then that they would die and I'd be the lone survivor, and the days came and they went. The shore in front of this Last Days Fortress has the quality I need. I should offer thanks to the sea for remaining static. Two by two by two and two more, the eyelashes float into the surf. A small sand bar runs out 100 yards from the land, nestled in raucous burnt waves and threatened by seaweed. This is my path, the rocks siphon me in.

I've lost my feet in the water and I speak to the fish for guidance, "Where do the clouds break? I see the gray and the gray and I know you're split from this world but the birds hate me and offer little help. If I walk without knowing, I'm bound to step in a drum." And the fish do not answer, and so I step into an oil drum from the days before.

"Rulers of the skies, I know you hate me. I beg you to listen. You! With your lackluster coat and combless head, which way is up? Is today not the day? My feet are lost, my eyes are nearly naked, and I can't trust my mind. If I wait for nothing, nothing is bound to happen." And the birds do not answer, and so I wait for plotless, pilotless, dead hours.

There was nothing for days. Through the fog, I saw the moon and the sun come up and go down six times. Six times, I watched the light of the sun return through the clouds and hoped it would burn through and shine anew. Six times, while I stood in the water ankle deep, I watched the light of the sun fall away, hopeless. Each perceived dawn I plucked an eyelash and married it with another: this ritual began to remind me of baby teeth, anxiously pulled in exchange for loonies. I won't stop until they're all gone. I have no use for my eyes and likewise, none for my lashes. I feel nothing is

mine anymore; the hippies took my morals and nature calls to my skin.

I'd like to keep that for now and so my eyelashes fall out, in accordance with the wishes of the land. Now rises the sun through the fog for the seventh morning. The sky has been so still for the past that a slight breeze, a fly's tailwind, is felt on my face.

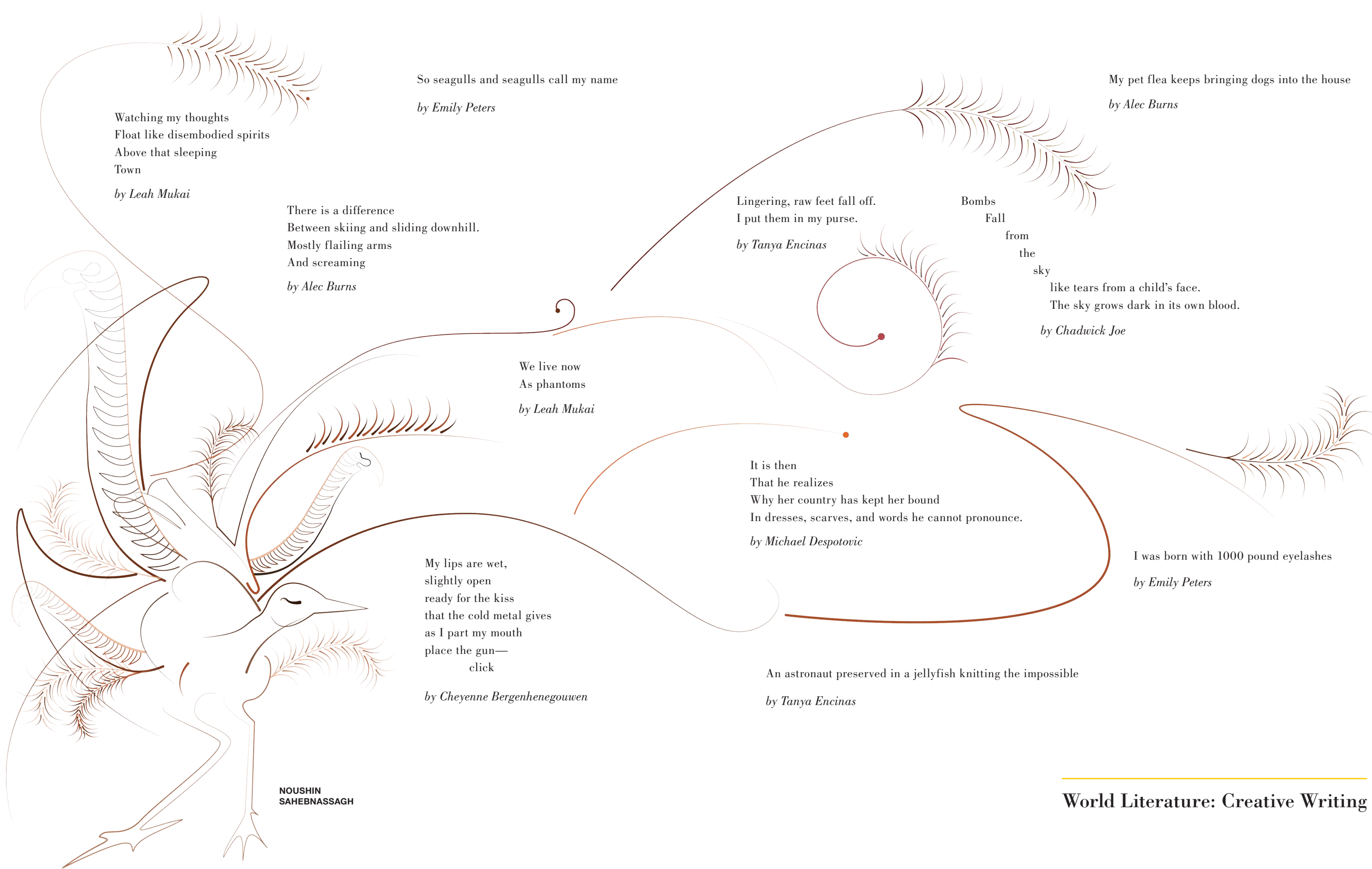
This is the beginning of the end of the storm. My daytime nightmares will soon end. Finally, the sun burns through the fog, and immediately I feel it beginning to scorch the skin I did not wish to surrender. I am grateful that my eyelids did not fall off with my lashes –my pupils have forgotten how to shift with the light. Enough about me, this is about the world and its first end. The water recedes from my ankles, startlingly bare and suddenly cold. I can see it in my mind's eye before the eyes on my face: in the sea, huge manholes not made by man open up and waterfalls form in their stead. Fish, seaweed, and mutated whales reside on the new land and begin decomposing far too rapidly.

The smell brings me out of my mind and back to my face. My mind was right: the soil has swallowed the sea. Sounds like thunder shout out behind me and for a moment, I think that perhaps I was never alone; someone has survived in their bulldozer and has come to help the dust return to dust. No, I was always alone; the trees have tipped of their own accord and have decided to make pilgrimage west. They strike me as weasels, dragging their hind legs to pull dirt and sand with them. I stand between the pilgrim forest and the natural man-holes, I should move.

Like the trees, like the ocean, like birds caught in a tornado and pulled into the earth, my own body is not mine. An army of ants march past my foot, carrying my lashes, two by two. I am meant to follow, meant to end the age of Man. I have been waiting for this day, when the sun would burn through the fog, but I don't know why.

Perhaps the spiders wanted a witness, they wanted Man's life to be as tragic as he deserves.





Watching my thoughts  
Float like disembodied spirits  
Above that sleeping  
Town

by Leah Mukai

So seagulls and seagulls call my name

by Emily Peters

There is a difference  
Between skiing and sliding downhill.  
Mostly flailing arms  
And screaming

by Alec Burns

Lingering, raw feet fall off.  
I put them in my purse.

by Tanya Encinas

Bombs  
Fall  
from  
the  
sky

like tears from a child's face.  
The sky grows dark in its own blood.

by Chadwick Joe

We live now  
As phantoms

by Leah Mukai

It is then  
That he realizes  
Why her country has kept her bound  
In dresses, scarves, and words he cannot pronounce.

by Michael Despotovic

My lips are wet,  
slightly open  
ready for the kiss  
that the cold metal gives  
as I part my mouth  
place the gun—  
click

by Cheyenne Berghenegouwen

I was born with 1000 pound eyelashes

by Emily Peters

An astronaut preserved in a jellyfish knitting the impossible

by Tanya Encinas

NOUSHIN  
SAHEBNASSAGH

World Literature: Creative Writing



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## The Death of God

by Andrew Zuliani

Frederick Willhelm Nietzsche  
died and went to heaven  
“God is not dead!”  
he exclaimed,  
reaching for a pad of paper.

he sent his letter  
to his best scholars.

“I’m not saying that I don’t trust him,”  
said one professor,  
“but we’ll have to group this  
with his later works  
post street-corner collapse  
and take it with a  
grain of salt-lick”

and the second agreed  
“how can we tell this letter  
is not the workings of  
that fascist sister of his?”

“I don’t think we can take  
this letter from the great ironist  
at face value,” said another.  
“what does he really mean  
when he says  
‘God is not dead?’”

---

## October Second

by Valerie Miller

Ann can’t remember much these days  
60 years forgotten.  
Yet she remembers she hasn’t had any other boyfriends,  
aside from Grandpa.

They met in a small town.  
She was working at the Okanagan café,  
he was training at the Vernon cadet camp.

She now talks of the roses my parents gave her  
which she decided to plant in the garden at the rest home.  
Their petals have withered becoming part of the earth.  
It’s clear to her now that summer is over.

She wants to go on a trip,  
when asked where she’d like to go,  
she say’s Heaven.

---

## Allen Coots

by Valerie Miller

If I told you to never stare into the light  
that would be impossible.  
It surrounds us with an undeniable truth.

How can you tell me that religion is so sweet,  
when I’ve tasted it once before

and it is most definitely sour.

---

## There is a Steep Hill and Beyond that Hill

by Y.G. Rancourt

You said you needed someone  
And after all, here I am  
It makes no difference if I have come prepared  
Or if the weather permits

True, I have a past  
– Irrelevance!  
It is now, now, today that I am here!

Look, see my strength  
You don’t get that often in men of my position  
– Impertinence!  
You cannot choose!

How many people pass this way?  
Headed for your Eden?  
Just so

And now if I may  
Get on with it?

Really you have no choice to remain  
But I,  
I have been headed this way  
For many years perhaps

Odd, isn’t it?  
What is the world but sun and moon, sea and sky, fish  
and wine?  
What am I but sand  
A man discrete and undistinguished  
What am I but movement?

One may breathe, one may hope  
One may as well do something about the leak

And each grain is the heaviest burden  
Each grain the sting  
Each grain  
Will swallow the water and sigh  
Over the ink  
Over the tops of trees, a mountain, a sea of silent crows...  
Who will come to collect  
The filled shell of a man?

“Whither is God?  
We have killed him, you and I”  
Let us now take up our shovels  
And begin the burial.





## Sweet Oranges

by *Cheyenne Berghenegouwen*

I have never seen Mother, no one has, but she has one rule regardless, one rule which we must all obey: Never follow the paths that lead out of the garden. I have always thought this rule to be strange. I do not understand why anyone would want to leave the garden. The garden is magical. Flowers of all colours and scents infect every inch of the ground, glorious trees are scattered here and there while children climb through their branches reaching up to grab the sky, storing the clouds they catch in their pockets. There is a continuous flow of water and fruit. The fruit comes in every type that the most childish of us can imagine: sweet, sour, round, square, orange, yellow, blue, and always ready to be plucked by our greedy hands and devoured by our watering mouths. The garden is all that we know; it is our home. But people, sisters, mothers, daughters, always women disappear leaving their beds empty and cold, their names to be eventually forgotten. They break Mother's one and only rule.

~

Orange. I need an orange, a sweet, juicy orange. Saliva pools in my mouth and leaks out of the corners of my lips, the best oranges grow at one of the corners of the garden next to a forbidden path. I pick myself up from the soft grass. My mouth leads me to where the orange tree grows. As soon as I reach the tree my hand stretches up and grasps hold of the most perfect sphere. I pull, a bit too hard, my orange falls from my hand and rolls to the ominous path that leads out of the garden and into a forest suffocating under its own foliage.

I was told once that curiosity killed a boy. It pushed him deeper into the depths of a lake because he wanted to see what lay at the bottom. To this day, no one knows what lies at the bottom of the lake.

Now, curiosity leads me to the pathway; I pick up my orange, and I am pushed further towards the forest. Just a peek is all I want. Just one...

"Hello little girl." I swing around in a circle; there is no one.

"Hello! Who is there?" The forest eats my words, the trees listen, but they do not answer.

"I am a friend. Don't be afraid." The voice has a hiss that lingers raising the hairs on my arms. There is a rustle of leaves to my right. It comes closer. My eyes search the ground. There is nothing, just the movement of leaves. Fear pushes me back towards the safety of the garden; my eyes continue to scan the ground at my feet.

"Who are you? Show yourself!" A hiss like thunder shatters through the silence. From beneath the leaves rises a serpent; dark green, long and thick.

"I am the serpent, your friend my sweet. What is your name?" The serpent's tongue licks the air playfully.

"Lisa," I say.

"Such a special name for such a pretty girl." The serpent stretches its face closer to mine, inspecting me as if I were a luscious fruit dangling from a branch.

"Sweet, sweet Lisa...What is that in your hand my dear?" The dry scales of the serpent's skin grazes down my arm as it takes a peek at the orange I grasp.

"An orange!" The serpent shivers in exaggerated disgust, "For such a sweet girl you deserve much better than an orange. Come with me. I know of a tree with a fruit that is more delicious than anything your young tongue has ever tasted."

"I can't..." My mouth begins to water again. A fruit more delicious than anything I've ever had.

"Oh yes, the rule! Do not worry my dear. It is just a little ways through the woods, in another garden more magnificent than this one. It will not take but a moment." Before I can answer the serpent slithers along the path. It expects me to come. It knows I will. I drop my orange; my fingerprints have made indents in its spherical shape, deforming its perfection. A small cut in its flesh forces it to spill its sweet nectar onto the patch of dirt where it lies discarded. I follow the serpent along the path and into the forest. We travel in silence. My mind is racing, contemplating what I have done, but my senses eat up everything in a hurry. All the new plants and smells are gobbled up by me in an instant. I crave this new knowledge as if it were the air I breathe.

Eventually the path bends around an intrusion of rocks and opens up into a massive clearing. The serpent is true to his word, the clearing is a garden more magnificent than mine. Gigantic trees extend into the air horrifyingly and are surrounded by seas of vibrant flowers.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" the serpent asks.

"Yes, yes it is," I manage to whisper.

"Let us go have a closer look, shall we?" The serpent slithers along leading me further into the garden. Seas

of flowers surround us on either side of the pathway. The air is thick with the overpowering perfume of the flowers; lavender, roses, lilacs, daisies, sun flowers. The colourful sea begins to give way to the massive trees. My eyes take it all in; light gives way to darkness.

The horrifying presence of the trees cast the tranquil beauty of the garden into a harsh darkness, a darkness that makes children weep for their mothers in fear of nocturnal monsters.

The trees exhale a scent of damp, rotting flesh. A hint of expired flowers lingers in the air. The magnificence of the trees is unquestionable; they both draw in and repel their surroundings like a wounded heart that desires love. Most trees I have seen extend their limbs up gently petting the surface of the great abyss; their old friend, but these trees do not. They extend their bare limbs, grasp hold and choke. They scratch and cut the vastness making it bleed white streaks. And then I see it. First an arm extended, the hand grasping the sky with the rest of the limbs. The arm leads down to a shoulder, breasts, a torso, thighs, knees, feet, toes; entangled and ensnared, twisting with the trunk of the trees. Every tree embraces the lifeless body of a woman like lovers who finally succumb to the lust of the other's touch. The living and the dead hold each other, both hugging and suffocating, until the living eats the cold grey flesh of its lover. These are the forgotten women.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" The serpent breathes on my neck, its tongue flicking my ear.

I want to scream, but the mournful silence of the garden forces my mouth shut. The wind rustles my dress, the serpent hisses and all is silent.

"What happened?"

"They are dead now, that's all that matters. Come on we've got to hurry, it's getting dark my sweet." The serpent continues slithering along the path. The trees are scattered on either side, a warning to not stray from the pathway. I follow hesitantly, wary that a tree might grab hold of me.

As I pass the trees the still gazes of the women watch me; half of their faces have already been eaten away. Some are completely gone; their bones are the only things that remain embedded in the tree trunks.

"Here we are my sweet Lisa." I pull my eyes away from the trees and the gazes of the women and focus on the snake's head that bobs in the air. My mind has forgotten why I chose to follow the serpent. What was it that he promised me?

Then I see just beyond his bobbing head a beautiful tree with bright green leaves that dance in the wind. There is no decaying body entangled in this tree and it gives off a rich sweet scent. My mouth begins to water again.

"Go have a look...a taste, my dear. I promise it will be the sweetest thing you have ever had." The serpent nudges me forward.

I know I shouldn't. I should turn around and run back to the safety of my home; my garden, but the smell draws me in, intoxicates my senses, corrupts my mind and I find myself walking up to the tree reaching up and plucking from its branch a bright red, sphere-like shape.

"What is it?"

"That my dear is called an apple." An evil snigger escapes from the serpent's mouth. Despite his sneer, despite all I've seen, my desire to know this sweetness, to know the taste of this new fruit is too overpowering to fight against. I open my mouth; place the apple between my teeth, my tongue touches the soft skin, and as I bite down the tree embraces me.

~

Mother stands before me, or at least I think it is Mother. She is dressed in a white gown that contrasts her dark skin. Her hair is wrapped up into a green turban upon her head. She has a sad smile upon her face, her eyes, as old as time, look worn and weary. We stand back in the garden by the orange tree.

"Hello, Lisa." Her voice has a melancholy sweetness to it like a nightingale's song to its departed lover.

"Hello, Mother." She says nothing, "What happened?"

"You gave into temptation, Lisa. You broke my one and only rule, now the tree holds your body and you must remain here, never to be satisfied."

"I'm sorry." I cannot look at her so I look at my feet.

"I know, my dear." I look up quickly, but I am too late. She is gone and I am left alone by the orange tree. I wander over to the path. The orange with my fingerprints in it still lies on the ground seeping out its sweet nectar. I press my finger inside the orange then take it out and lick off the juice. It does not taste sweet at all.







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## A Sample of Haiku

by Jacqueline Parsons

why the war on drugs  
when a hallucination  
can help the blind See

Oui, je suis une fille  
Une fleur qui fleurisse malgré  
Le feu de l'enfer

Humans strive to reach  
Heaven to the same effect  
As trees always have

Democracy calls  
For an electorate of  
Critical thinkers

Pourquoi est-ce que  
J'essaie de justifier  
Ma brève existence?

---

## For Rules, in Response to Aphorisms 10/20

by Sydney Vickers

I want to write too  
of crisscrossed platelets  
in open aired mazes;  
Dreaming bigger than wait lists  
and sequential facelifts.

You, butterfly  
in open eyed stations  
riding inflations  
are smaller than time  
and large animations.

And given to me  
wings set into flutter  
from ricochets shutter -  
Should I write beyond you  
and whisper, or stutter?

---

## Carnal Knowledge

by Julia Berry

She is new and unspoiled,  
Beautiful in an unconventional and utilitarian sort of way.  
With a nervous awareness of my responsibility to treat her gently,  
I hesitate.

Then with the anticipation of how she will feel to my fingertips, I  
eagerly undress her – carelessly peeling off the thin layer which  
desperately clings to her

to protect her from the filthy hands of many men who have seen  
her before me.

But I am the one who gets her.

I inhale deeply – drinking in her fresh, comforting smell.

Instantly I am transported to memories of the many that came  
before her.

Each of them started like her, until I used them.

Without remorse, I marked them, dirtied them, and left them  
ugly,

as I learned from them what I wanted.

But for now I savour the experience.

After all, I will have to wait until next semester to unwrap  
another

crisp, new textbook.

---

## YUL2010

by Tara Nykyforiak

Eyes lost in space staring at rusty harbours and  
cobblestone floes  
Tread lightly no more;  
Ungloved hands can withstand the exposure if only  
to check the time.

Any east end road begins here for an  
Astral traveller.

Shades of yellow, amber and chestnut brown  
Little bit chewy little bit smooth makes a person  
wonder how the cracks even started  
When celebrity swing moves transpire dreams in a  
room far away from any world stage.

I have seen the grounds they walk on  
all foot worn and weather beat.

Stairs leading up to their second floor views  
And their narrow lamp lit streets.

Lights like firefly flashbulbs

Humming while shirking the snowy stillness in time.

Blinded by 3am newspaper smoking on by.

Blinded by brass.

The illusion back home disillusioning me.

Big band bind to render me whole

Constructing an image to frame and put up on the  
wall

Answer the call

March, march, march

Repeat

On this one way departure

---

## Bitter Tears of a Scarecrow

by Nazanin Saheb Nassagh

The way he stands there in the middle of the  
sunflowers field

And stretches his arms far to the sides

About to hug all the flowers

With his straw filled body and brain,

And a beating humane heart.

The scarecrow is tired of standing,

Frightening and standing... again.

So he reaches out for help from the burning sun,

To burn him down,

Or from the crazy wind,

To blow him away,

But,

No one hears the cry of a scarecrow

No one sees the bitter tears of a scarecrow

Everyone sees the woven smile on his face

A smile that can never be erased.

---

## Clean

by Rosalie Morris

I think it's funny,  
that you refuse to walk  
barefoot in the park  
because you think you'll get a disease  
from the geese and squirrels and homeless people  
who walked here before us  
("it isn't clean,"  
you tell me in disgust, as I slip my feet out of hot, sweaty  
sandals  
and allow my naked skin to  
touch the earth),  
but you have no problem inhaling  
those expensive little lines of white,  
a status symbol  
that came from thousands of miles away  
on a trail of blood,  
transported in the secret dark  
bowels of a 16-year-old girl with knots in her hair and  
dirt on the soles of her feet.





## History of the Classical, Literary and Everyday Woman

by Laura Smit

Thank you Eve  
for  
the demise of  
women

Adam is morally superior  
Aristotle is a genius  
Shakespeare is God  
with a pen

“it is not appropriate  
for a woman to exhibit...  
the intellectual cleverness...  
associated with men”

Poor Ophelia  
brainless woman  
Desdemona, Juliet  
half-wits

don't be hysteric  
god forbid  
you actually  
feel...something...

introducing...  
the vibrator

Women are tools  
for reproduction  
sex, sex, sex  
but not for fun

vibration calms  
the nerves  
nothing more  
nothing less

...unless....

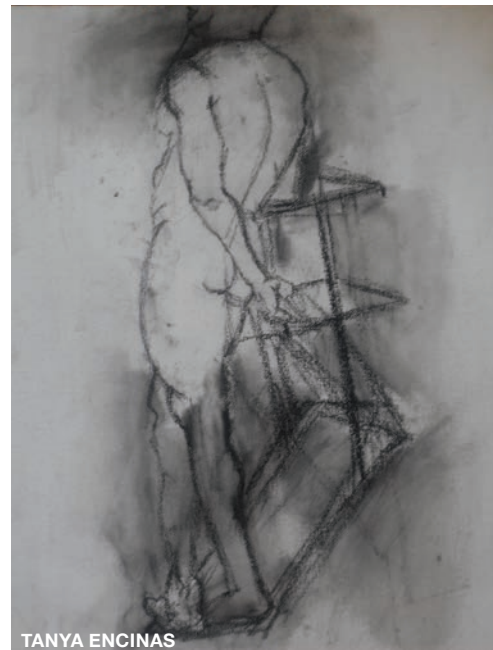
Sexbomb Marilyn  
va-va-va-voom  
show us your...  
“womanhood”

less curvy the better  
right on to today  
see it in the magazines  
keep food at bay!

The female body is  
dead  
long live the stickman!  
add the W-O

where does this leave us  
world of malnourished females?  
we've come so far  
to go right back to the start?

Thank you Eve  
for  
the demise of  
women



TANYA ENCINAS

## The Weekend

by Derek James

Back when I was only addicted to liquids, I would have awful hangovers. Now these hangovers weren't anything compared to the feeling of coming down from a twelve hour high, but the alcohol hangovers were still quite foul. The worst part was the dehydration. I'd wake up feeling weak and tired, as if all of the strength had been sucked from me. A feeling of weakness; faint and dim—that was the worst part of the weekend.

When I woke up on the Sunday, it felt like my blood had been drained. My veins were vacant corridors left hollow, save for some cobwebs and tumbleweeds. My bones were dry, my muscles stiff. If I were to slice my arm open from fingertip to shoulder, only dust would come pouring out, like emptying out a vacuum cleaner bag.

Jennifer had one of those fancy European vacuums. It had jet engine technology or something. I would always be so fascinated by all of the debris that would come pouring out of the little trash receptacle: dust bunnies, dirt, and the occasional piece of small change. There was a whole world of stuff that would come out of that vacuum cleaner. The contents always told a story.

I wondered what world story my blood would tell. A week ago, my blood probably would have smelled like vodka and would have looked like sticky heroin; tar. Now, my blood would tell a tale of impoverishment and thirst.

As the afternoon sun rises, I twist and turn in my bed, becoming hopelessly entangled in my sheets. Occasionally I would stretch my wingspan across the bed, aimlessly reaching out for Jennifer, only to find a cold shadow in her place. I was putting myself through all of this just for her, and she wasn't even here to see my efforts. She was the one who wanted me to do this; she wanted me to kick these habits. I couldn't care less whether or not I got clean or just wasted away. I was doing it all for her. Even though I'll never get her back, I know she'd be happy.

I twist and writhe in agony- my weak muscles and tired bones ache with every passing second. Waves of heat cascade from the crown of my head down to my toes. As some unseen demon cranks up my internal thermostat, sheets of sweat roll down my skin. The condensation runs cold, and I soon find myself shivering with a chill, while simultaneously burning with fever.

I feel like my body is being pulled in two different directions; into the land of fire, and into the land of ice, and

the struggle is tearing me apart. It's like this one medieval execution method I once read about—an executioner binds ropes around each of some poor sap's limbs, and attaches the other ends each to a horse or bull. The animals all take off in different directions, quartering the condemned on the spot. Shit, what the hell am I talking about? My mind won't stop straying.

This could all end, I tell myself, if I just take another hit. Maybe just a small one, right? I can slowly take less and less each time, until I don't need it anymore. No—don't go there. I need to get back to thinking about bloody execution techniques, anything to take my mind off of this craving.

As I toss and turn, I distract myself by thinking about Jennifer. Towards the end, the contents of her vacuum cleaner were my drugs all ground up and stomped into her carpet. Like I said the contents of a trash bin always tell a story.

Night falls and the fever finally breaks. I gain enough strength to pull myself from my drenched mattress, and I stumble into my kitchen. I feast on some old Chinese takeout, and the hollowness starts to fill. The shivering and sweating dies down, and the weekend seems to be over.

I immediately think of calling Jennifer, though I know she won't pick up. I call anyways, just to hear her voice on the phone's voicemail. Sooner, rather than later, the cell company will take her number down. As far as I know, they still charge her on a monthly basis, but eventually they will start to enquire why she hasn't been paying the bills. A company rep will have to call her immediate family, probably her mother, and ask about Jennifer. Her mother will break down as she informs the cell company stooge about the accident. He of course, will offer his condolences, and she will naturally tell him that it is okay. She accepts what happens, but feels cheated, she will say. And of course, because she can't resist, she will say that it just isn't fair that her daughter's drunk junkie boyfriend behind the wheel of that car came out unscathed. I wouldn't disagree with her.

The weekend ends and I am reborn. My blood is pure and clean now. I will go out into the world and try to rebuild. But even though the addiction is over, a hangover remains. You see, a hangover is your body's reaction to being deprived of something so badly needed. It's three in the morning, and I'm eating alone. That's when I realize that I will be hung-over for a very long time.





## Nature's Magic

by Jasmin Ring

Rays of sunlight streaming in  
Dancing shadows across the walls  
They disappear as the light grows dim  
Gone completely when night falls

Meadows covered in glistening raindrops  
Which reflect rainbows among the flowers  
Slowly melting when the rain stops  
And appear again after another shower

Blowing gently across the plains  
Moving flowers from their steady stance  
Continuing even as the moon wanes  
Still making tree leaves dance

It makes a blanket where it lay  
It appears when the temperature slips low  
Shining serenely, for awhile it will stay  
That mysterious thing called snow

## Discoverer

by Andrew Zuliani

I sat, jacketless and shivering,  
on a bench in a park  
in the early afternoon.

A mother and stroller  
rolled up, stopped,  
stood on the gravel path  
and paid me no attention.

A child, blonde ringlets  
still semi-translucent with youth,  
leveraged herself clumsily  
from the carriage, and placed  
two pink shoes on the ground.

The little girl turned  
to face the moss-green pond  
silent and devoid of ducks  
this early in the spring.

*pretty,*

She said. A patch of  
dandelions or daffodils  
– I could never distinguish –  
caught her attention.

*pretty,*

She pulled free from mother's hand  
and trundled over to join them.  
pretty.

She looked up from  
the upturned yellow faces  
and spotted me.

I held my breath.

## Father's Day

by Daryn Wright

My father,  
he throws good parties and

drinks beer out of crooked glasses  
in the shape of a boot.

There's a picture of us  
when I'm maybe five

and we're napping  
together, I'm nestled into

his chest, elegantly,  
legs crossed and dangling.

I spent much time later  
trying to get this close again

but hugs aren't the same as  
conversations.

When I think of what to buy him  
on Father's day, I come up blank

not only because I'm broke but  
also because I can't think of anything

but motorcycles and expensive tequilas.  
He fixes my car -

Says it's the battery, it's weak.  
We sit in the loft,

me reading a book and him  
watching television,

shows about swamp people and alligators.

## Liberty Warriors

by Jasmin Ring

The dreams for modern freedoms actualize  
Filling the hearts of the suppressed with hope  
Fierce determination empowers the unhappy  
The voices of morality rise united

The gallant struggle for change persists  
Released is an essence of infectious quality  
Which envelops the Arab world: a Renaissance, a revival  
The souls of a nation against the leaders of oppression

The clash of forces echoes around the globe  
Painting images of horror unleashed  
Tyrants aim to smother and conceal  
But up rises yet another martyr

A phoenix ascends from the ashes  
Brilliance emerging from the smoldering embers  
As it lifts its majestic head to the horizons  
The fire still burns within; the fight for regeneration endures

## Scholarly Sources

by Michael Despotovic

Reality is misery,  
we all have writer's envy.  
Call us bookworms or bookslugs,  
our blood blacker than ink.

Was it Prometheus or Pandora  
who gave us the text?  
How we fail to comprehend our own state  
of ignorance  
wobbling with delight  
like drunkards in the night.



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## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOME AND THE PERIPHERAL: An Interview with Nuruddin Farah

by Emily Peters

When I first met Nuruddin Farah, I was not nearly as eloquent as I had imagined I would be, yet the world famous author perfectly embodied the words he had written and did not disappoint my expectations. Prior to meeting him, I had read that he often receives mail addressed to “Ms. Farah” due to his strong female characters, feminist values, and stories written from the mind of a woman. Although I had the presence of mind and knowledge of his novels and life to expect a man, when I asked him about his mail he chuckled and remarked that the letters addressed to a woman still flow through his mail slot.

Nuruddin Farah, the 1998 laureate of the Neustadt International Prize for Literature and rumoured 2012 Nobel Prize for Literature nominee, was born in the country we now call Somalia in 1945. His life story would fill many novels in and of itself but he is best known for *From a Crooked Rib* (1970) and his three trilogies: *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship* (1979-1983), *Blood in the Sun* (1986-1988), and his most recent novels *Links* (2004), *Knots* (2007), and *Crossbones* (2011). For a period of 22 years, Farah was exiled from his home country for his novel *A Naked Needle* (1976) but continued to write solely about Somalia, to keep it alive through writing, while his physical body resided in one country after another. If it were not for a phrase from one of his novels that has haunted me since I first read it, I doubt I would have had the impetus to speak to Farah and record each word. Every so often, a word, a line, or a passage from a novel will stick with me, and for the

most part they are inspiring or involve magical wordplay. Having now met the man behind the words, I understand why a passage which stuck with me is haunting rather than inspiring, and in turn raises difficult questions rather than conjuring magical images. Farah is a man unafraid to say what he means in no uncertain terms. For example, it was the following blunt passage found in *From a Crooked Rib* concerning female circumcision which has remained in my mind: “They had beaten drums when the girls cried, so that the beating of the drums would drown the crying” (*From a Crooked Rib* 137). It is difficult to pinpoint for certain the quality of this line which lends itself to floating around in my head yet it is impossible to deny the sheer honesty and bleakness it portrays. There is a beautifully touching simplicity in such tragedy masked by such concrete facts: drums “drowning” out the crying, as if there was not enough water from the girls’ eyes. When I read and re-read his novels, this horribly beautiful passage acts as a lens through which I view Somalia, and perhaps this is why it is so important: Farah unintentionally created a window through which I could see the country (in which his heart resides) through his eyes, to the best of my ability.

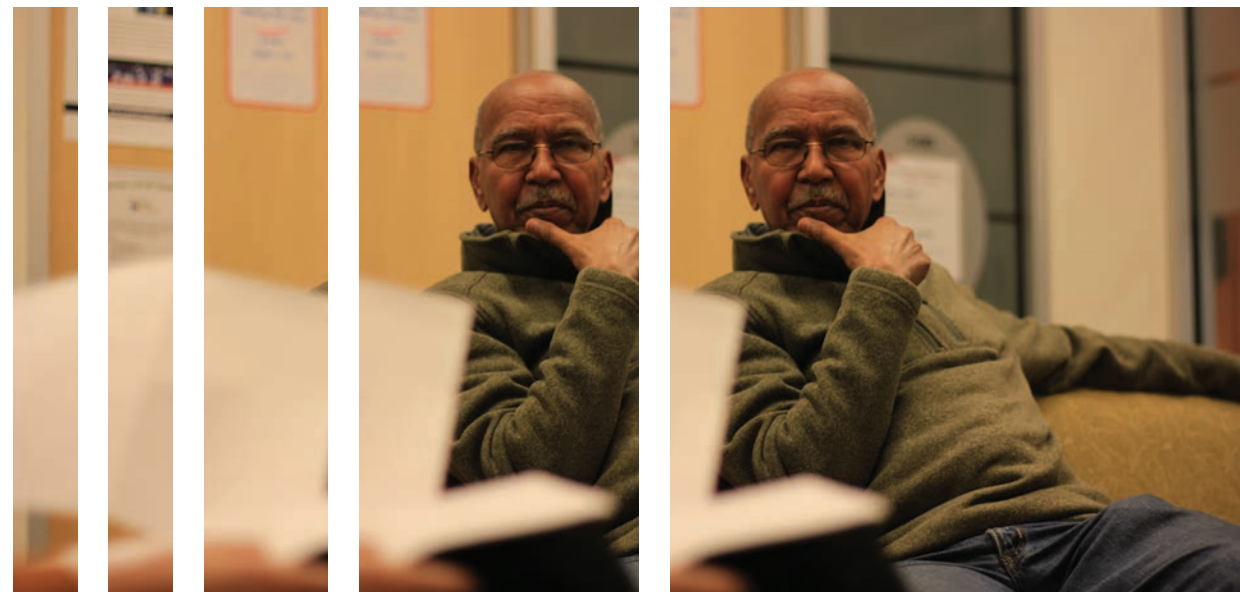
It would be a lie if I said that his novels and personal words did not affect this article. It is his extensive experience and accomplished career which make me write with respect and his opinions on the process of writing determined the steps I have taken in piecing this interview together. When asked about writers block, Farah insisted that there is no such thing; aspiring writers

simply forget that writing requires “75% patience and 25% talent”. When further pressed on the issue he offered simple, yet effective, advice: “stay until there is an opening... and when there is just the smallest sliver of light, crawl through the crack like a small man”.

With such a solid relationship with patience, Farah identifies his biggest struggle as something quite opposite of writer’s block; he says “my greatest challenge is to never ever repeat myself”. In overcoming this challenge, Farah’s knowledge of multiple languages gives him an edge. In reference to his multilingualism, he told me:

*“Well I think every language gives you access to a world and therefore the more languages you know the more worlds you have access to. Sometimes it can be a hindrance, in that you feel inadequate to say everything you want to say in one language as opposed to any other language. [For example] Italian and English: in Italian, the word for bus terminus means “where it starts” and in English it means “terminus” (where it ends)... you have to negotiate all these differences, make sure to use them... and the best thing is, to allow language to use you”*

Beyond the influence of knowing many languages, I was curious if his nomadic lifestyle allowed countries other than Somalia to sneak their way into his books. To Farah, Somalia is everything, and the countries he lived in while writing his novels were merely peripheral: “I learn from them but I need not acknowledge their presence in my life”. He went on to



question any person’s ability to write about a place in which they are not entirely grounded:

*“Also I don’t understand them sometimes completely... until I know where the fabric has come from; where the timber has come from ... you need a lot more knowledge. Some people don’t even bother themselves with some very important questions like ‘where do we get the water?’, ‘why is it that some areas are wealthy and some are poor?’... you have to know a lot more than one can.”*

One of the most common questions Farah receives is about the nature of his novel, *From a Crooked Rib*, second only to the questions of his political opinion on Somalia. When asked how *From a Crooked Rib* took shape as strong feminist writing in the face of the rampant disrespect of women in Somalia, the long answer examines his childhood and his relationship with his mother, but the short answer is that Farah had “no idea” what he was doing. The short answer Farah provided hints that it should come as no surprise that a young man naturally wrote a book in which a young woman questions her position in accordance with men and describes with horror the process of female circumcision.

The notion that women are equal and should be treated accordingly simply did not strike him as a radical idea, he just wrote a story he needed to tell.

While I expected to gain knowledge through talking with Nuruddin Farah, I forgot to expect a new worldview and an encounter with questions and ideas which would shake around once-concrete concepts in my mind. If World Literature is about perspectives and viewing the world in more ways than one, it is safe to say that reading Farah’s novels in and out of class and having the opportunity to speak with him was paramount to my love of, and involvement in, World Literature, in every sense of the phrase.

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## Taken from France

by Paul Savage

I spent the better part of an hour at the Abbaye this Saturday morning, drinking coffee at the bar while the mother of one of my students, talked to me about going home. I find this woman attractive in a wilder sort of way. She barks at patrons; to those that think they can tell her that extra sad bit of pity, countering always with a story that is much more pitiful. Daring to say a little more mother like, she puts aside this roughness today for me. I didn't say so, but she said I looked homesick and I went reluctantly with this.

I am, like the rest of my preferred world, inefficient when it is my heart that does not fall forward into something. A mother knows. I wander around in my mind, looking ten times at small objects in the place, wondering why I do not cast only one brief glance at most. I will feel better when I am on the train to Paris.

I have done it so many times but I do it again, because that's what a "go-west young man" does, right? I consider again my time spent here in the context of what I have been able to do for others. It is simple and becomes ridiculous to repeat more than once that I have tried to show people here what they should expect from others that are at your service.

Richard Millet quotes the promise near the end of his longest novel: "I am with you until the end of time..." He describes it as the most beautiful phrase in literature, and we may agree that it is the same for life, but this is not necessary. As bombs exploded this morning in London, we hear the echoing voices of the people that are safe: "O Jésus, reste avec nous..."

A child gave me a picture last week. There is a night sky, the moon surrounded by twenty or more stars, all in proportion and all appearing at the very top of the page. I taught songs about the sun, moon and stars, and I am selfish to think of this as a tribute to me. I hear tiny voices, in (un-I-son) or alone, there is still a sound of something. I feel myself traveling back. I hear voices of angels. No, time would have to stop to hear that, or end, more simply.

Did I end up pointed in the direction that matters?

I touch the moon and stars on the picture, and the reflection in the water blurs. Rain is ready to fall from a sky with no clouds. There may be tears that make fine dew for one of the most beautiful flowers I have seen. There are blooms of three different species from one stem. You can gasp, or shake it off. Only a child is innocent enough to give praise to the three persons in one...

A flower of life, the top bloom is blue, Eliot's color. A red rose of Sharon, pointing east and then the fire of orange and yellow passion for the flaming sword. Most reflect or pray with some of the heart. Peace will not come easy to the heart that prays during sleep. The child drew enormous green health into leaves that spread out because a child lives in hope and life.

A masterpiece! And the artist shrugs it off, distracted, rapid, lazy, precise, carefree. Picasso and cubism? I don't really know what those are. The eye in this picture looks ahead and then, at the same time focuses around 180 degrees, and the upper lid is deft and unnerving. Does the head want to role forward to its egg-shaped destiny? The golden hair holds it back, unstable but equal for now. It screams all of a sudden: "I am a woman, and I will speak!" And I will speak eloquently and with intelligence that will make you uneasy. I will speak golden to you men in [your] color of kings. I am an artist! "Je m'appelle Anaïs"!

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## September 1964

by Tara Nykyforiak

I saw your face between the pages of dreams. It was framed by white borders, blank slates that would shrink and start blotting with Time. I saw your face between the Moon and the Rain, lips pressed together with arms and legs crossed squatting in safety on the gravelly ground. I saw your face amidst the parallel lines, soon to be fused with the surrounding blank space, forcing you to dash lest you be crushed by the crumbling walls.

In my dreams  
In the Rain

Your face marks Time on the Moon

Parallel lines never touch  
Except for your lips and limbs nervous in the downpour of the night  
I saw the Rain blot the blank spaces around you  
I saw its drops cause them to shrivel and shrink as dreams do

Un-press your lips  
Uncross your legs

Let nothing and everything consume you



MIRELA SKRIJELJ



## Chai Khana

by Aayla Umar

Night. A well-dressed grandmother and granddaughter stand over a stove in the kitchen. There is a lesson going on.

NANO

There is an art to a good cup of chai. There are elements that dance and glide over your buds when you take a gulp. The angreez, they kill chai. 'Chai tea' they call it. No. Here, there is only chai. And our chai is special because it's mysterious. You know what I'm talking about right?

FARAH

Yes.

NANO

Good. At least you know something. Anyway, it's important for you to understand how to make chai, or else you won't be able to find a good husband.

FARAH

Oh God. I don't want a husband right now.

NANO

Yes, you are right to implore God. God will need to assist you in this endeavor. Lord, give my grandchild some taste in her hands! You need it.

FARAH

Nano, quit being dramatic.

NANO

You made me that cup of chai yesterday and I got a headache. I couldn't get out of bed all afternoon. Did you forget? I missed my afternoon prayers because of you and God is angry with you. Ullu ki pathi. Now listen, are you interested or not? Your in-laws and husband to be are waiting. Don't you know that the way to a man's heart is through his chai? The secret to seducing the right man is captured at the bottom of his cup of chai. Made by you, of course. If he makes it to the bottom, you'll know the secret. If not, then, well, you know...

FARAH

If that's the case then I am happy with how my tea currently tastes. Tell them to leave! I don't want him. Have you heard the song 'my milkshake brings all the boys to the yard'? Well I don't need a milkshake.

NANO

No. My milkshake? What flavour is the milkshake? Where is the yard? Who are the boys? Do you make milkshakes for boys in your yard!? Does your mother know about this!

FARAH

Does my response matter?

NANO

No. Good. At least you know. Chai is a delicate simple. For me, it is just simple. For you, it is Everest. You start with mineral water. Always mineral water. If I catch you using anything else you will feel a hot palm against your face that will reverberate for many months. Mineral water. Bring it to a boil, and then let it simmer. Make the water yearn for what it's missing. Its companion, the thing it is empty without, kind of like you, how you're empty without... him; flavorless without. Look, the little bubbles are begging you to insert what they want. What they need.

FARAH

Nano! Quit being graphic!

NANO

How else will you learn? Your generation is ganda. So dirty minded. All you need is a sex association and then it will stick in your mind.

FARAH

Oh my God.

NANO

No, we don't talk about God during sex. Anyway, when the water is moaning, groaning, begging, yearning, like this, insert the chai patti. Now watch how it floats on top of the water before getting enveloped in its moist embrace. The water is euphoric while the patti is brought to climax over and over, and over... and over. Watch. Do you see? Now stop! We want to elongate this moment of desire between these two lovers so turn down the heat and let them melt into each other. Let them become inseparable.

FARAH

Who knew making tea was such an erotic experience?

NANO

You will not gain access to a man's heart without knowing erotic secrets, child. There is a long way for you to go still. Too many things you need to know too many things I won't teach you.

FARAH

I would prefer if you don't teach me erotic things. Thanks.

NANO

Hah! So who will? Your friends? What do they know. Can't make a cup of tea. In their tea you can taste the water. Even in your tea. Water, water everywhere. Add some cardamom pods. Two or three should do the trick. I'm telling you, tea is an art. An art you must learn.

FARAH

I am not interested in marriage, Nano. In a few years maybe.

NANO

You'll be lucky if any man wants to marry you! Look at how fat you've gotten! How tan you've become! Kali. This chai is all you've got. The man sitting on my couch waiting for his chai in the living room is all you've got. Lucky for you we're almost at the end of this chai debacle; two ingredients to go and one complicated blow job.

FARAH

What? Please never use those words again!

NANO

What? There is a very intricate blow job involved when the black chai patti water mixes with the milk at the very end. Done rapidly, like when you are devouring your lover waiting for the finish. Speed and exhilaration! Ha! These are joys you won't know until you are married. Don't have sex before marriage or you will go to Hell. You know this right?

FARAH

I don't want to have sex if it means I have to get married. Nano please, I don't want to meet him.

NANO

You run from marriage like it's the devil. Marriage is beautiful. You have a companion. A mate. For the first while you ravage each other, all day. Any opportunity you get. Even now I salivate at the thought of being with my own 'him' day and night until we were both too weak to even make chai. And those memories are imprinted in my mind as clear as my nails as they dug in his back all those times we went for a ride. Cringe, look uncomfortable. You are not a child anymore. Next year no one will want you. Right now you are younger, next year you will be older. Don't forget what I said about the water: flavourless, empty, colourless, yearning, needing, wanting. It's you. You are the water. And you don't even know it.

FARAH

Nano! Water brings life. If I am water, I am life! I don't need a fucking chai patti to complete me!

FARAH grabs the pot of chai, overtaken by a fierce moment of anger, throws the pot of chai to the ground. Some of the hot tea hits the grandmother who shrieks in pain.

Go! Go show them what type of daughter in law I am. If I am capable of throwing love on my own grandmother's feet, I am more than capable of SHOWERING them with love all over. Go! Go tell them. I don't want to know your fucking chai recipe.

FARAH exits the kitchen.

The scene ends as NANO falls to the floor moaning in pain.

## Cuffed

by David Ly

A MAGICIAN, middle-aged, enters wearing a tuxedo. His hair is black, but greying, and slicked back with some strands out of place. His hands are clasped and handcuffed. He takes a seat in a metal chair that is bolted to the center of the stage.

MAGICIAN

Tonight's magic show isn't going as I planned... a few minor complications. I'm in a bit of a conundrum. But the show will go on! You see, I'm bored of "shocking" audiences with generic magic tricks wherever I travel. I wanted to do something different with you guys: create an unforgettable show, have you witness real magic, and see a twist on an age-old trick!

He flashes his palms in excitement to the audience, and shamefully looks at them. They are glistening with blood.

I know, I know. Excuse my appearance. The handcuffs are a bit much, right? Your city's police seem to have a problem with a little experimentation. They need to take it a bit easy. I've only performed for you people twice, and somehow cops have showed up at the end of both nights addressing my shows for having some disturbing content. I mean, the same classical trick was done each night...just with my own twist. Just earlier an officer arrived; a rather rude one, as a matter of fact. He's to blame for this (Raises cuffed hands). I don't see how my shows are so disturbing. I still did what you all were expecting, right? Cutting a body up into pieces.

ELVINA runs on stage with the MAGICIAN's suitcase. She's in her mid-twenties with purple hair sloppily tied in a bun, wearing a tight grey, knee length dress, and a black cloak, in black heels.

Perfect timing. Now let the show begin...

ELVINA

There you are! The caravan is all packed and I bleached the backroom. Let's go!

MAGICIAN

What's the rush? We still have an audience to amaze.

ELVINA

Looking like this we don't! (To audience) We apologize, folks, but tonight's show will have to be cancelled. You will not be refunded. Please leave. Goodnight!

MAGICIAN

No, no, no, no, no. Let them stay. (To audience, standing) Please excuse my assistant, everybody. She just has cold feet. The show will go on...

ELVINA

Another night.

MAGICIAN

(Sitting down) Is he still here? The officer?

ELVINA

He's right here. I've been carrying all six pieces of him in your suitcase everywhere.

MAGICIAN

Oh, such a wonderful assistant. Now get setup. We'll give the audience a true spectacle.

ELVINA

Seriously!?! What do you plan on doing?

MAGICIAN

I'm going to give our friend in there some air. He must be extremely cramped.

ELVINA

Excuse me?

MAGICIAN

Just open the suitcase. Once I put him back together, he'll re-animate and be so grateful, and the audience will be wowed! The greatest magic exhibited ever!

ELVINA

I'm in no mood for this. The last two shows ended with us being harassed by officers. C'mon, let's go. This really isn't the time to do another one of your experiments.

MAGICIAN

This won't be an experiment. I'll perform true magic. Show that it is real.

ELVINA

Real?! The only thing real tonight was that you attacked, and cut up a cop with one of our swords while you were cuffed! If you want to do some real magic, then pull off some sort of miracle to fix this mess before we're over.

(She turns, puts on the hood from her cloak, and begins to walk off stage)

The MAGICIAN gets up to catch up with her. He grabs the end of her trailing cloak and ruffles within it, then reveals his hands freed, and holding the handcuffs which are still locked. ELVINA turns around angrily.

MAGICIAN

Tuh-duh.

ELVINA

A cheap trick.

MAGICIAN

Now, Elvina. The limbs are bleeding out!

ELVINA

We're going to get in the van, drive away from here, and we're going to throw the suitcase into the river. C'mon, let's go.

MAGICIAN

That's ridiculous. The man's going to drown in the river. Come, let me give him his head back.

ELVINA

It's not going to work! You can't do it!

MAGICIAN

What?

ELVINA

You can't bring him back to life. He's as dead as can be.

MAGICIAN

I know that, Elvina. It's quite obvious he's dead. Who would be alive in his condition? But after I work some magic he'll be as alive as can be.

ELVINA

Do you even hear yourself?

MAGICIAN

Crystal clear. But I also hear that you're scared. Elvina, don't worry. I can do this.

ELVINA

No. I'm tired of all this magical nonsense.

MAGICIAN

Nonsense?

ELVINA

So many bodies I've disposed of for you. Do you even know the body count?

The MAGICIAN anxiously stares at her. He goes to the chair and throws the handcuffs on the chair. He kneels down and begins to slightly sob.

MAGICIAN

You're scared.

ELVINA

Yes. For us. I'm grateful you took me off the streets all those years ago. That was real magic you did. Now, let me return the favor. Leave with me, and we can start over. No more mistakes. Only clean shows. No more of this nonsense.

MAGICIAN

No more...

ELVINA

Yes, no more.

ELVINA hurries over to him, puts the suitcase down, and takes off her cloak to put over him. She kneels opposite, grabs his hands, and tries to comfort him.

It's alright. I'll help you get through this.

MAGICIAN

No more...

ELVINA

I'm here for you...forever.



## Cuffed (continued)

The MAGICIAN quickly rips off the cloak from his back and throws it over the chair to cover ELVINA's hands and the handcuffs. He tightly holds her hands down to prevent her from running

What are you doing?!

He stands up, ripping off the cloak, revealing one of ELVINA's hands cuffed to the backing of the chair.

What the Hell! Why'd you – How did you do that?! Please, let me go!

MAGICIAN  
No.

ELVINA  
What do you mean “no”?!

MAGICIAN  
I mean no more. You don't believe in me no more.

ELVINA  
I'm proposing a clean start! I believe –

MAGICIAN  
You don't! You don't believe in my magic.

ELVINA  
Please, let me go. Please. I'm sorry.  
I was just scared.

MAGICIAN  
Exactly. There's no time for being scared with magic. Did you see me hesitating to cuff you? The BEST magic is possible when you're most confident; when you truly believe in the impossible. That's when you unlock magic. You have been a wonderful assistant; thank-you.

He picks up the suitcase.

But all I wanted from you was your full support in my art. Now I know that's clearly impossible.

ELVINA  
You can't be serious in leaving me here?  
What's going to happen to me?!

MAGICIAN  
Hopefully something. I mean you don't want to be stuck forever! That would be horrible.

He begins to walk off stage.

So hope for something to happen. Anything to happen, if you can believe in anything.

The lights fade out with ELVINA struggling to break free.

## Author Bios

*Alex Anaya* enjoys travelling. He wrote poetry based on his experiences abroad. Whether or not he does it well is up for interpretation.

*Cheyenne Berghenegouwen* is entering her 4<sup>th</sup> year at SFU. She is majoring in World Literature & History with a history concentration in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies.

After some time in the business world, this year has occasioned *Julia Berry* to return to both poetic writing and full time academia.

*Alicia Blimkie* is a second year International Studies Major and World Literature Minor. She spends her time rhyming, devouring poetry and generally surrounding herself with words.

*Alec Burns* studies Interactive Arts and Technology and World Literature. He is unpleasant and smells like hollandaise sauce.

*Carousel Calvo* is a Filipino-Canadian starting her MA Creative Writing degree at Concordia University this Fall. Her poems have been published at Ricepaper Magazine. Her website: [www.carouselcalvo.wordpress.com](http://www.carouselcalvo.wordpress.com)

*Michael Despotovic* is the proud Editor-in-Chief of this fourth issue of Lyre. His creative casualties included here should satiate him until the next issue.

Born in New York City, *Tanya Encinas* grew up in Atlanta, GA. Starting with Charlie Brown, drawing and painting helped develop her voice in meshing fragments of her memory with the immediate world.

*Hillary Hodgskiss* is a Sagittarius. She likes long walks on the beach, picnics, and holding hands.

*Reese Irwin* is a third-year English Major at SFU. He enjoys tea, nineteenth century literature, and finding adventure and beauty in the everyday.

*Derek James* is a Vancouver born freelance writer. He is currently in his final year of his bachelors degree at Simon Fraser.

*Nick Jennings* is an aspiring designer/author/photographer from Port Coquitlam, BC. He loves travelling, bungee jumping, and cats. He also makes a fantastic batch of crêpes.

*Chadwick Joe* is a fourth year World Literature major at Simon Fraser University. He hopes to eventually become a High school English teacher.

*Ketan Jogia* can be found at every bar.

A specimen of globalization, *Katya Kan's* worldview presents an eclectic concoction. For her, art is the exquisite act of seeking, creating and immortalizing beauty.

“...And what are you going to become?” Majoring in World Literature and minoring in English, *David Ly* is too familiar with people asking him this in his third year.

*Valerie Miller* is both compassionate and driven. She is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in world literature. Performing and writing music is her niche.

*Rosalie Morris* is an English student at Simon Fraser University. She hopes that you like her poems, because they like you.

*Tara Nykyforiak* takes photos, writes poetry and records dream sequences in a psychedelic way. She loves Rush and Inger Christensen.

*Jacqueline Parsons* has just finished her first year at SFU and is excited for her future, studying World Literature and Political Science.

*Emily Peters* is entering her 4th year as a World Literature Major: busy with volunteering and work as well, it's a wonder she's always so well rested.

*Amanda Powell* is a fourth year French major at SFU. You can contact her on her blog: [apowell-art.tumblr.com](http://apowell-art.tumblr.com)

*Y. G. Rancourt* ducks deadlines with a sheepish grin. She tries to lurk mysteriously, but ends up sleeping. No one knows what the “G.” stands for.

*Jasmin Ring* is a first year student at Simon Fraser University who intends to major in History and minor in Linguistics. She loves to read of faraway places and write whimsical poetry.

*Leah de Roy* is a cat enthusiast and aspiring globetrotter who is studying English at SFU. Besides writing poetry, she is currently planning a novel.



## Author Bios (continued)

As a third year student of the World Literature program, *Nazanin Sahebnassagh* enjoys reading works of literature from all around the world and admires their balance together.

*Noushin Sahebnassagh* is a third year student majoring Industrial Design at ECUAD, where she also received a 2D Design certificate. She thinks Art is a really powerful tool to express her creativity.

*Paul Savage* studies and works locally with his family as well as pursuing various interests in language pedagogy and volunteering.

*Mirela Skrijelj* is an aspiring World Literature major. She attributes her creative work mostly to good timing and a trusty old black gel pen.

*Laura Smit* is an English Literature Major, GSWS Minor. She has always loved writing poetry but never thought anyone actually wanted to read it until now.

*Justin Stevens* is a mild mannered SFU student in his second year. He commonly writes poems and short stories when he should be focusing in class.

*Aayla Umar* is a World Literature and International Studies double major, looking for new ways to experience the beauty of the world.

*Sydney Vickars* is a World Literature major pursuing graduate studies. She likes creating stories and living them.

*Daryn Wright* is a poet, editor and occasional photographer, interested in contemporary Canadian poetry and art deco.

*Andrew Zuliani* is a writer, painter, and drawer of comics who lives in books and the sunny West End.

