

LYRE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 2. - 2011

LYRE MAGAZINE



L Y R E L I T E R A R Y M A G A Z I N E

Publisher
The World Literature Program,
SFU

Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief
Daniel Poirier

Managing Editor
Brittany Vesterback

Contributing Writers
Cheyenne Bergenhegenegouwen

Paula Lindsay
Natalia Mayor
Krysten Maier
Daniel Poirier
Krisandra Reid
Yvonne Reinhart
Racan Souiedan
Denise Torok
Sydney Vickars

Contributing Artists
Kristen Puri
Sonya Ryou
Denise Torok

Editorial Board

Krysten Maier
Daniel Poirier
Kristen Puri
Krisandra Reid
Yvonne Reinhart
Denise Torok
Brittany Vesterback
Sydney Vickars
Dusty Yurkin

Art Direction, Design and
Production

Brittany Vesterback
Dusty Yurkin

Faculty Advisor:
Ken Seigneurie

Staff Advisor:
May Yao

Printed in Canada by
Rhino

Copyright 2011 remains with
respective creators



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

The lyrebird is a poised mimic, and in its call it incorporates the resonances of the world that surrounds it. Yet, its intention is not to blend, but to challenge. The sounds it reproduces are beyond that of other birds, other machines, and rather than simple reproduction, its song tells that it cannot be bested. Like the bird – we are ready for the challenge.

Many of the pieces in this, the sophomore issue, engage with the world directly. Rather than shy from anxiety of authorship, the writing engages it head-on. Whether supplementing, arguing, or challenging, there is no shy work here. In its second issue, *Lyre* magazine pushes the boundaries in how it defines itself. In addition to the fiction, poetry, and images, Issue 2 also features our first interview, with authors Kamila Shamsie and Denise Chong, and the first essay, which grapples and tries to come to terms with a life of academia. We hope these exciting forays herald more of this type of submission for future issues.

By using new and diverse types of media, or using different ways of producing or printing its content, *Lyre* can tread new ground in what it means to be a literary magazine. New technology has changed the ways in which content can be delivered and has increased the amount of interactivity between publication and reader, and these types of changes are most exciting for a young endeavour. I know that the current and future staff is excited and imaginative about the future for the magazine.

It has been one of my proudest accomplishments, being one of the co-founders of this literary magazine. I am pleased that I am leaving it poised to take new and exciting directions.

Daniel Poirier
Editor-in-Chief

WRITING

Bridging the Gap: A Talk With Denise Chong and Kamila Shamsie by Sydney Vickars	3
Notes from a French Addict In Toulouse by Krysten Maier	7
Mirror Stage by Sydney Vickars	12
Outside My Window by Krisandra Reid	13
The Age of Miracles by Yvonne Reinhart	14
Transport of the Tome by Paula Lindsay	14
LOCOmbia by Natalia Mayor	15
Young Men and Women by Cheyenne Bergehegenegouwen	17
Bluebeard's Tough Man by Daniel Poirier	18





Variety Moon Meat by Racan Souiedan	21
No One-Man Band Is an Island by Daniel Poirier	27
When Nietzsche Meets Shakespeare adapted by Krisandra Reid	29
To Academia by Sydney Vickers	30
Contributors	32

ARTWORK

Fingerpainting by Sonya Ryou	5
Self-Portrait of an Artist by Denise Torok	12
Collage by Kristen Puri	15
Sacrifice for Rome by Denise Torok	25

BRIDGING THE GAP

A Talk with Denise Chong and Kamila Shamsie

by Sydney Vickers

The Vancouver International Writers' Festival brought authors from all over the world to the local stage. Ken Seigneurie points out that "these authors master one of the finest and most complex symbol systems of the modern world, that is, the literary idiom, and display a sensitivity for human beings of widely different backgrounds." As World Literature students we were granted the honour of having two of these renowned authors speak with us at school. Denise Chong, a Chinese-Canadian, writes about her family's history in *The Concubine's Children* and gets political in her latest book *Egg on Mao*. Kamila Shamsie discusses delicate cultural relationships in her most recent novel *Burnt Shadows*. Both of these authors "engage with compelling questions in the contemporary world and serve as a model for our current World Literature program" and "have much to tell us about this exciting and potentially dangerous period of history through which we are living" (Seigneurie).

Not only was this event a rare chance to meet "world" authors in the flesh, it contributed to dissolving the barrier that so often exists between students and their scholarship.

As students of World Literature, we are often located a great distance from what we are studying – whether through geography, culture, or time– and we are very aware of the dislocation between pure literature and the critical theory that surrounds it. Thus, this visit allowed us a chance to clarify a piece of the puzzle we strive throughout our academic careers to make sense of: authorship.

Instead of conducting a formal interview, editors of the Lyre magazine had a chance to sit down and have a discussion with the authors directly following their general address to the World Literature and SFU community. Our first topic of discussion

was perhaps the most obvious one burning in our comparative-oriented minds: the question of language. Both of these authors, from spaces traditionally outside the English-speaking world, write in English. This is because, they both agree, English is the language they know best. For Shamsie, it is her first language and the only one she feels comfortable communicating in at all. For an author who in her novel writes linguistically and culturally significant questions like, "Would you like me to be in English or Urdu right now?" we found this particularly interesting. If speaking a different language allows you to be in that particular language – and all of the cultural spaces that allows you to fill – then writing in English must mean being in the English. Being in English, as Lawrence Venuti would have it, is being in the Anglo-American world. In response to this, Shamsie makes clear that "the English-reading population does not imply any sort of cultural position." As students of "world literature" this is overwhelmingly significant because, for the most part, we study in translation, and English translation at that. Shamsie's intentionally indecisive outlook on this way of reading the world is telling of our positions as students of the world: reading in English, and reading in translation allows us a malleable perspective. While critics such as Gayatri Spivak would argue against reading solely in translation, as it prevents us from engaging with the other in any meaningful way, Shamsie offers us hope. While none of us comparative-minded students would dream of getting through our academic years with the grasp of only a single language under our belts, the fact that it is English, in Shamsie's view, allows us a multitude of critical perspective.

Kamila Shamsie writes in English because it allows her to reach the greatest possible audience while reconciling and maintaining a crucial balance between so many cultural positions in her work. Denise Chong

writes in English for many of the same reasons. Writing about a country where “you need a permit to get pregnant,” and where “YouTube has been banned because it perpetuates social movement,” language has become a political issue. For Chong, writing in English was the only way to get her book published and the only way to get her book read. In an overwhelming number of instances, says Chong, translations from English are banned. While this is indeed the case, she also makes clear that “any self-respecting intellectual author in China reads all the banned books.” With this in mind, Denise is sure that her book will be read in China, where perhaps its content is most relevant. Being written and published originally in English, Chong is also sure that it will reach the Anglo-American world, where the contents are most pertinent in illuminating an Asian world so often ignored. Again, as students studying primarily in English, we enjoy a privileged position, as we are given access to important world issues.

Shamsie offers some insight into the field of translation. When asked whether she had ever been contacted by her translators or whether she had any sort of input in the process of translation of her novels into other languages, her answer is simple and surprising: no. When asked if she had ever attempted to read a translation of her work or get feedback about a particular translation by someone who knew the language, her reply is again, no. In an era of easy communication we find this very surprising. We had expected that living authors would be very interested in how their works were translated, wonder about faithfulness and whether they were being represented in other cultural spaces authentically. Her response to our surprise, seemingly pessimistic at the time, was this: “If you want to change the world, don’t write a novel.” In retrospect, this statement amplifies so many of our own misconceptions about the world of authorship and does not present gloom, but opportunity. Shamsie writes because it is what she is meant to do and to worry about her representations in spaces she can’t control is futile. There will almost always be controversial (mis)representations of a work, but behind them

are numerous cultural foundations. Attempting to break them would be a fruitless task. After all, it is the study of these cultural foundations that provide the stuff of our discipline – and this does not fall into the realm of authorship, nor should it. It is simply an unintended consequence, and Shamsie’s attitude is to let come what may.

What we can take away from our discussion with Shamsie and Chong is a sense of opportunity. They have successfully shed light on a dynamic and crucial component of our studies and in doing so have validated our methods and processes. Studying in English, and in translation, is not as limiting as we are so often told. We understand the restrictions that a single language presents and we are aware that we cannot be successful comparatists with only one way of looking at the world. Recognition of this, however, grants us the necessary tools with which to apply our knowledge and take initiative as the future generation of literary scholars. As Shamsie says, “It’s like being in the dark room, you don’t know where it’s going and... that’s the excitement of it,” and, “If you don’t have fear, then you’re doing something wrong.” To us she says, “If you start doing something, and you know you can do it, then what’s the point?” Shamsie and Chong have both enabled us, as English language readers, to occupy a dynamic position in World Literature and we will forever be grateful for this. In conjunction with the position we have been granted, both Shamsie and Chong stress the importance of learning other languages, not as a means of merely acquiring new vocabulary or even as a way of obtaining new ways of seeing. Rather, Shamsie says, “we can learn other languages [so that] we can learn other ways of being.”





NOTES FROM A FRENCH ADDICT

In Toulouse

by Krysten Maier



Double Life

I feel like I'm living a double life. I lived on the outskirts of Toulouse, France from 2007 to 2008 as an au pair for the Genot family in a town called Castelnau d'Estrétefonds. In the spring of 2009, the family invited me back, having had bad luck with two au pair girls already that year. It took me under two minutes to accept and before long I was hopping on a plane back to the country that I had fallen in love with a year earlier. The reason I feel like I'm living a double life is because when I got back here, it felt like I had never left. It's like one me has been living here all along while the other carried on life in Canada. Immediately I was that au pair girl again; how to explain?

One of the Genot's neighbours, Mathilde, who I used to baby-sit for, came and picked me up at the airport and I spoke French! It just came flying out of me despite its absence in my life during the past eight months. We went and got some lunch, I had a salad with lardons and melted goat cheese on toast. When I had finished, the waiter, as well as Matilde, expected me to order dessert even though I was stuffed.

I'd forgotten how every meal is followed by a dessert in this country! I politely refused a delicious slice of cake, and even the customary after-dinner java. That's France, I thought.

The reunion with the family was a delight: the parents, Phillippe and Muriel, their son Lucas, and their sweet little girl who had missed me so, Lison. It was a joyous occasion, but down to business the next day, jumping right back into the routine like entering a round of double dutch. With Phillippe and Muriel off to work my first morning back, I drove Lison and Lucas to school, and picked them up again for lunch. Lucas reminded me, as I was cooking the filets that I had just bought at the butcher down the road, that "We're in France, we like our meat bloody, or else! This isn't England". As I cooked, I remembered how very few cooking implements there were in this house. More precisely, there are very few of the very useful and practical items, and many more utterly futile ones. On closer thought, there seem to be fewer tools that seriously aid in the preparation of dishes, and more that serve in the presentation of them. That's France, I thought.

I drove the kids back to school. The car!

My old faithful Beatrice: a 2002 Renault Twingo. How I had missed it. I got back into the seat with the shock of the unfamiliar configuration, like the first time breaking any habitual cycle, like typing on a new keyboard or texting with a new cell phone (naturally, these are other things that I had to reconfigure myself to). This car drives like such a go-kart compared to the Intrepid at home. When I drive here, I really have the impression of going fast. Maybe it is how well the car accelerates, maybe it's the unmarked speed limits on the country roads, or maybe something else, but I just fly. Still, I'm the slowest one here. I'm scared at how fast the French generally drive, but I love the frequent roundabouts. And as I navigated the area, I found myself merging into necessary lanes unconsciously, a roadmap obviously still printed in my head.

I sped into Toulouse later that day with no certain goal, and basically no money. I wore my plaid pink and blue sundress in the temperate afternoon, parking far from the centre so I wouldn't have to pay. Walking in, I suddenly found myself feeling as though I had missed a memo regarding dress code. Black, gray, sleeves, jackets surrounded me on all sides. Whoops, I thought, that's France. Apparently it was still "chilly" out. I didn't let the stares of the passers-by bother me. I followed my feet down a familiar path and took in the town.

Rien n'a changé. Nothing has changed. I saw the same faces peering out of the same snack shacks and restaurants. They haven't left, they've continued pouring out crepes and serving sandwiches on Rue du Taur during my absence. Their lives have just gone on. I made it to La Garonne and felt a little more in place: this is hippie central, with wild clothing and hairstyles littering the grass on the riverbank. Campy swing songs of an acoustic guitar and clarinet fill up the air. That's France. I located the source of the music and saw a familiar face: the same musician with the ponytail and rabbit face who would always play upright base in the Capitol park. I can't believe that I saw him my first day back. He's still here, he still plays, his fingers have never left the strings. But his hair is short now.

I expect to see people I know at every turn; it's a strange feeling. I heard the sound of skateboards grinding the pavement in courtyard of

the Saint Sernin and expected my ex-fling Nico to come olying out from around the corner. Every person of his stature makes me jump.

Rue St. Rome! Shopping! I wandered in and out of old stores, Trait, Stadivarius. I was trying on jeans when I got a texto from Matilde to see if I could baby-sit that night. Here we go again! So I left Toulouse, and I went to her place. And just like that, I'm back in the routine, I've picked up right where I left off. Now, the "here" is the familiar and the "there" is the forgotten. France is the close, and Canada is the distant.

And tonight, I dined with the neighbours in typical French fashion, at the table from 9 PM till midnight, and as we nibbled on cheese and bread, sipping red wine, it was the neighbour, Fabrice, who said, "Ca, c'est vraiment Français, non?"

Stranger Friends

Parisians have a reputation for being rude, cold, and too busy to give you the time of the day. Naturally, Paris being the only nameable French city for many North Americans, there is a perpetuated stereotype of all French people being rude, cold, and too busy to give you the time of the day. I'm not a hundred percent sure, myself having lived rather in Toulouse, whether this image is simply false or if there is a great difference between the people in the South, because I can't say enough about how friendly the people are here.

First of all, there is the community of my little village, Castelnau. All of the neighbours know each other well, and are often great friends. Of all of my next door neighbours in Canada, I think I've only ever talked with three of them. It's very pleasant having friends so nearby.

The other night, the couple next door, Fabrice and Anise, came by to return some movies that they had borrowed, and Muriel and Philippe invited them in for a drink. We sat in the living room with aperitifs and snacks chatting and, as it was almost time for dinner, Muriel invited them to join us for the meal. That struck me as odd, as we hadn't planned anything at all and were likely going to have one of those scrape-together-bits-and-pieces dinners. Anise

shared that she had already prepared a tajine, modestly down-playing it, but speculating that it would be enough for all of us. Like it was nothing, she hopped back next door, and brought over her dish for all of us to enjoy. Philippe provided the wine and some cheese we had in the fridge, and they called it even.

Another time, Lison had a friend over and they wanted to bake cookies with me, but we didn't have enough butter. It was Sunday so, "obviously", we couldn't just go pick some up at the grocery store ten minutes away on foot, because no businesses are open on Sundays. So we did what one might do in an old film: we went knocking at the neighbours' doors to see if we couldn't very well borrow some. First at Jocynthe's door, and she had some but, as she explained at length, she had bought it specifically to bake a cake that afternoon. Next at Anise's, and she both had a pad of butter and gave it to us without reluctance. So we made our cookies, and brought some over for her to taste.

In my experience, this phenomenon is not unique to the close-knit, small-town communities. When I go into town, the centre of Toulouse, I have no doubts that I will soon be chatting with strangers in the park or on the street. Of course oftentimes this is men, trying to pick me up, allowing me to confirm tenfold the rumour of the amorous quality of Frenchmen. They start to chat and eventually progress into the asking for my number, or even asking me to accompany them to their flat for a drink. For example, every time I go into Virgin Records to take advantage of their listening stations, some guy comes and starts listening to the CD next to mine in hopes of starting a conversation.

So this I have become accustomed to, this is normal, but I had a rather different experience the other day. The weather was temperamental that day, swinging from sun to showers every couple of hours and I was not properly dressed. When the rain began to fall I took shelter in the covered hallway in the Capitol building. There was a young man playing the guitar in there so I took a seat on the pavement to have a listen and wait out the rain. Many others had the same idea, and congregated in the hall. Suddenly an old man started commenting about the

weather to me. He must have been in his seventies, I guessed. It was an awkward conversation, him standing on the cobblestone, myself reclined on the ground leaning against the stone wall. I was so taken off guard, it never occurred to me to stand up properly in conversation. It was simply a couple volleys back and forth between us as the rain drizzled down.

And when it finally stopped, I rose to leave, and he asked me if I wouldn't like to go have a coffee together. It was a surprise, to be sure. What would an old retiree want to discuss with a young foreigner like myself? However, had I not planned on meeting up with Nico in just fifteen minutes in the Place du Capitol, I damn well would have liked to join him for coffee. Probably a lonely old guy, just looking for company, and bold enough to ask for some. That's cool.

Euro-soup

Oh how I'd missed those Euro-soup, multinational foreigner parties. Unlike parties back home where you might first ask "Who are you?", at these, the first thing you ask is "What are you?"

I went back to the old Tchic café, the corner sports bar on the Boulevard de Strasbourg that I faithfully frequented almost every Tuesday last year. It's the home of the Anglais-Français linguistic exchange, established in 2007 by the infamous multi-lingual dynamic duo of Nico and Dino, that's still kicking today despite a comatose summer. In short, the native speakers and foreigners looking to improve their respective English or French unite in these two-three hour sessions to chat in the two languages, vocabulary-building exercises included for the more diligent of the flock. One of the original intents, if I recall correctly, was to serve as a vehicle for the novel, North American idea of networking. And it worked. Naturally I was interested to return and reconstruct something of a "peer group" for myself during my present stay.

As I got to know so intimately one of the group's fearless leaders last year, at my first return to the meeting I came to know one of the new self-proclaimed leaders, a German guy named Dominik. He and a French lady named France took over the exchange and kept it alive in the absence of some core original members. After having spoken with Dominik, cha ching! in came the facilitation

of networking, for there I was with an invite to a house party that Friday. Tchín tchín to that! *(“tchín tchín” is a French expression for cheers).

So there I found myself, chez Dom, before a host of young people, not really sure in what language to engage in conversation. It’s wonderful! For one thing, starting a conversation is easy, simply asking, “Where are you from?” or “What are you doing in Toulouse?” Although the answer to that last question, when in a room surrounded by young German men in this town, is more often than not “I work for Airbus”, and then I know exactly where the conversation is going to go: nowhere!

But nevertheless, the language variety always keeps it interesting. I started speaking in French with a dude from Minnesota and never changed over to English. I spoke with a French guy in English about French music. I was engaged in conversation with a Norwegian girl about Canada’s history. It’s just so jumbled up and colourful and variant. People bring absinthe and Jagermeister and an unspeakable variety of beer that they simply brought from their homeland, probably purchased at a not-so-foreign corner store near their house. We dish out dozens for import alcohol, and they live next door to the breweries. The invitees parallel the labels on their booze: Made In ____ [fill in the country]. These parties remind me that I’m in Europe! in all its mottled glory.

It was the same when I went out with my long-time friend Martha and her new group of buddies the night before. We squished onto a couple benches at the Café Populaire and ordered a “crate” of beer (13 plastic cups of beer in a wooden box, which I think is just nifty as far as social drinking goes). Martha is Columbian and what I didn’t realise about her friends--although they are from different countries including France, Germany, and Italy--is that they all speak Spanish. Suddenly I had to apply two semesters of Spanish grammar that has slowly been seeping out of my head since the end of school and since the beginning of my reconnection with the French language! One of the German girls, taking me for French, started talking to me in Spanish, apologizing that she didn’t speak any French. Lord knows I tried to keep up with her, scrambling to access my learnings, locked someplace in my brain, and managed to carry a conversation for a good



five minutes before deciding to admit defeat and disclose my English origins. Needless to say the conversation was better after that. Curse those Germans and their outstanding linguistic abilities!

In short, I love the challenge of swimming in the Euro-soup, the cacophony of a dozen different accents and languages uttered simultaneously, the universal recognition of shared interests, the concrete connection despite obvious differences, the union of countries in the pursuit of party; the cultural convergence, the anti-culture, the culture club, the culture-typing, and the high culture observed in it all. What a beautiful thing!

Jour férié

“Jour férié”: the most agitating combination of words in the French language. It is the French term for a stat, or legal, holiday, or even a holy day. This term gets thrown around a fair bit most simply because they have an astronomical amount of such days in the year. Already in my short stint in the country since the last week of April, there have been no less than seven “jours fériés”, so far.

May actually is an exceptional month as far as the frequency of holidays go, but it still seems more than a little bit extravagant. The first of May is the “fete du travail”, or “work holiday”, ergo no one works; that one’s just for fun. The following Friday was Victory in Europe Day; that’s normal, commemorating the end of the Second World War. However, this past Monday blew me away, for this country full of on-paper-Catholics/flesh-and-blood-non-believers observed a stat holiday for Pentecost. I heard Muriel and Lison discussing it in the car and neither of them could recall exactly what Pentecost was. Honestly, I couldn’t tell you either. France also observes The Ascension (another religious date carried over from earlier times) as a day off, and it fell on a Thursday this year. When that happens, as any Frenchman will delightedly tell you, “on fait le pont”. In other words, they make a five-lane, structural steel frame, superhighway of a bridge right on to the weekend, claiming a Friday at their liberty as well!

Kids Lison’s age never have class on Wednesdays, so in this month of fantastical make-believe holidays, she’s been having two- or three-day weeks! How do they get any work done? Send her off to school and leave me the house alone for a few hours! I exaggerate. Having the kids in the house, that’s fine. What

really bugs me about extended days off is that everyone really takes it to heart, goes for the gusto, and does nothing all day. Nothing.

Gas stations are closed: dangerous for me if I should ever run out of fuel on an unexpected holiday, with no French cards and able only to pay in cash! Bakeries are closed: we have to remember to stock up on necessary bread the day before or face the horror of a day without carbs! Grocery stores are closed, and this really doesn’t correspond with the French shopping ideals of stocking the bare necessities, buying fresh food for every meal, and never keeping things handily available in the freezer. Many restaurants and cafés are closed as well: this means no take-out option should we fail to get groceries for that night’s dinner! And to top it all off, every single Sunday is just the same as the dreaded jour férié: closed, closed, closed.

How could a North American like myself possibly live like this, coming from the land of 24/7 convenience stores for continual service, Safeways closing at midnight in case you should need the fixings to make late-night ice cream sandwiches (or whatever...), and every store driven open every day of the week by capitalism and greed?

Actually, rather peacefully. It’s kind of nice knowing that the hustle and bustle can stop for an entire day, that the clockwork is allowed to wind slowly to a halt and rest dormant for some time, to be rewound tomorrow but not a moment before. It is an adaptation that must be made, but after making the change, it is a pleasure to know that everyone across the country is calmly lunching in their backyard terrace, or falling asleep on the lush grass of a public park, mowing their lawn, reading a book, or even shooting NAZI zombies on their XBOX. Anything but working, just taking time for themselves. It’s nice to be a part of such a culture for a while.



The Mirror Stage

by Sydney Vickers

I felt a little bit doubled
When I stopped forgetting
What you needn't have told me

I felt a little bit cheated
When I began to buy
Things you couldn't have sold me

I felt a little bit lost
When I thought up a place
Where you couldn't have lured me

I felt a little bit silent
When I started yelling
Where you couldn't have heard me

I felt a little bit othered
When I started a war
Where you couldn't have fought me

I felt a little bit valid
When I started thinking
What you couldn't have taught me



Outside my Window

by Krisandra Reid

A field of white
thick
heavy
blankets the horizon
black trees interrupt the white silence
bedposts

A single pair of footsteps
pierce the immaculate duvet
only to disappear
in the middle of
somewhere

The trail of a child
jumping on the covers
lithe
light
only to disappear into the biting cold
of the mourning air

There is something maudlin
about a crib of snow

The Age of Miracles

by Yvonne Reinhart

Where does Apollonius lay his head at night?
How does Jesus chew his food?
These are stories better left untold,
surfaces better left untouched.

Tracing his footsteps,
One sees horse-wielding barbarians,
foreign-yet familiar cities,
anacondas in the land of Jungle Book.

The veins of an aging behemoth run blue,
On familiar Roman roads -
One man treads off a traced path,
aware that he is a microcosmic particle centered in
God's grace.

Finally he returns to Rome, eternal Rome,
Dallies with religious reform and thwarts death.

Meanwhile, a shard shatters a temple,
Somewhere far from the Centre,
through the heart of Rome,
Into the core of the Earth.

A man is rendered stoically pure by fire,
As a congregation of muttering clergy wave empty
hands,

Invoking the name of God,
Sighing, at the exponential increase of sin.
Saying: Speak not of mortality, but of life eternal
Not of loss, but purification gained.
Your sin exchanged for redemption.
Then, a loving reception.
Thank us, for your eventual return to Logos.

His condemnation: alchemy of the mind and flesh.
Reading, writing,
Interpreting, disputing.
Unintentional inspiring.
Another magician misstepping.

Proud Petrarch writes another sonnet,
Dante is stunned by cosmic alignment.
A monk holds one pen dipped in ink,
The other hand empty and unfurled
He whispers,
Glory to the Sun,
Glory be to Rome eternal.

Transport of the Tome

by Paula Lindsay

Take me places far from home,
Lands and times beyond my own,
Past the cloistered orb of I
And all that's me and mine and my.

Where sights and smells and sounds and names
Exotic in their foreign frames
Burst forth from pages beckoning me
To see beyond simplicity.

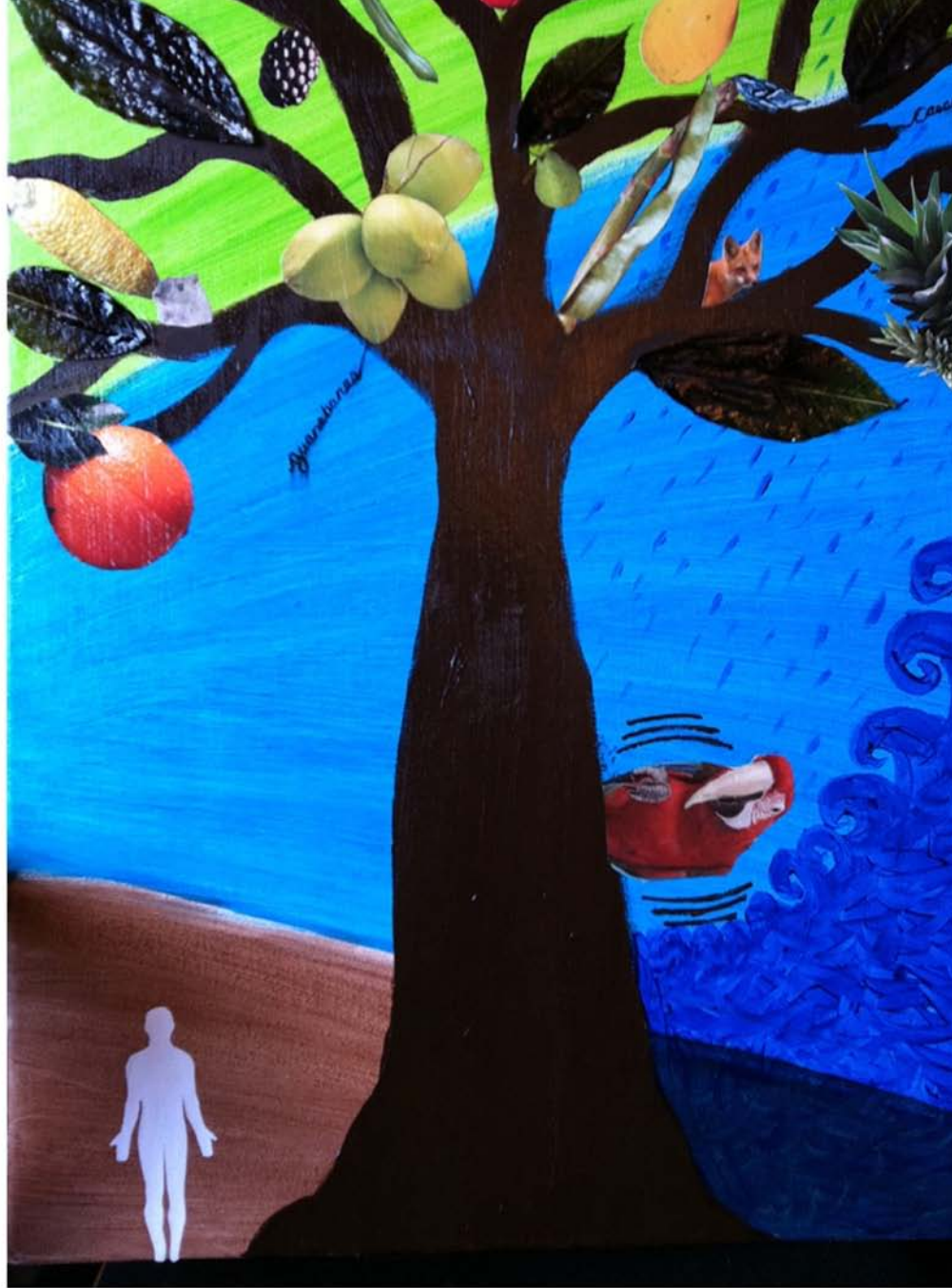
To think outside familiar realms,
Consider life from different helms;
Moved to smile or laugh or weep
As deep calls softly unto deep.



LOCOMBIA

by Natalia Mayor

Past the oceans and the sandy coast
But not further than the tropical jungle
Is a magical place
A place where children work in order to eat,
Instead of going to school and being able to play.
A place where mothers and fathers are kidnapped
For ransoms higher than the price of land.
A place where brothers and sisters
Fight the devilish troops from within.
A place where hearing stories from grandparents
Is becoming extinct due to scheduling demands.



It is here where hope grows
Stronger than cocaine and cheaper than coca-cola
Where the vast biodiversity,
Overruns the cement roads and the city smoke.
Where the people smile
More often than a beauty queen at a parade.
It is here where my call comes from
It is here where I will inspire millions.
It is here where I will make a difference.
Colombia, I am listening to your cries.

Young Men and Women

by Cheyenne Bergenhegenegouwen

Young men and women,
We are corrupted, infected,
tainted, by the very thing that will end
us all!

It was our knowledge that
formed it, it was our hands that built it,
and we will pay for the consequences.
You can be sure of that.

But we must rise and come
together against this enemy!
We must not give in to its splendours!
We must fight against this foe at all
costs, for if we do not, our intellect will
surely wither away long before we are
in our graves!

You are probably wondering,
who is this enemy? But the question is
not who, it is what; the thing that has
corrupted, infected, and tainted us all
is Technology! Technology is a regime
that has made us dependent upon it
and has slowly been taking over our
bodies and our minds.

There once was a time when our
ancestors would sit and write letters to
their family and friends with a pen in
their hand, a mere pen. But computers
have put an end to this - strangling the
emotions out of writing. Letters are
sent in cold black fonts, lifeless, with
no feeling in them. The art of letter
writing will surely die and become
buried beneath the dark hardness of
the earth if we do not do something.

Then, of course, there are
movies and television programs which
have taken over the weekly outings.
Nowadays all we do is sit and watch,
allowing Technology to grasp a hold of
our minds, suck the life out of us and
leave us to become nothing more than

lumps sitting on the couch.

Now Technology has the audacity to
obliterate literature one book at a time!
Movies have claimed the storylines of great
novels, taking away our imagination, giving
us a reason not to read.

Not to mention, the internet formed
easier storylines to read, so instead of
sitting in a chair reading a book more
and more of us are surrendering to this
infectious tyrant and giving in to simplicity.

Books in libraries lay waiting,
abandoned on the shelves collecting
dust. Students no longer wish to read a
novel; they would rather capitulate to this
infection of our society.

So we must rise!

We must fight!

We must read!

Do not give in to Technology!

For it has destroyed writing. It has
claimed our imagination and it will tear
literature apart page by page, word by
word!

So, read my fellow peers, pick up a
book and read!

Read for the honour of all mankind!

Read for yourself, for your own
dignity!

Read so that books will no longer
have the fate of being doorstoppers, or
being placed under the short leg of a table!

Read for the sake of reading!

BLUEBEARD'S TOUGH MAN

by Daniel Poirier

The water pump was there! Isaiah could see it on the horizon, waving in the heat. He stood under the burning sun, trying to shield his nakedness with the metal water pail he was carrying, and he looked at the sky and tried to judge the time and how fast the line had been moving. He was quite sure now that he would make it before the end of the day. Up ahead he saw a group of people walking in his direction, and they were inspecting the water lineup. Most of the group was people like him, but one was white. It was not the first white person Isaiah had seen, though there were few, but the first woman. She was quite tall and slightly overweight, and her clothes were clean also - all signs she had not been in this camp long. Isaiah could see that she was sweating heavily, so much that he thought she would melt. Her skin was so white Isaiah imagined that that was what ice looked like, pure and clean amongst the dirt of the camp, and melting in the dry, acrid heat.

The white lady stopped when she saw him and her eyes grew wide. Isaiah thought he had done something wrong and looked quickly away. The white lady started speaking angrily to the men around her and pointed repeatedly at him. Isaiah was unsure of what he had done, but suddenly wanted to get away, embarrassed at the sudden onslaught of attention. There was nowhere for him to go, and he could not give up the place in line.

That morning Isaiah awoke to a boy shaking him by the shoulders. The sun was already rising and Isaiah had overslept. The three other boys he shared a hut with all chased him out into the morning and threw the water pail at him, which missed. Isaiah picked it up and ran to get in line for the water pump. The boys had been trying for two days to get to the front of the line, but every night the crowd was dispersed by soldiers before Isaiah could make it to the front. Every night the boys would crouch in the darkness and draw straws that they pulled from the side of the hut to see who would stand in line, burning in the sun, and every day Isaiah seemed to pick short. On this third day

the line was again very long before Isaiah got to the back of it, but he was starting closer than ever before. The sun was only in the middle of the sky when he could see the pump, like a mirage, just out of reach.

The white woman had tried to pull Isaiah from his place in line. She had taken him by the hand but he cried out and they had saved him. Two soldiers had stepped in and broken her link with him, and she yelled at them. Isaiah had never seen anyone yell at soldiers such as this woman did. She pointed at Isaiah, at his nakedness, and hollered at them. One of the soldiers continued to argue with her while the other turned back to Isaiah, a wide grin on his face.

"Come with me, Tough Man." He walked toward Isaiah. "We'll get you some water. A strong man like you doesn't need to wait in line."

He led Isaiah away from the line and toward the brick shelters on the outskirts of the camp. Isaiah said nothing, and he did not protest. The soldier put his thick, muscled arm on Isaiah's bony shoulder and Isaiah was proud and frightened. He was worried about the boys he shared a shelter with, they did not have another pail, and he was worried for himself. He did not want to go to the soldiers' camp like his two brothers before him.

"Listen, little brother. That woman wanted to give you clothes, but she would poison your mind. I'll give you the best fitting clothes of all: a uniform. Clothes with power. You stick with me, Tough Man, and I'll teach you to be really strong."

The soldier smiled down at Isaiah and Isaiah smiled back. He looked at the soldier's eyes and saw only darkness behind them. His

eyes were detached and floating like two black stones inside his head and Isaiah could see that the soldier did not see a boy. The soldier saw only a thing. The soldier looked ahead to the brick shelters and laughed. Isaiah clutched his water pail and tried to put his mind at ease. It was not so bad. There had been worse days than this.

Isaiah and his two brothers were orphans long before they reached the refugee camp. They had walked alone for many days and eventually met up with a group of people who seemed to be wandering in a specific direction. By the time the group reached the camp there was well over a hundred of them, walking in a silent, dead march. Isaiah's oldest brother had been listening to the hushed conversations during the night and came across people who had been in camps before, which was when he first found out where they were all heading. He also found out it was much easier to enter the camp as a family, as families got their own housing and were not split up. Before they reached the camp, Isaiah's oldest brother found a middle-aged couple and talked them into bringing the three brothers into the camp as their sons. The two older brothers took Isaiah aside from the group one night, and the three of them could hear the predators in the tall grass. They said to him, looking in his eyes but also toward the danger, "They are mother and father, okay? Mother and father."

In the camp the group of five was given a small hut of straw and mud. Within a few days the middle-aged couple found other friends and children of friends and turned the three brothers out to accommodate their neighbours. The camp was growing exponentially, still in its youth, and the brothers managed to use the confusion to get a hut for themselves. Whenever questioned,

their parents were out waiting in the line for water, or waiting for rice. Before the three brothers really knew what was happening they started taking in orphans, and soon there were half a dozen boys in the tiny hut, sleeping in a pile at night and scavenging during the day.

When soldiers arrived and settled in at the outskirts of the camp, Isaiah's oldest brother said that the great commander Azraq Lihya was there. The next morning he left to go and join them and he told the middle brother that he must not go, but stay and look after Isaiah. A month passed and the oldest brother never returned and the middle brother left saying that Isaiah must never leave and join the soldiers, but stay with the orphans in the hut. Isaiah was younger and weaker than all of the other boys in the hut and when the sun set on the day his middle brother left they beat him and stole his clothes to barter for rice the next morning.

At the outskirts of the camp with the brick buildings, several of the other soldiers laughed when they saw Isaiah and his thin naked body. One of them spoke in a language Isaiah did not know and another said it looked like Azraq Lihya, the soldier that had brought him, had taped together a bunch of firewood and was parading it around like a boy. Azraq Lihya told them to be quiet, the boy was not Sticks – he was Tough Man, the toughest man. Isaiah did not know what Azraq Lihya was talking about until he realized that it was Isaiah himself. The other soldiers were quiet, but their smiles worried Isaiah. Azraq Lihya patted him roughly on the back and told him to wait before disappearing into one of the brick buildings. The soldiers watched Isaiah and spoke to each other in the language he did not understand. When Azraq Lihya returned he gave Isaiah a uniform to put on and a bottle of water to drink. Isaiah had never seen water in a plastic bottle before and Azraq Lihya opened it for him and told him to drink the whole thing. Isaiah felt the pure, cool liquid run down his throat and it seemed to trickle out to the tips of his limbs and he felt alive again. He drank slowly and was careful not to spill any

on his uniform. The uniform was too big for Isaiah, and it had been patched in several places, but he was happy to have clothes again.

“That’s it, Tough Man. You feel better, yes?”

Isaiah nodded.

“Good, good. Roll up those sleeves. We work for our water here.”

Isaiah spent the rest of the day digging in the dirt with other boys in uniforms. He did not know why he was digging or what, but just dug where he was told. The water had lit a fire in his heart and he would do whatever was asked for more. To the west of the digging there were other boys who were handling guns for the first time. Some of the digging boys expressed their envy, but Isaiah did not want to hold a gun. He had seen what guns did. When the sun was setting and the boys were told to stop working, Isaiah thought of his brothers and wondered what Azraq Lihya had done with them.

The digging boys were led into their own building and fed a small meal. A large, dark soldier came in and showed the new arrivals how to arrange their sleeping mats in a circle. All of the boys were caked with dirt from the work, but they rolled out their mats and lay down as instructed. Azraq Lihya came in carrying a pail full with water and set it down in the middle of the room. Isaiah recognized it as the pail he had been carrying when he arrived.

“You are not to touch this water,” said Azraq Lihya. “This water is for the morning. Sleep well my men, you did hard work today.” He caught sight of Isaiah and winked at him. “Good night, Tough Man.”

Soon the boys were all sleeping, exhausted from the events of the day, but Isaiah could not sleep. His stomach groaned and his dry body ached for more water. He began to feel as if he was possessed. His mind played tricks on him – no one would notice a little of the water gone. Azraq Lihya had winked at him, so he was his favourite and the rule did not apply to him. The water was even in Isaiah’s old bucket so he was entitled to it. Without

the bucket there would be no water. He wrestled with himself until he could stand it no more and stood up and walked to the bucket. He squatted in front of it and peered in. The moonlight filtered through the window and illuminated Isaiah and the water, and the water shimmered white and blue. Isaiah tried to pick up the bucket, but it was too heavy and he was too weak. He dipped his hands in the cool water and brought it to his mouth and drank deeply. His hands went back again, and a third time and he let the water replenish his whole body. Isaiah opened his eyes and noticed the water was no longer clear, but clouded from the dirt that had been on his hands. He dried his lips on his sleeve and went back to his mat. He spent the night wide awake, waiting for dawn and Azraq Lihya.

By the time the sun rose Isaiah had fallen asleep, but he woke when the door opened and Azraq Lihya walked straight to the bucket. Isaiah tried to remain calm, and Azraq Lihya looked placidly around the room, from boy to boy, until his eyes came to rest on Isaiah. He walked over and grabbed Isaiah by the wrist to inspect his hand. There was no trace of the dirt from the night before. He smiled at Isaiah and his black stone eyes sparkled and shone. He dragged Isaiah out of the room and into the courtyard calling for the other boys to follow. Many of the other soldiers, old and young, were out and watched as Azraq Lihya dragged Isaiah to the middle of the courtyard. One of the other soldiers brought over a small wooden stool and took Isaiah’s hand from Azraq Lihya. He held Isaiah down and pinned his clean wrist to the stool.

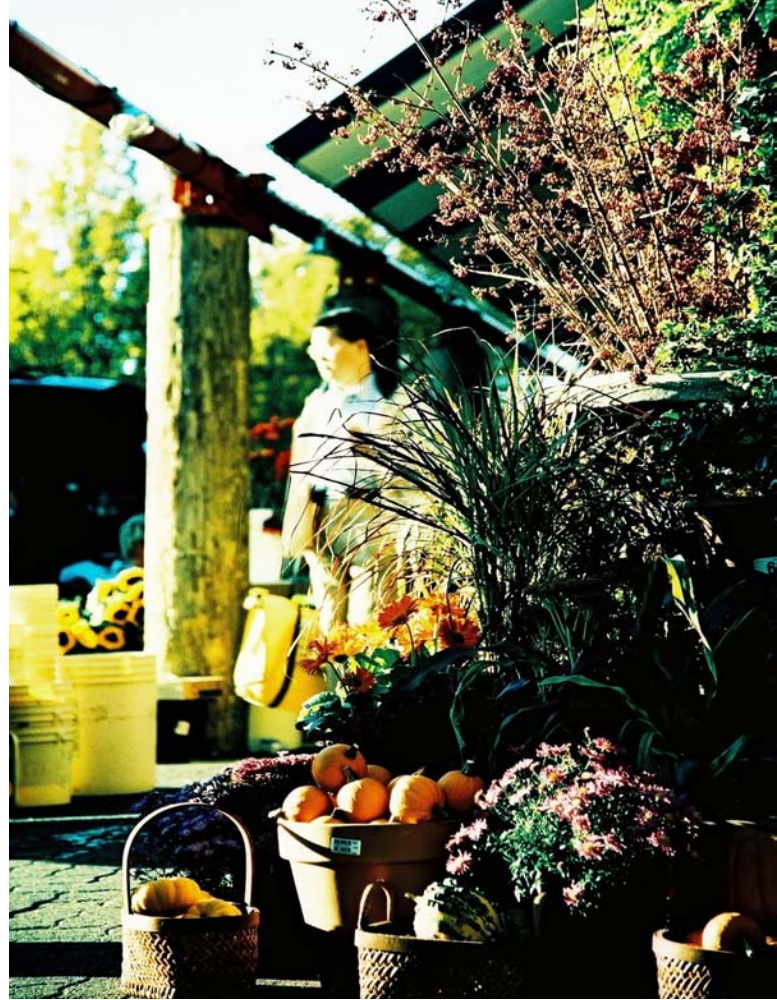
Another large soldier handed Azraq Lihya a machete and Azraq Lihya said, “Everyone look at the Tough Man. He has offered to teach you all a lesson.” Azraq Lihya lifted the machete high in the air and it cast Isaiah’s face in shadow, momentarily blotting out the scorching sun.

Variety Moon Meat

by Racan Souiedan

William was newly arrived to the Moon from Earth when he thought it might be a good idea to buy himself a pet to curb some of the loneliness of landing on a new colony. The cheap bachelor suite displayed all the signs of a landed immigrant from Earth: slim furnishings, limitless hopes, and none of the consumer amenities that littered the average planet-side apartment. He knew that the Moon was experiencing a food shortage from a few notable crop failures, but William was still determined to make the most of his new surroundings. It had been only two weeks since his arrival and he had been feeling homesick ever since, although he had no family waiting for him on Earth. His parents had died in an orbital flight accident, leaving him a hefty inheritance to make a clean break and begin all over again. Selecting the Moon as his destination had been no more random than the circumstances surrounding the death of his parents; he just had a good feeling about the place. Walking out the door to his apartment he felt a household pet might do him well in remedying his isolation, at least until he could get acclimatized enough to meet a few friends.

Still unaccustomed to his surroundings he decided to head straight for Lunar Centre, a bustling hub of activity and shops a mere five-minute walk from his apartment building. Walking along intricately designed corridors, he gazed up at the beautiful skyline, adorned with galaxies, stars, and a planet he used to consider home. The stale, recycled air felt both familiar and alien. He could never quite escape the thought that just beyond the protective



glass lay the deadliness of space. In the distance he could just make out the massive hydroponics warehouses, where farmers and scientists busily worked to feed the rapidly expanding population of the Moon. To the casual observer, William appeared a rather awkward looking young man, eyes fixed to the ground with antisocial and carefully laid-out purpose. His thick glasses made it easier for him to avoid eye contact with his fellow colonists, and he adjusted his ill-kempt dark hair just to brush it out of his eyes. William arrived at Lunar Centre with his mind transfixed on acquiring a pet for himself.

Being a mid-afternoon on a Tuesday, Lunar Centre was predictably empty, sparsely filled with the patterned footsteps of patient shoppers with no fancy planet to return to. William navigated excitedly, and came upon what had just a few days ago been Apollo Pets. There was only one problem: the pet shop had seemingly vanished and been replaced by a House of Knives and Save-On-

Meats. William felt overcome with bizarre feelings of anxiety, paranoia, and irritation. He was soon reassured knowing that he could actually do with a bit of cutlery, and maybe even a good slab of meat.

"First I ought to get myself a set of knives," he thought to himself, "then maybe some meat to fill up that empty space in the fridge." Soon he felt fine about having to put off buying a new pet. William strode into the House of Knives and could not help but wonder at the hastily set-up appearance of the entire place. The shop was a complete mess: display-cases open, knives strewn about the counters, not to mention the lingering stench of the previous business. William recognized the distinct odour of a wet dog, before a shabby-looking employee appeared to greet him.

"Hello, sir. Anything I can help you with?" inquired the slim looking man, who appeared exhausted, which seemed normal to William considering how quickly the House of Knives had moved in.

"Hi there. I'm looking for a set of knives." William replied.

"Sure, glad to help. Did you come in from Earth?"

William hated the attention his accent had given him since his arrival, but politely answered with an abrupt, "yes." The man seemed satisfied and reached for some of the knives that were laid out carelessly over the counter.

"Say, these ought to serve you well," he mustered, not trying particularly hard to sell his product. "They can cut through almost anything, even...a gravity boot!" He handed the knives over to William and began to give his attention to the disastrous state of his entire shop, and the desperate task of setting it in order as quickly as possible.

"Why would I need to cut through a gravity boot?" asked William, confused by what the man had considered a selling point of the set. As his fingers passed carefully over one of the knives, a long and thick instrument designed for carving, he thought it was rather

dull-looking. He would not have given the matter any further thought until he noticed the single drop of blood on the tip of the blade. The man noted the look of disgust across William's face.

"Gee...I don't know how that got there?" he scrambled.

"This knife has been used!" cried William, "And recently! What have you been doing with it?" He felt a gagging sensation and started to cough uncontrollably.

"Uh...look, just get out if you don't want the knives!"

William fled in alarm and decided to try his luck at the newly arrived Save-On-Meats. His appetite, though spoiled for the time being, would catch up with him later. He tried to understand what was going on in the House of Knives, but could draw no reassuring conclusions.

The Save-On-Meats was in an even sorer state than the neighbouring House of Knives. Meat was thrown about haphazardly, aprons littered the floor, and a pool of blood seeped out from underneath a door in the back. William was about to leave quietly when his plans for departing were soon interrupted.

"Hello, what can I do for you?" questioned a massive man, whose nametag read "Dave" on his bulging chest. His voice was pleasant, yet intimidating.

"I guess I just want a bit of meat, whatever you might have," William answered, finding it difficult to hold Dave's piercing gaze.

"Try our new variety Moon meat," Dave ordered. Judging from his tone there was no alternative. William's attention was briskly directed to a display cabinet he hadn't noticed. Inside were some of the most questionable cuts of meat William had ever seen. Everything looked stringy and fragile. He could not shake the sense of déjà vu that accompanied the viewing of this variety Moon meat, and then he remembered a few graphic pictures he had seen in a roadkill cookbook not too long ago on Earth.

"Anything wrong?" he asked suspiciously, careful not to alarm what he still saw as a potential customer.

"You call that meat? Why it looks absolutely inedible! Where on Earth did you get it from?" asked William, desperate for a logical explanation.

"Not the Earth, the Moon! These meats come from the Moon," Dave responded.

William then spotted the distinct features of a claw, along with a few whiskers sticking out of a sample. "Sweet Republic of Cascadia, is that a claw!" William shrieked, now drawing the attention of a few nearby shoppers. Dave reached out a muscular hand to detain William, who was still staring in horror at the variety Moon meat display. William evaded the danger and ran as fast as he could, not stopping until he had arrived back at his apartment.

A torrent of thoughts raced through William's mind, and it took the remainder of the afternoon for him to calm down. In the meager trappings of his apartment he slowly remembered how out of place he still felt on the Moon, finally dismissing his experience as a result of the culture shock from his arrival. "This is the Moon. They just do things a little differently," he reassured himself. "Tomorrow I'll find myself a pet. Maybe at Sea of Tranquility Shopping Centre" William then fell asleep on his sofa without any trace of doubt.

William eagerly awoke the next morning. He believed that perhaps he was finally coming to terms with being away from home and that the events of yesterday had merely served to broaden his sense of tolerance with the cultures and peoples of the Moon. His boundless energy carried him out of the apartment on his second journey to buy a pet.

Sea of Tranquility Shopping Centre was about as calm as Lunar Center during the previous day. William rushed through the mall to visit the pet shop. He quickly traversed the many escalators, passages, and shops. Recognizing his location by

the familiar sight of the Rover Store and Solar Aisle, William turned to where he expected to find Armstrong Pets. Once again, another House of Knives and Save-On-Meats had appeared almost overnight. William experienced a sense of dread and foreboding. He could no longer dismiss what he saw on Tuesday at Lunar Centre as a simple difference in culture on the Moon. There was a partnership between the House of Knives and Save-On-Meats at work on the Moon. The mysterious circumstances surrounding the abrupt disappearances of both the Lunar Centre and Sea of Tranquility pet shops only made that partnership all the more frightening. Perhaps the food shortage on the Moon was worse than he had been told. Although seldom the inquisitive type, William felt it his duty to investigate the exact nature of what was happening before his eyes.

The House of Knives and Save-On-Meats grew increasingly demonic as he approached. "Whatever happens I have to press on," he thought.

William was pleased to find the Save-On-Meats in better shape than the one from yesterday at Lunar Centre. Everything was spotless this time around. The only similarity was the display case at the entrance, which again featured the horrific variety Moon meat. William's worst fears were confirmed when he heard a blood-curdling cry from the backdoor. William thought he recognized it as a cat. The horror continued with the distinct sound of cutting flesh. A familiar figure emerged from the backdoor: Dave from the Save-On-Meats at Lunar Centre. William quickly dropped to the floor as Dave entered the store-front and made his way over to the House of Knives next-door. He breathed a sigh of relief after realizing that Dave made no notice of him lying silently beneath a counter. He listened to the audible conversation from the House of Knives between Dave and whoever was working there.

"Thanks for the knife, Mark," said Dave blankly, "it cuts good."

"No problem, Dave" replied Mark

cheerfully, "I hope that cat was no trouble." The sound of chuckling from the House of Knives made William's stomach all the queasier. Feeling overcome with emotion, he ran headlong into Dave, just as the enormous fellow was returning.

"Hey! I remember you!" accused Dave.

"That's right!" shot back William, "And I know all about your little arrangement with the House of Knives! Replacing pet shops and killing all of the animals to sell as your putrid variety Moon meat! I know what you did to that cat back there! How do you live with yourself?"

"Stay out of our business," warned Dave. "I'm warning you, just walk away! This is bigger than you think! You tell anybody about this and you'll regret it."

William felt a hand clamp down on his shoulder as he gazed back into the penetrating stare of Dave from Save-On-Meats. William shriveled beneath Dave's brute strength and promised not to tell the secret to anyone. Dave was reassured enough to relinquish his grip on William and allow him to leave. William ran back home even faster than the day before. He never even paused to catch the Aldrin Express Tram.

William felt utterly alone in his apartment, where he paced back and forth deliberating. He had nobody to explain everything to, at least nobody who would ever believe him. Lunar Police would never pay any attention to his story. He laughed to himself just thinking about it. "Hello operator, a couple of murderous shops are killing pets and selling them off as variety Moon meat." Despite the hopelessness in anybody on the line buying his story William still called 9-12, judging it to be the only solution, and therefore at least worth an attempt. Scratching nervously at his hair he picked up the old receiver brought all the way from Earth and waited for a response.

"Hello 9-12 emergency. How may I help you?" inquired the voice of a polite young woman.

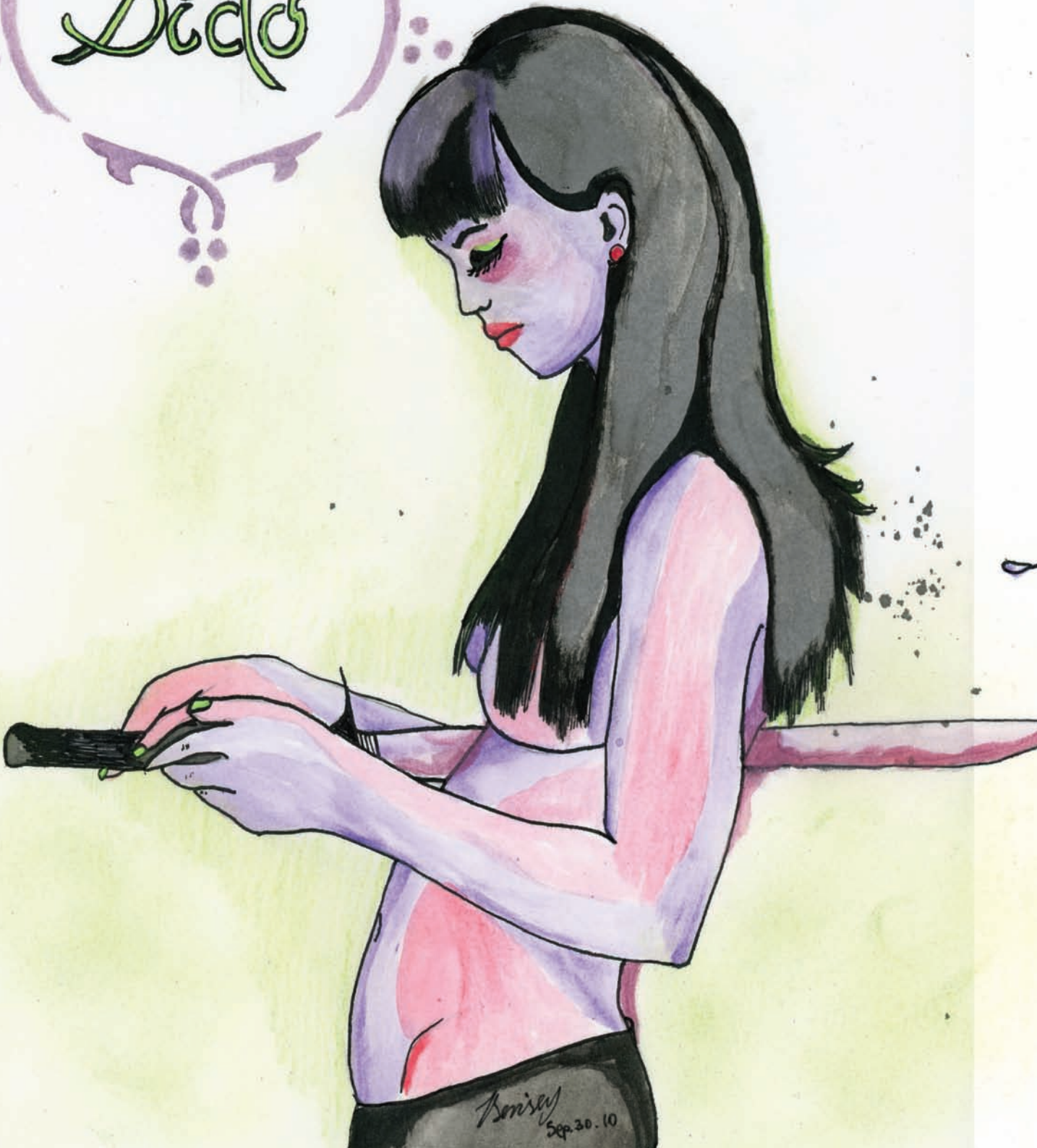
"Listen. This is going to sound a bit

crazy but please hear me out," begged William, trying his best to calmly tell his story. "The House of Knives and Save-On-Meats at Lunar Centre and Sea of Tranquility Shopping have started killing household pets and selling them as food to people. Please, you've got to do something, they threatened me if I talked, but there was no other way. I had nowhere to turn to..."

His speech was cut short by the abrupt click of the woman hanging up on him. William felt satisfied that at least he tried. He just wished somebody else out there would notice the same terrible sights he had seen over the past couple of days. Anybody he made the mistake of telling would consider him just another lunatic. William saw his situation as bleak and resolved that he could do nothing further about it. All that could be accomplished now was a good night's sleep, which would hopefully dull his fears and revitalize whatever optimism in life on the Moon he still had left in him. Sleep quickly visited him in his bed that night.

He was still sleeping when he heard the door to his bedroom open and awoke to see the unmistakable figure of Dave from Save-On-Meats brandishing a knife before him. How they had found him he would never know. William felt resigned to his fate and took a grim satisfaction pondering his final thought in life: that at least in death he would make a worthy addition to the variety Moon meat. Before the blade came down he yelled a warning to whoever might happen to hear him: "variety Moon meat is people!"

Didlo



Benisey
Sep. 30. 10



The sun started to set over Granville Island, so the One-Man Band started to break himself down. He looked in the open guitar case at the paltry earnings of the day and sighed inside his head. One million tourists, one dollar per tourist, one million dollars. The harmonica went into its box for the night, and he closed his eyes, exhausted.

He stood in front of the flower shop staring at the wall of sunflowers outside the store. The sunset made them explode with colour and the One-Man Band decided this was why they were called sunflowers. The girl inside the shop flashed him a smile and he plucked a sunflower from the bunch. She was a lovely girl; he decided her name was Suzy. Yes. The two of them, he and Suzy, had been friends for a while now. Friends in passing, he thought, they never really had too many conversations. But she liked his music. No, she adored it. On her days off, no...on her breaks she would get some flaky pastries from the market and sit and watch him play. He had crafted a song for her, Suzy's song or Ode to Suzy. That's a good idea. I'll work on that tonight. Her smile was her best feature, two rows of perfect pearls. He sauntered into the store smoothly, she's in love with me, but he didn't make eye contact to tease her. Look, I'm just a customer, you mean nothing to me. Then he caught her looking and smiled. She smiled. He put the one enormous, luminescent orange sunflower on the counter and asked, How much? I can't charge him, Suzy thought, but she felt a sudden pang of jealousy. Who is he buying this for? Have I been reading his signals wrong? Suzy knew she loved his music like no one else. The skill of a One-Man Band is so underrated. She often thought of buying

him a pastry, but didn't want to interrupt. She felt a little selfish at that, denying him pastry affection because she so lusted for his songs. Two dollars, she said nervously. The One-Man Band gave her the money and waited, staring deep into her eyes and drawing the question from her so that she could not resist, but ask. Who is it for? She asked, her voice lined with honey as she held the flower out for him. The One-Man Band winked. Why you, of course.

He opened his eyes and sighed again. He put the guitar on its stand and unbuckled the cymbals from his knees. The sunset was beautiful. He looked over at the girl at the flower shop. Not interested. She had a phone tucked against her ear while she awkwardly brought in the display stands. The One-Man

Band put the cymbals away in their pouches and stood up. He pulled his hat brim a little lower over his eyes and looked back toward the flower shop.

There. The man just outside the flower shop with the yellow bag. The One-Man Band narrowed his eyes to try and focus against the glare of the sun. No. The word was barely more than a breath on his lips. It was Lou Ping, one of the most dangerous North Korean assassins, who was Agent Smith before he defected. He must be looking for me. What's in the yellow bag? The One-Man Band advanced on Lou Ping slowly. He must have found out it was me who got Bryce out of Seoul, but how did he track me all the way here? I should call for backup, but there's no time. Did Bryce betray me? The sun caught the glare off of the One-Man Band's .45 as he drew it out of his vest and Lou Ping's head snapped around to where the One-Man Band was crouched. Lou Ping sprayed a hail of bullets at the One-Man Band before he took off, and

No One-Man Band Is an Island

by Daniel Poirier



the whole scene blurred in the glare of the orange sky. Lou Ping dashed through the market with the One-Man Band in hot pursuit. Not this time, the One-Man Band breathed through clenched teeth. He won't get away this time.

He unhooked the bass drum pedal from his foot and took the rest of the drum kit off of his shoulders. After he put them away and loaded them on his cart he counted the money from the guitar case. Twenty-six dollars was a pretty slow day.

I caught up with the star from the new action film on Granville Island where it was shot and was able to ask him a few questions:

Q: Your most recent film has been winning all of the major awards. Are you nervous about the Oscar's next month?

A: No, it's really just an honour to be nominated; even more so since there are so many other great films and performances this year.

Q: I hear you are directing your next film? Any details?

A: Well, I just decided it was time for me to give it a shot. I actually wondered for a while if it was a good idea to star in it as well, but I just decided since I had written the part based on my own experiences it could

be frustrating to try and direct someone else in the role. It mostly focuses on growing up in an isolated small town; essentially a coming of age story.

Q: I know your band is wrapping up its tour in a few weeks. Any plans for the next album?

A: Yes, actually. I've already written most of it, and I spent a little time in the studio recording. It's nice touring with a full band of professionals because they can give me feedback on the new material. It probably won't release until well after the new film finishes shooting though, since I'm doing soundtrack work for that as well.

After the interview the One-Man Band walked the interviewer to her car, a fantastic red Mustang that glowed in the setting sun. He opened the door for her and closed it once she was in. Listen, if you're not busy maybe we could get some dinner, she said. The interviewer was a very beautiful woman. I actually have to meet George Clooney and Tom Hanks to talk over a project we're working on. Well, maybe some other time. The interviewer just knew that she couldn't let this opportunity pass her by. He was such a fantastic actor and musician and his genius sort of overwhelmed her. But she had asked anyway, feeling insignificant, but hoping there was a chance. Sorry, the One-Man Band said, I'm all booked up, and he looked off to where Suzy had just emerged from a store with a handful of bags. She smiled and waved for him to come over.

The One-Man Band tied everything down and pushed his instruments toward home. He slowed as he reached the flower shop and looked inside. The flower girl sat behind the counter reading US magazine and talking on the phone. He walked by very slowly, pretending to look at the flowers. She never looked up. He pushed his cart of instruments under the bridge and up the hill against the setting sun.

When Nietzsche Meets Shakespeare

adapted by Krisandra Reid

Then something happened that made every mouth dumb and every eye rigid. For meanwhile the tightrope walker had begun her performance: she had left the safe tower of obedience behind and balanced as she engaged in this journey across her heartstrings. With her crime and her parents' disapproval, the rope seemed to sway beneath her feet, yet she clung to the wire with the support of a returned love. With her decision to elope, Hermia found herself teetering in the exact middle of her challenge, hanging on the dangerous edge of the unknown future.

When just then, a fiendish little jester, a hobgoblin, jumped out from the trees and quickly flitted across the rope to the young maiden. And when she was but within an inch of her destiny, the dreadful thing happened which made every mouth dumb and every eye rigid. With a devilish flower, he leapt over the girl, continuing on his mischievous way, as poor Hermia rocked unsteadily above the fatal fall, hearing her love profess, "Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest that I do hate thee, and love Helena." This girl, however, seeing her devotion disposed, discarded what was left of her broken heart and plunged into the depth, a whirlpool of tears and lost virtues. Thrown aside by her fickle lover, her tear-stained face and dishevelled hair met its fate against the malicious edge of stone, staining her face with the wasted blood of her heart. Her companions rushed apart and over one another, desperate to escape the tragic scene and into the darkness of the surrounding forest.

He, however, did not move; and it was right next to him that her body did lay, limp and crimson soaked. In the dregs of her consciousness, she saw him kneeling beside her. "What are you doing here?" she asked. "I had known that my heart would trip me. Now it will drag me to hell. Would you prevent it?"

"By my honour, friend," answered he, "all that of which you speak will not exist; your soul will never be dead, for I will ensure that you will live on beyond the confines of your body. You have made danger your vocation; there is nothing contemptible in that. Now you perish of your vocation, your devotion, your love: for that I will bury you with my own hands. And for that, I will give you new life with my own hands. Your love shall not be a tragedy."

When he had said this, the dying girl answered no more; but she moved her hand as if she sought the writer's hand in thanks.

To Academia

by Sydney Vickars

I didn't even really know what Modernism was when I arrived at the Empress Hotel that rainy morning. I had come to Victoria to spread the word about World Literature at the Modernist Studies Association conference. I left with even less of an idea. In fact, the concept of Modernism as a set term makes it feel like a static one, and my experience was testimony to this in no uncertain terms.

This realization for me – that Modernism is not static, and that no one can really define it – solidified my academic goals and aspirations. Where I had been intimidated before at terms like fellowship and dissertation and research funding, I was strangely calm, content even. In the place of anxiety at the thought of my future was the bud of ambition, and it began to grow that weekend.

I decided I wanted to be an academic when I visited Harvard University during my second year of studies. I was part of a contingent of students from my own university who decided to volunteer at a literary conference being held there. I saw how people communicated, got excited about their latest contribution to research in this or that field, and I became enthralled by it. I clued in to how important words were, how language quite literally meant the world to me. My ambition took over at this point but, like anyone in my position, I felt anxiety over how to shape the future I saw for myself: which paths to take, which areas to focus on, which fields would be most conducive to my success.

In a sense, the MSA answered these questions for me. Insofar as it showed me that I did not need to worry about where to go or how to get there, it manifested in me as a source of comfort. I saw the way the crowds packed into the tiny lobby, searching for faces willing to listen to their stories. I watched as professors and students, young and old, ran in to meeting rooms late, in their barely ironed tweed jackets and pant suits. I saw the way that none of these people focus their lives on the way they look or how they appear but rather they define themselves by what goes on in their heads. Their ill-fitting clothes, a clear attempt at the smart casual attire they assumed was the norm, was testament to this. They have adopted tweed as their unofficial uniform – it maintains their masquerade as normal folk. You are what you think in this world, not what you own or what you wear or what you drive.

And academia is so vast – it contains, like Nietzsche, like Walt Whitman, multitudes. And these multitudes are forever expanding and changing shape. Their very existence depends on their malleability. The particular multitude that has always been my passion, the field of comparative literature, is particularly reliant on its ability to remain in constant motion and continually change in shape. In reports of the state of the discipline – that is, the state of comparative literature – this trait is consistently called upon. It is the essence, and the charm, of the field. Haun Saussy says that the fragility of comparative literature lies in its being “the art of the in-

between” (Saussy 10). The comparative nature of the discipline, which brings with it the myriad of cultural studies so crucial to its approach, requires it to hang in a fine balance. Saussy responds to those who seek to define comparative literature as a field by proposing that we “think of it as a discipline defined by the search for its proper objects” (12). On a much broader scale, we return to the idea of modernism and how existence lies in the consistent attempts to define it: comparative literature’s unique strength lies in the perpetual act of defining it. If the realities of world literature, which is a new but arguably necessary branch of comparative literature, seem bleak and perhaps even grim, solace can be found in the next generation. It is the “adventurous students,” (35) to which Saussy so optimistically refers, who will carry forth the task of ever defining comparative literature.

Where I was once terrified of what I didn’t know, I now find hope, and humble reception. I am so grateful to have a world like literature open to me. Realizing the limits of my knowledge is the first step in my undertaking of this career. I don’t have to be qualified by some greater entity to be a critic. As long as my ideas are founded and I am confident in my research and my interests, I can be a part of this world. As long as I am willing to go down difficult paths for the sake of learning then I can succeed here. If I am willing to open myself up to constructive – and sometimes even deconstructive – criticism, I will slowly begin digging my feet into this foundation. If I am willing to not stay satisfied with the realm of translations and go to great lengths to learn languages, then I can begin to embody different, sometimes contradicting perspectives. I will strive every day to deserve the role that academia has unknowingly granted me.

Academia is not as exclusive as it seems. Don’t be fooled by the thick-rimmed glasses or the prestigious stamps. Every one of those people and names on degrees started here. They all sat and watched those before them duel it out, words their weapons, their conflicts and their saviours. What makes academia a viable option? The state of ever hanging in a balance between language and literature, constantly having to adapt to the changing economic tides that define my career objectives? The full time job and benefits I won’t receive until I am a middle-aged PhD laureate? The dates I won’t go on and the friends I won’t meet because I’d rather sit on my couch in pajamas and write my novel? For me, academia is not the best option, it is the only one, and thank goodness for that.

Works Cited

Haun, Saussy. “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: of Memes, Hives and Selfish Genes.” *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*. US: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

Contributors

CHEYENNE BERGENHENEGOUWEN is a first year student at Simon Fraser University. She enjoys reading books of all genres and hopes to write her own novels someday.

PAULA LINDSAY is a music teaching mother of three who cycles, runs, writes poetry. She also gardens, travels, reads, sings, and helps build Haitian libraries.

KRYSTEN MAIER is a 4th year World Literature and Publishing student at Simon Fraser University who likes to write travelogues and other factual accounts, with a budding interest in writing graphic novels and guerrilla gardening.

NATALIA MAYOR B. is completing a Bachelor of Education with an Extended Minor in French, a Minor in World Literature, a Minor in International and Global Education as well as a Curriculum and Instruction Minor. She enjoys teaching, reading, writing, jewellery making and engaging in dialogue.

DANIEL POIRIER is a recent graduate from SFU as a World Literature Major with a History Extended minor. He spends a lot of time writing and hoping to make a living doing it.

KRISTEN PURI is a 4th year World Literature major at Simon Fraser University, with a keen interest in intersemiotic translation and South American literature.

KRISANDRA REID is a fourth year World Literature Major at Simon Fraser University; she plans for her future to either be on the stage (musical theatre) or in public relations (professional spokesman).

YVONNE REINHART is a recent graduate of Simon Fraser University where she received her double major in World Literature and Humanities. She prefers to write speculative historical fiction and to read the lesser known Classics.

SONYA RYOU has recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in World Literature and English at Simon Fraser University. She loves trying new food, oddities and mystery novels.

RACAN SOUIEDAN is an M.A. student in history at the University of Victoria, and runs the blog Board Gamer in Paradise. He is also an avid science-fiction fan and is the co-creator of Star Trek: Chains of Betrayal.

DENISE TOROK is a World Literature student at Simon Fraser University, and is also a life long learner who enjoys spending copious amounts of time reading.

SYDNEY VICKARS is a fourth year World Literature student at Simon Fraser University. She writes what she knows and what she would like to know.



www.fass.surrey.sfu.ca/wl/lyre