

The Lyre



An Undergraduate Literary Magazine



Issue 9 | Vision & Time | Fall 2018



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Issue 9 | Vision & Time | Fall 2018

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“Autumn on Tundra” by Carlos Suzara

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

There are those who fixate on the past, swim in nostalgia and live in a house of ghosts, and there are those who rivet one's eyes to the future, those who eagerly watch the horizon for the sunrise and doggedly chase the ideas that are yet to be born.

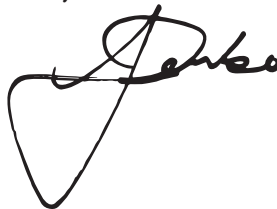
We are able to stop time with a kiss, slow it to a crawl as the final seconds tick away before the last school bell of the semester rings, or speed it up when laughter fills our chests in the company of good friends. Time escapes us, there is never enough of it, and we are always asking for more. Yet, we can be told we have too much time on our hands. What a gift that is.

The ouroboros, the serpent eating its own tail, is an ancient symbol that repeats itself across cultures and considers time as the constant destruction and re-creation of existence. The ninth edition of *The Lyre* addresses these thoughts and plays with the theme of Vision and Time, our authors looking forwards to the future, back into the past or to a different timeline altogether. Is time linear, or are we stuck on an endless loop as history seemingly repeats itself? Is there a future or are we simply reliving the past? These are all topics of discussion for this edition's contributors and for you as readers to ponder.

I would like to thank and congratulate all of our writers and artists published in this year's edition of *The Lyre*. It is your creativity and innovation that allows us to reflect on questions such as these and to expand our minds as individuals and as a society. In times such as these, it is crucial for artists of all kinds to challenge perceptions of the world around us and allow for the expression and exploration of thought.

I would also like to thank our editorial board this year for their efforts in reviewing an extensive number of submissions with diligence and dedication. It is also with great pleasure that I commend our Designer, Amanda Rachmat, for completely redesigning *The Lyre*, and creating a beautiful and modern magazine that will serve many editions to come.

Finally, I would like to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Melek Ortabasi, for her mentorship and guidance with the magazine. Without her support and encouragement, *The Lyre* would not be the caliber of magazine it is today.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jaiden Dembo'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop at the bottom and a horizontal line across the middle.

Jaiden Dembo
Editor-in-Chief

Daniel Poirier: The Return

Transcribed by
Jaiden Dembo

On March 26, 2018 World Literature hosted an evening with Daniel Poirier, an SFU World Literature alumni and current English instructor at Langara College. Poirier is a teacher and a writer, having completed his MFA in Creative Writing – Fiction from Sarah Lawrence College, and returned to his roots at SFU to offer World Literature students insight into the industry, his experience with World Literature and the myriad of possibilities that the World Literature program offers.

This interview was conducted by Dr. Melek Ortabasi, the current director of the World Literature program. This conversation was edited for clarity and length.

DR. O: Are there any courses, or directions you would have liked to pursue when you were studying, but didn't?

DANIEL: I wanted to take all of the World Literature



SFU by Carlos Suzara

courses, but could only take so many. Although field school was something I never did and regret big time. I made excuses, that were grounded in reality, financial and otherwise, but I do regret not going. The Honours program wasn't around when I was here, but I would've liked to have done that given the opportunity.

O: Were you involved in any extra-curricular volunteer activities such as student magazines or student unions while you were studying here?

D: I co-founded The Lyre in 2009 and stayed for the first two editions. Ken Seigneurie was the faculty go between at

the time, but it did start with the students and was definitely student lead. SIAT also had a magazine at the time that was more on the tech side of things, and so I gave them some fiction to put into their magazine. I was also a part of the student union, which was just a fledgling and loose at the time, and so I didn't go too hard into that. But I did design the original image of the globe in a book that's still floating around.

I'm thrilled that the Lyre is still a thing, since we were making it up as we went in the beginning.

O: When you first started studying World Literature,

did you expect to end up in the career you now have?

D: Yes, and no. When I first started I didn't know what I was doing. I transferred to SFU as a History student and thought I would become an English major. I'm not a career goal driven person, I'm more

“There's a certain value in aimlessness

of a “what am I interested in” person, and so World Lit was an easy hook for me. I was in between the cracks of interdisciplinary areas, and people in World Lit come from many different areas and different backgrounds and that's the way it always has been.

I knew I wanted to write, and I tried the pragmatic route of BCIT, the “how could I get a job” route, but that didn't work. So yes, once I was in World Lit I just needed to find a way to keep doing it. Whether I thought I would be teaching in the future, I don't know.

O: Students worry about what they're going to do when they graduate, but it's okay to be clueless because as long as you're applying yourself to something its going to lead somewhere.

D: Yes, there's a certain value in aimlessness.

AZADEH: But your desire to write was always there, and your talent for it.

O: Do you find your approach to teaching English is different than your colleagues because of your background in World Literature?

D: I don't attend their classes, so I couldn't exactly tell you, but I do stress certain things in my teaching. For example, teaching literature across boundaries and stressing a more interdisciplinary approach. I go out of my way to teach non-English canon literature as well, and I don't know if other teachers do what I do.

Like the World Literature program, Langara also has small class sizes, and I really like that. I'm not a stand up in

front of the class for an hour and then go home kind of teacher. A lot of my teaching methods come from World Lit, the way we pull ideas out of students, being engaged in the classroom and immersive in what we're learning. I try to push those methods, to not just tell you what to think about what we've read but to form your own thoughts and ideas. Students sometimes say things that are pretty incredible. You get somewhere either way with a discussion.

O: Has studying WL influenced your creative work in any way?

D: That's an easy one. When doing my MFA, I was supposed to be writing my thesis, but I wrote a novel instead. It was in dialogue with Kafka's *The Castle*. World Lit was when I was doing the most reading, and then during my MFA. As you get older life gets in the way. But the reading I did here, when I was the most invested, and taking it apart applies directly to my creative process.

O: Which books really stuck with you after graduating?

Continue...

“Literature is the closest you can get to knowing a person really well.

Have you taught texts that you studied at SFU?

D: Most of them, honestly. Well, I was kind of a nerd so I did engage with them a lot. But for WL 200, Metamorphosis, which I actually taught this semester at Langara, and The Great Gatsby stuck. The Fortress from WL 304, everything from East/West (WL), Andalusian poetry from Ken Seigneurie’s class, and even The Odyssey, The Unbearable Lightness of Being, and Spring Awakening, all from WL 100. I also still have my copy of Lois Tyson’s textbook, which I’ve recommended to other people. I’ve kept it, and you learn a lot about me by knowing that [laughs].

O: Have the skills you learned while studying World Literature been useful in other aspects of your life, professional or otherwise?

D: Yes, my teaching style for sure. My writing is also influenced by World Lit, and even the way I talk is influenced by it. I try to hammer home the importance of literature to my students without being pedantic.

Literature is the closest you can get to knowing a person really well. A lot of my fictions deal with identity and not knowing how to deal with other people. It’s made me more empathetic, to other people in other places too.

When doing my MFA, the director of the program had a daughter who had a disease that required a bone marrow transplant. She had to go through intense transfusions that involved a lot of pain. They created a story together when she was in pain which involved beating up monsters. Using a writing framework to place your pain on something

else is a therapeutic thing. It’s important to be able to do that, that in those bleak times in your writing life to remember that it’s worth it in the end. I couldn’t live without writing and literature.

O: Any advice for students looking to pursue similar career options as you?

D: I don’t want this to be advice. I don’t feel like I made career oriented decisions. I did sort of want to teach, there were some elective courses within the MFA to help with that. I was able to teach at an IB school and create a creative writing opportunity. I took opportunities as they came. I got an MFA, which was not the best financial decision, and I’ll be paying it off for a while, plus going to a school in the USA comes with its issues. When I was accepted into the MFA I texted my wife “Do you want to move to New York and be poor forever?” My options for jobs were low paying and limited. So debt, yes, I’ve got it.

However, I kept in contact with professors from my undergrad and they are a great resource. They’ll go to bat for

you, so don't think that when you're done here that it's over, as far as World Lit goes. I did the same with my MFA, kept in contact with professors I met and important people I met along the way. I'm teaching at Langara, I had contacts that helped me get in, because it was a highly competitive position to get.

O: It's personal connections that will help you. We know you well enough that we can write good letters of recommendation that have flavour and say something distinctive about you, not just forms letters without personality.

D: And most professors are happy to talk to students. The job market is a difficult one, but hopefully there's a job you can find. I wanted to write and read, and I embraced the possibility of failing spectacularly. Life is too short to do something you hate, whether you love it is debatable.

O: Any food for thought for fellow writers?

D: As far as a career as a

writer goes you need a certain amount of vulnerability, but to try not to take rejection letters so hard. There are so many considerations editors take when accepting or rejecting someone's writing, so don't take it personally. The nastiest rejection letter I got was a form letter, but usually that's a time issue on the editor's part. The wins will be when you get a personalized rejection letter, and if they say to keep submitting that's a huge encouragement and that

means you're getting closer. Writing moves in steps, and a lot of the time the piece of writing you're submitting needs more editing and reworking – take it as an opportunity. Rejection is a learning experience.

O: Do you find people/colleagues you talk to are unfamiliar with World Literature? How do you explain it to them?

Continue...



Photo by Jaiden Dembo

D: This came up more when I was an undergrad, but for my current colleagues they're curious, and familiar with comparative literature, so I tell them about the World Lit program here and how it was when I was at SFU, which isn't too different from how it is now. I tell them about the different things I read, the small class sizes and the amount of opportunities I had here and would not have had otherwise.

O: What is your best piece of advice for a student just starting to study World Literature? What about a student who is just preparing to graduate?

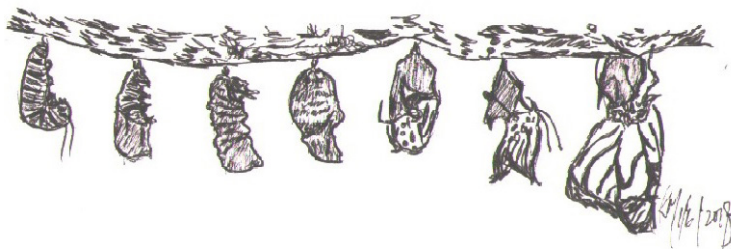
“There's no better time than now to do the thing you love.”

D: If you are just starting to study World Lit major in it, if you haven't already. You have a unique opportunity at a large university because of the small class sizes and the professors who will come to know you on a first name basis. Take all the opportunities you can, if something comes up grab it because it differentiates you from other

candidates and looks good on a resume. For first years, do field schools or go on exchange, especially if you're studying World Lit.

As for the graduates, it's a weird time in the world so I don't know. There is no better time than now to do the thing you love. Do the thing you're interested in, or at least try it. Now you have the most time and the least time to lose, even if it doesn't feel like that. That was my hesitation to pursue opportunities when I was younger. Some of this is starting to sound cheesy, but live with no regrets. At least try the thing you want to do and there's always time or pragmatism.

fin



Metamorphosis by Kathy Mak

Rumi told me, by Appel Cabrera





World Literature Student Conference 2018: "THE ROAD NOT TAKEN" :WHAT'S SO WRONG WITH DIFFERENCE?

*Article by Coryn Clough
Photos by Apple Cabrera*

180 attendees.
29 undergraduate
presentations.
4 diverse panels.
1 evening of
intellectual and
social engagement.

2018's World Literature Student Conference marked the 4th annual celebration of undergraduate dedication in World Literature. Hosted in Halpern Centre on SFU's Burnaby Campus, this year's conference with the theme *The Road Not Taken: What's so Wrong with Difference?* showcased a variety of presentations. Topics ranged on everything from cinema, music, and the image, to literature and investigations of the socio-political, cultural, and

literary fallouts of cross-national encounters and beyond.

Each of the previous three conferences have been attended by approximately 180 students, faculty, alumni, and members of the public and have been successful in showcasing the work of the undergraduate presenters in a formalized setting. This year, 29 undergraduates from different departments presented papers across 4 individually-focused conference panels on aspects of World Literature and global culture.

Highlighted in the conference this year was the



gral in the context of World Literature. Each presentation maintained its unique and individual flavour as the impressive work that the contributors delivered was rich and varied in nature.

The gala that followed the conference continued to showcase student creativity and dedication through musical performances and entertainment. The event was an outstanding success and strengthened the foundations for future academic student conferences to build upon and to grow World Literature's relationship with other departments within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

inclusion of presentations from undergraduate students from multiple faculties and in multiple languages. Not only did the presenters come from departments beyond World Literature, including French, but they also diversified in terms of languages, with presentations conducted in French integrated throughout the four panels.

These panels worked to thematically distinguish different interpretations of the theme of What's So Wrong with Difference? Panel 1A, Inner Landscapes: Imagination and the Evolution of Self dealt with presentations on identity and introspective analysis that addressed the concepts of difference. Running concurrently, panel 1B, Raising Voices: The Art of Marginalized Communities looked at

varying cultures and communities and the embrace of their respective marginality.

Following a short break, panels 2A, History's Ripple in the Cloth: Finding Past in the Present and 2B, The Human Knot: Relationships and Connections in Literature deal with themes of time and connectivity that are inte-



Poetry & Prose

“If I feel physically as if the top
of my head were taken off, I
know that is poetry.

- Emily Dickinson

Everything Blue I Have Touched

Mariah Lynne Dear

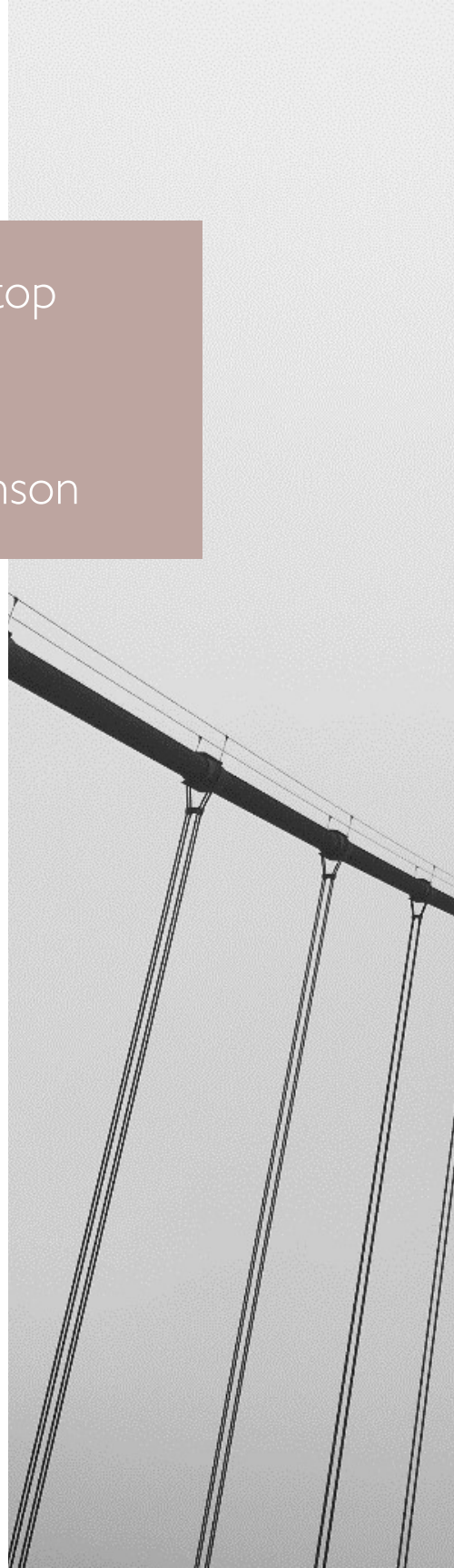
I touched my own lips
with her small red fingers
the blue unraveled like a ribbon
silver on the sweaty index print

a strong blue vein
tacks across my chest
arms groping for the puncture points

the cold ghost is white warm
rolls like an otter in the porcelain
and the stainless steel
begs the children to twitch her whiskers freezing

the first blue thing I touched was a pillow,
an infant palm wiping slow the corduroy

the last soft thing I touched was blue
the quiet ink in my arm
from when I rerouted all my circuitry





Golden by Alyssa Belle Zaportza

Zephyr

DF Parizeau

I'm drawn to the warmth
of Saturday's fresh-baked buns,
Orange Pekoe steeped too many times,
and the radiance of the TV
no one is ever watching.

Voices never compete here
they each harmonize with the
rhythmic tchk of Coca-Cola cans
and the intermittent firrrttt
of shuffling cards.

Painting the walls
comforting shades of
off-white & beige
ivory, cream, and buff
each a vocal imprint
of those I love.

Even as logic dictates that
twenty-plus years,
bread cools into cement
and dry crackling static
fills every channel.

I come here
drawn to a place where the brass
deadbolt is strictly ornamental:
a WELCOME sign for those
seeking shelter.

I come here
drawn by the promise
of Orange Pekoe
and the warmth
that you can only
find by coming home.



Millennial Romance

Anna-Beth Seemungal

Swipe right,
Swipe right,
Two star-crossed lovers
Bored on a Saturday night.

Reading by Audrey MacTavish



Hekatonkheires by Carlos Suzara

Acknowledgement

Youeal Abera

I'd like to acknowledge
the young boy who-
during his childhood,
adolescence,
and his ascension to manhood,
spent his time fixated with the stars, and their lights.

Little did he know he was the moon.
Such a shame.

dried herbs

Heather Anne-Marie Prost

I am sprigs of fresh rosemary
a lavish bushel in July
purple-green botanical
warm from the sun
growing
growing
growing

sudden detachment
plucked and
strung up
bound tight
I can't breathe
in this room

and you mortar and pestle
cracked grey stone
strong
i'm weak
pulverize me
floral pine needles
are merely dust

separated fragments
stored in airtight mason jars
perched on cheap Ikea racks
claustrophobic eggshell kitchen
masking tape labels
your name scribbled
instead of mine



Leaving

Felix

“There’s still skids on Kingsway,”
which is incidentally where Arthur was left to wander
with Alzheimer’s and piss soaked khakis.
He got lost on his way to city hall,
where he planned to pay his taxes.

“Let the community know of any suspicious activity.”
There’s more crime under a full moon.
I read her her horoscope while she told me about her old job
where she worked for ten years and was laid off,
it was the magnetic force pulling on her old joints;
old joints, slow work,
new restaurant, new owners, new staff,
new clientele,
but if it weren’t for them I would have never learnt
to leave the pit of an avocado in the guacamole,
to prevent it from going brown.

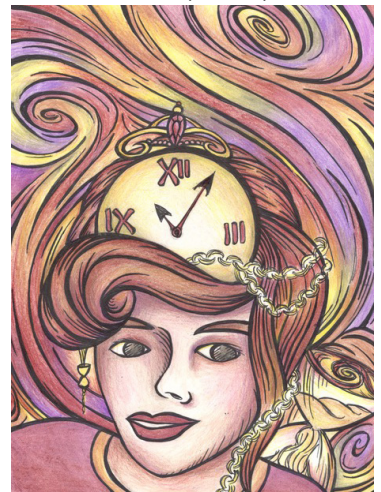
The Impact of Falling

Brittany Rose Barrell

This is the impact of falling
The dark water ripples
Ink that blacks out the page
Lost in the murky dark

That is the impact of falling
This trail of all those left
The broken line of love
That tumbles all the rest

Illustration by Brittany Rose Barrell





Upward Spiral by Alyssa Belle Zaporteza

Primordial

Jaiden Dembo

Throw down the metal and breathe
Fall back onto a bed of white lilies
With thorns of roses beneath
And I called out

Kiss me Lilith
Remind me how to forget
The scars Adam carved into flesh
When he promised me love
And tossed me to the serpents



Stars Among Streetlights

Kitty Cheung

We were the teenage terrorists
filled with booze
and “mari-joo-wana”
leaving shattered glass in the middle of roads
creating night-time nuisances with our noise and souls
within suburban neighbourhoods
somewhat scattering
with each pass of a car’s headlights
afraid of the bright white glow
(too bright - be careful!
it might reveal all our secrets
and trepidations, plight
We were drunk enough to fight
too intoxicated to fight
Anxiety.
it rushed through our vulnerable veins
Mom must have been right)
We hollered and danced
We staggered and vomited
We took care of each other
despite our own individual turmoil:
lost phone, lost jacket, lost mind.
Broken bottle, broken heart, broken dream.
Damaged goods, stolen youth.
The air was pungent, acrid with the scent of bile and
alcohol
but the summer night
made us feel
liberated
invincible
a fleeting happiness



What Happens When You Ignore the Instructions

George Nevgodovskyy

You peel my skin off
with the same hands you use to hail taxis
that always seem to stop for people in love -
thoughtlessly,
like the usher
who ripped our tickets
for that matinee of Roman Holiday.

You tear my hair from its roots
with the same fingers you use
to count the number of times I've bought you flowers,
and you rip through my bones
with the same teeth you use to chew the edges
of your faded purple hair
that smells like the mint smoke
that I blow into it.

You take these pieces
and put me back together,
ignoring the instructions,
like that writing desk you built in your study
that buckles
and looks as though at any moment
it might collapse.

Night Music: Lonsdale

Chance Daldy

Cascades on water silver-streaked, where legs of titans cast
great shadowed columns, through which countless lonely boats have
passed.

Chords of steel wail under stifled sky and murky moonlight,
with rumbling distant tumult, to silence's helpless plight.

Barrel on, oh powerful engine, 'cross mechanic arteries blaze
towards citadels, glittering with halogen eyes' most baleful gaze.

Now lonely sits once verdant decks, vine-wrapped outlier,
bearing witness to a totem scorched, and a sister scarred with fire.

The heartbeat's drum remains in only several chambers deep,
within my weary frame, a burden far too great to keep.

An elegy for a community passing, by our railroad symphony,
across a train-tracked fretboard, while the bass drum shunts with glee.

For it will remain, when we are culled to make room for giants of glass,
the morning robins will still sing with joy, as other songs come to pass.



Time by Daniel Truong

Canvas to Carcass

Usman Khan

He walks
In truest rain and snow,
In the farthest meadows and ponds,
In the yawning valleys and innocent creeks.
His steps are like skipping stones on a lake's surface,
With the sound of picking flowers

He walks
By starlight, dim and bright
By shadows, slow and pensive
By the harrowing, wistful silence.
His steps are as lamenting birdsong, like fallen stones,
The undertone of a blind man's beauty

He walks
Through rain and fire
Through blood and molten steel
Through the darkest dusks
And the deepest dawns,
His steps are heavy,
Like the wayward trickling of time

He walks into the wind,
The cadence of his steps a symphony,
and pauses.
He collapses like tumbling leaves,
Bleeding a trail of iridescent colors

Growing Pains

Allison Elizabeth Shields

Cramps from the morning after
you are still beside me
your cool, hair pushed back.
Good or bad I can't decide,
my back is stiff from sleep.

Eyes red,
hair matted
my fingers trace the cracks from my lips
that you filled the night before with yours

You and I talked this time
I tell myself how it's better.
I walk home,
tell myself of how I'm better
with knots in my back

I messaged you, you don't reply.
I shower through my knots,
elbows still bending,
hands still twisting,
my heart still beating.
I tell myself I'm better.
I go to bed stiff.

Pest Control

Victoria Fraser

I keep a compact
catholic in my pocket
tucked beside my
fairy alarm.

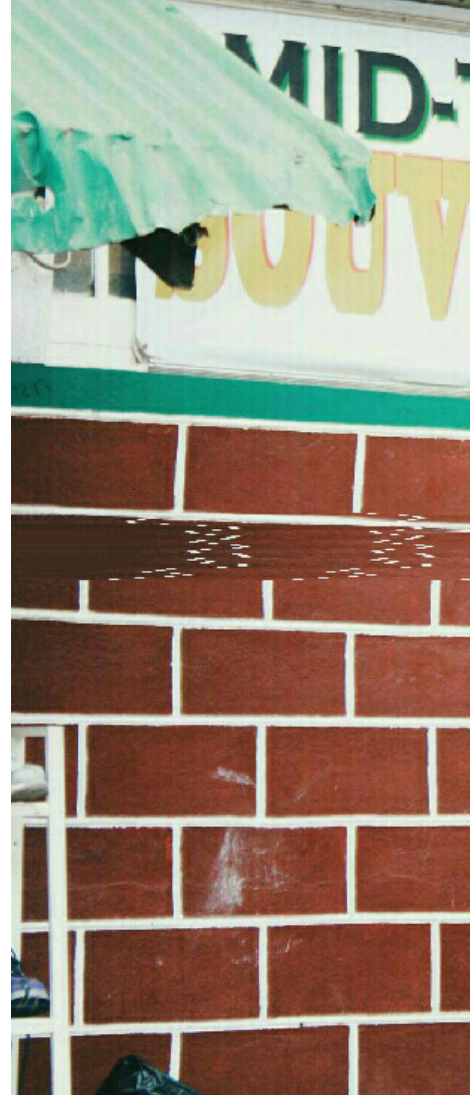
You never know when you'll need
to perform an exorcism. Especially when
there's a poltergeist portal in your bathroom.

The first time it was my ex-boyfriend
who kept cursing me in Latin.
Last week it was my cat
on the ceiling
instead of his scratching post.

You can't trust
chimneys. It's where
the fairies make their nests
from human hair
and stolen
toilet paper.

I squeeze on my slug lipstick
with one eye watching
the greedy gryphons
flitting around the bananas
in my basement suite.

I will have to find
a new place live.
Hopefully without a chimney
full of fairy droppings
and a toilet
that doesn't go to hell.



Anonymous by Appel Cabrera



In Lieu Of Errands

Youeal Abera

Last night, I travelled into space in lieu of some errands.

Along the way, I picked up some stars, and placed them in my pocket.

As I grabbed the last one, I exclaimed, “I see you from my home almost every night. How on earth do you shine so brightly?”

He responded, “I always wanted to ask you the same”.

A waterproof newspaper, an urgent pillow, an ancient waffle iron

Natasha Sheena Tar

My dear,

As urgent as a pillow falling from a twelve-story building, I wanted to tell you, Monica, that I'm doing quite well. I reached Victoria on the 15th with all my luggage and limbs intact. The weather here reaches highs of about 45 degrees Celsius, quite chilly for winter. That's Canada for you, eh? I miss you every day, especially when I'm out on my bike. When I look up into the green skies, my eyes fill with the image of that lovely teal dress you wore on our first date. No, I did not forget my promise to you. Yesterday I paid my visit to the Museum of 21st Century Artifacts and stood particularly long before the ancient waffle iron. As I perused the museum, I felt it impossible that I was in any way connected to the strange people of the past. To consume goop pressed between two hot surfaces seems so...barbaric. Uncouth. Nevertheless, I'm thankful for any entertainment between my bouts of business with Mr. Liam. He bores me dreadfully, but he's my only hope of getting my writing off the ground. Every sentence that comes from his mouth seems to start with "that someone of your background is doing this..." and ends with "absolutely stunning." He treats me less like a writer and more like a peculiar specimen of butterbee. I thought I was the only one (and you, of course) who thought my fake autobiography on a man named Neville Drinkwater inventing a waterproof newspaper was clever. Apparently, Mr. Liam thinks more of it than the both of us ever did. Hopefully his age isn't interfering with his opinion. Unfortunately, my space on this postcard seems to have run out, but do enjoy the photo of the archaic waffle iron on the front.

Take care and much love,

Delta

Growl

Madeline Kang

The shower curtain is doubled. There is one on the outside of the tub and one on the inside. In between the two plastic spreads is a girl who does not upset their straightness. Wendy balances on the cold edge of the tub and wiggles her toes. They scratch the inside curtain.

She likes it here. The space holds her so snug like the skin that holds in her vertebrae. The water cuts diagonally from a jet stream head. All water falls.

There is a small bar fridge under a 36 by 36 counter. The fridge is empty. 36 inches are far too wide for hips, yet her bones stay in place. She considers vomiting again, but she has to go to work. The task of making a liv-

Cars

Azita Teimouri

Blue Mustangs were your favourite.
We would drive by one
And you would always tap my arm profusely
Like a little child who has heard the music from an ice cream truck
closely approaching.
I loved watching your eyes light up.
You made me promise to stay
So you could take me out in that car.
So we could say, look, we made it.
Now every time I see a blue mustang drive by,
I wait for you to tap my arm, like the little child.
But all I have are memories of your smile slowly fading,
A sunset disappearing in the horizon.

Short Fiction

“There is no greater agony
than bearing an untold story
inside you.

- Maya Angelou

Baby Blue

George Nevgodovskyy

He watched as she turned her wedding ring around and around her finger from across what seemed like miles of kitchen table that stretched between them. They'd been sitting like this for an indeterminable amount of time when suddenly Mia got up to pour both of their mugs of tea down the sink, like she'd just remembered that she had stirred cyanide into them instead of sugar.

“In the wintertime here you can't forget about your tea for a minute without it getting cold,” she said into the black hole of the drain as she rinsed out the cups and filled a fresh kettle of water to boil – luxuriating in the mindless and mundane world of food and weather before he would inevitably begin to drag her back into a different world of memories and sadness and regret and consequences.

But which part of it did she regret? She saw the clock on the microwave and realized that Grant would be coming home in an hour. She couldn't imagine that Matty would be staying that long. On top of the microwave was a copy of Thérèse Raquin with a sushi takeout menu marking her page. The baby monitor stood beside it with a tiny, green light indicating that it was on.

“You got your sleeve filled in,” Matty said, stupidly, unable

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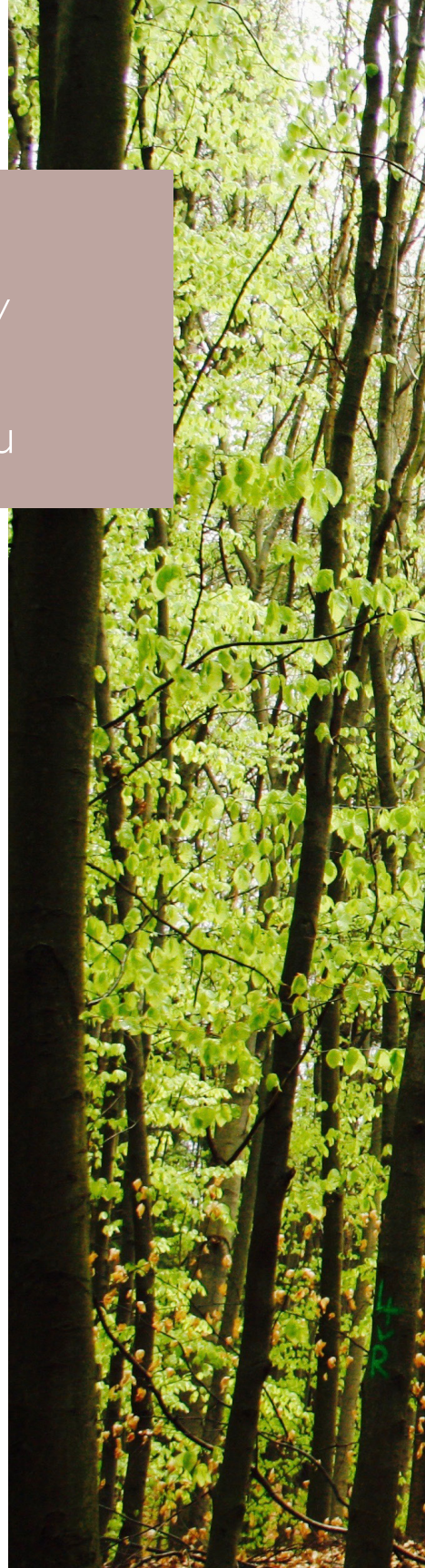




Photo by Jaiden Dembo

to help himself. "Did it hurt?"

"Yes. But in a good way. I wanted a different pain to take my mind from...that other one," she said as she stirred sugar into her mug so vigorously that the boiling tea splashed onto her wrist and scalded her skin. "Fucking shit."

"You alright?"

"I'm fine."

Mia licked the sugary tea from her skin but it didn't taste sweet at all. She felt like she was losing her fucking mind.

"Why did you come here, Matty?"

"I wanted to see how you were."

"Well, go ahead and look," she said as she set their teas down on the table, knowing that they would probably suffer the same fate as the previous ones did. Grant could be home earlier if the traffic is clear. God, why did Matty have to come here?

Matty looked, just as Mia told him to. He knew that she wanted him to see how much she'd changed - her haircut, her sleeve, her thin arms that protruded out of her sleeveless blouse, a hole in her lip where a piercing used to be. But Matty still saw her in the only way that he could, the way she looked when they first met: her long hair a washed-out shade of purple, a stud in her lip catching the sun, an unfilled tattoo sleeve running down her arm, her fingertips yellowed by nicotine spinning her wedding ring around and around just as she was doing now.

"Do you wish you'd never met me?" he asked.

Before she could answer there was a sound that emerged from the baby monitor, dissonant and sudden like a distant car crash. Mia sprang up without thinking and ran up the stairs to



the room that had been the nursery. He followed behind her.

The first thing he noticed was that the crib was still there - all decomposed and stripped down to its jagged wooden skeleton. The fresh coat of baby blue paint on the walls almost made Matty sick. The other baby monitor was propped up on a little table in the corner, identical to the one that stood in the kitchen. The sound that had called Mia up here had been a fallen bookcase, spilling Hemmingway and Irving and Zadie Smith onto the carpet. And that was where he found her, crouched down and despondently picking the books back up.

"We get these little tremors here sometimes that rattle the walls. You can barely feel them, but the house can."

He knelt down to help her, their bodies closer than they'd been in years.

"Why do you still keep it on?" he asked.

"It's hard to kill habits. Or maybe I'm just scared to try."

There was a still silence. Neither of them moved.

"I wish I could've seen him," he said.

She realized she wished for that too.



Photo by Jaiden Dembo

Meet-Cute

Alyssa Belle Zaporteza

“I wish we were an anomaly in the world of serendipitous encounters. The kind that tapped into your emotional reservoirs and seeped out of your reverie, bleeding into the everyday whether it was convenient or not. A notch or three above puppy love or exemplary more-than-acquaintances. There were probably stories like that. We probably weren’t one of them.”

Jasmine placed her notebook on her lap and looked up at her therapist, who was listening intently. Her head remained level as her eyes fell down to her notebook and her fingers fumbled with the bottom rungs of the notebook’s coil binding.

“This story seems different than your previous ones,” her therapist commented, sitting up slightly from his recline.

“What do you mean by different?” Jasmine replied.

“Different: as in lighter. Happier, almost.” Jasmine pressed her left thumb into the

coil and tilted her head back down to face her notebook. The notebook was a graduation gift.

“They actually don’t end up together in the end.”

“Yes, but I don’t know that. Neither does your audience. Maybe they don’t need to.” Jasmine silently applauded her therapist’s attempt to be encouraging.

“I think it’s a good direction, Jasmine.”

Jasmine mustered a toothless smile in return. It had taken her the better part of three sessions to write anything remotely optimistic.

“Is there anything you want to add?”

A combination of mild agitation and unbridled hysteria welled up in Jasmine’s throat, the kind she allowed to sink back into her stomach even when she couldn’t stomach what she wanted to say. A meld of fight and flight that culminated in a starving stalemate. Whenever you’re ready, he stressed in their first session. Jasmine wasn’t sure how to gage what it meant to be comfortable or ready. To her it was enough that she had conceded to attend counselling and that she managed to keep the strained, staccato responses she harbored in her throat at bay. She paused before replying.

“No.”

She knew full well that her “no” omitted her thoughts on senseless shootings and goodbyes that took place too late or didn’t happen at all. Her “no” also didn’t include her failure to reply to a weary soul in need of convincing when it was inconvenient and when it mattered most. Jasmine’s gaze darted back and forth between the Proust quote on the bottom left hand corner of her notebook and her therapist’s ballpoint pen. She was, at best,

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distraught at her inability to have been neither a better stranger nor an available friend.

“Well, whenever—”

“—I’ll let you know when I’m ready,” she interjected gently, grazing her finger across the edges of her notebook’s mascara-stained narratives. Her therapist smiled thinly and adjusted his silver frames. They had two remaining sessions together.

She exchanged goodbyes with her therapist after scheduling another appointment and proceeded to the nearest bus stop. The sun had gone down and the sidewalks were littered

with damp autumn-tinted leaves and miniature puddles which found shelter in sidewalk cracks from the afternoon’s rain shower. She lowered the volume on her smartphone and moved towards the center of the uncrowded sidewalk. Walking in the middle of the sidewalk often gave her the impression that she was less isolated than she felt.

Jasmine went through three playlists, wondering how often the spaces where pens met paper were locales for if onlys and could-haves. To wrestle with the ineffable or make up for the follies of men with bad intentions.



Untitled by Jason Gallant

A Conversation with the Monkey King

Jaiden Dembo

“Would you put me in one of your stories?” He asked as he made permanent brush strokes across my skin. From one artist to another, speaking in our own creative languages. “Sure,” I said with a laugh. “I’ll be a 60-year-old man, working in a Chinese restaurant and my line will be ‘We’re out of goddamn wontons.’” What a strange man. But he made me laugh even when he was putting ink beneath my skin and drawing blood to the surface. “Why not?” I said. We took a break from tattooing and he offered me trail-mix, “Did you forget to eat again?” he asked. I’d spent 10 hours with this man and he already knew my low blood sugar tells. “No.” Forget wasn’t the right word. I took him up on his offer of trail-mix and grabbed a banana from my purse as well, trying to ignore the raw, throbbing of my skin. “Where can I put this?” I asked, dangling the banana peel in front of him. He looked at it as if it were a dead animal. “Man, I hate the smell of bananas.” He took the peel from me and ran out of the shop to dispose of it. He came back in from the dark and the rain and I raised a brow at him, “Wow, you really do hate the smell.” I sat back in the leather chair and he sat next to me, getting the needle ready for round two. “It reminds me of my dad,” he said. I looked at him and he shrugged. From one artist to another, I understood.



The Thickness of Time

Diana Drozdik

Gasping for breath, I reached upwards, towards the only light I could see in this dark place. The spiders crawled along my sides, running away from something.

My knees sunk further into the mud while I hunched over on all-fours and I gave in to the lightness of my head. In it, my dreams danced close and far between consciousnesses.

‘Wake up! You lazy bum, we’re going biking today.’ My phone vibrated against my head and I found myself sleepy in bed.

I lifted off the mattress, my feet meeting the floor. Then I was suddenly on a bike, pedaling lightly as my friend swayed intensely behind me.

We glided on a wide curve, almost drifting. We jumped our bikes over the speed bumps with sheer enthusiasm. The euphoria erupted between us as we laughed from the thrill. The wind caked our faces and we licked it off with pleasure. I adjusted my hair from my face that the wind decided to plaster as my friend caught up.

In the summers of 2013 and 2014, we biked the perimeter of Richmond in its entirety and if we were ambitious enough, we came back to New Westminster and biked the Greenway biking

route to Vancouver. It was a long journey, but it was enough to escape the city lifestyle we lived on the daily.

‘We’re in Steveston, alongside UBC’s rowing facility. This is my friend Drumstick’ she said as she videotaped me with her selfie stick mid-stride.

I caught myself smiling as we sang our own versions of the songs we knew. Doing them justice with our experienced voices. My voice tickles and start to fade as the feeling of something crawling on my hand snaps me out of the karaoke.

We’re at Surrey Central Mall, drinking an Orange Julius she insisted on. The original Orange Julius. Alongside a Mozza burger, despite my complaining.

‘We need to eat and drink the same thing!’

But why? I really want a root beer float.

‘So we can share the same experience and enjoy ourselves even more!’ With such sentimental reasoning, how could I argue back? So that was that.

Flash back, we’re two virgins in a biology class dissecting a frog. We share our desire in being virgins with no intention of dating anyone, ever.

We discussed how gross boys are while she



Photo by Jaiden Dembo

holds the leg of the frog and playfully ‘karate chops’ our nearby classmates... and then proceeds to wear it like a moustache. Totally humane, I know. We were in grade 10, sure, we weren’t the most mature high schoolers, but we had fun. We fed off each other’s energy. She looks at me with a crooked smile. Without asking I know she wants to take over the biopsy. An almost devilish expression takes over her face, at least it appears to be.

Flash forward, we’re at KPU, her feet are kicked up against stained glass. Her posture is lax. Light is coming from the windows, but the room is dark.

Something crawls up my throat and exits. ‘You look like an evil villain, but you also look like a millionaire’ I tease her. She smiles, ‘One day I’ll look down from a similar window once I’ve made it big.’ She then laughs a stereotypical evil laugh with her arms raised above her head. I laugh alongside her and look down.

We’re at the top of the Hellevator, an amusement park ride. I’m quiet with overwhelming fear.

I scream, ‘let me down!’ to the employee who definitely can’t hear me. I find a camera right next to my face.

‘Wow, we’re really high up aren’t we? Look at the people! They look like little ants.’ I tell her to shut up.

She flails her feet around in the air, while gay with excitement. And then waves down to the little ant people below. We whoosh down to the ground with plenty of time for my heart to almost give out. I promise her I’ll never go on it again, but she’s rallied the P.N.E. employee against me and they both cheer me on. And we’re off again.

There are many times I’d like to believe she is joking about going sky-diving or cliff-diving, because I know who would go with her: me, despite my immense fear. At the time this fear felt overwhelming but now, it pales in comparison.

A flash of light obscures my view, and we’re tumbling down, two friends side-by-side. One friend who is wary of everything and the other who is afraid of nothing.

The stickiness of that sentence clings to my body. It weighs me down.

‘We’ll face your fears together!’ she says. Being afraid of nothing invertedly means not being afraid of death itself.

I’m falling into the mud. Is it mud though? I’m not sure. It’s sticky and thick. Smells a little bit metallic. It’s too dark to tell. What else could it be?

Kura

Hanna Chau

God, what am I doing here? The people seem to be in love with the sound of their own voices. The sky is threatening to turn black. Across from where I am sitting, a man with one eyebrow looks at me suggestively and motions towards the entrance of the bathroom. A river of spit dribbles down the left side of his mouth and he licks his lips.

Everywhere I go, it's the same. Different cultures, different personalities but it's still the same. Can you hear me? Do you care? Does it even make a difference? Mother told me my purpose before I was even ten years old. "Kura," she told me, her gray hands stroking my hair, "you are it. You are the one to keep our story alive. Even when your body decays, your words will live into the future. The promise of immortality." But our world, my mother's and mine, was much too small. So she got down on her knees (though not in prayer) and closed her eyes and thought only of me. Now I am here.

The people here have darker skin and talk with their hands. They are friendly even when I cannot understand most of what they say. I spend the afternoon half-heartedly reading my book then take the bus back to the hostel later in the evening. Samra greets me at the door. Her eyes are always watering and empty and it is dangerous if you look into them too long.

When I first told her I was an aspiring writer who was travelling as much as I could to learn more about humans, she threw her head back and gave a cackle. "You're too young, Kura. Too young to know that the world has many more beautiful, magnificent things that

are far worth writing about than humans." Samra got into an accident when she was eleven years old. That's what she calls it, an accident, a slight mismanagement of fate, but everyone here knows that her stepfather tortured and raped her until she turned eighteen and left. The one time I brought it up, we were both drunk and she wiped her mouth and shrugged her shoulders and said you can get used to anything if it happens to you enough. She has nightmares every night where men peel off her skin with a razor blade and inhabit her body. She screams really loud and the other kids always complain.

"So. Did you learn anything new about the human condition today?" Samra asks.

I shake my head and get ready to take a shower. There were no towels here and I didn't bring my own, so I often had to use an old t-shirt to dry off. I fished one out of my bag and grabbed my toothbrush out of the side zipper. Keenan was using the washroom when I opened the unlocked door. Luckily he was finished and already washing his hands.

"All yours, miss" he says in his high falsetto voice.

He calls everyone miss or mister even if they're younger than him. He is the only one who shares his snacks and the only one who doesn't complain about Samra's nightmares. He has scars all along the back of his neck in the shape of a turtle. He calls it his pet and we always laugh at the joke, even Dane who seldom laughs at anything. Dane sometimes takes it a step further and would softly pat the turtle and ask if Keenan had fed it yet and to make sure it doesn't run away because he once had a turtle that ran away and he didn't give a shit what

anyone else said, he was sure that it ran away because it left a note and we would all laugh and shake our heads.

After my shower, I open my copy of Vonnegut and hope to catch up on the next few chapters before Dane arrives. It's too late. I could hear him in the front door, loudly stomping his boots on the mat and making an unsuccessful attempt to be quiet. It was almost past midnight. I bookmark my page when he comes in the room and drops his bag next to my bed. His eyes are blood red and he smells like ashes.

"Morning sunshine! I'm feelin' good today! Let's go play some chess or something!"

Dane gets high about six times a day. The only reason they haven't kicked him out is because of some connections he has with the business. There was talk about his family having money, good money, but it was impossible to get to know Dane. No one knew why he was in a hostel if he was rich, and why he wears those clothes Samra calls "hobo-y." A lot of the others are scared of Dane but I am not. I think this is the reason he confides in me from time to time. The rare times that he is sober, he tells me of the things he has done. When he was fourteen, he ran away from home. He said he felt like an alien, like someone plopped him in some random house in the middle of nowhere with strangers who stitched on whatever face they were going to wear that day and talked in robotic voices. He said that he punched a guy in the supermarket while waiting in line one time because he felt like it. He stole, cheated, lied, and almost killed a girl because she didn't call him back after two dates. There are worse things, I know there are, but I don't ask. He was

surprised the world hasn't decided to kill him off yet.

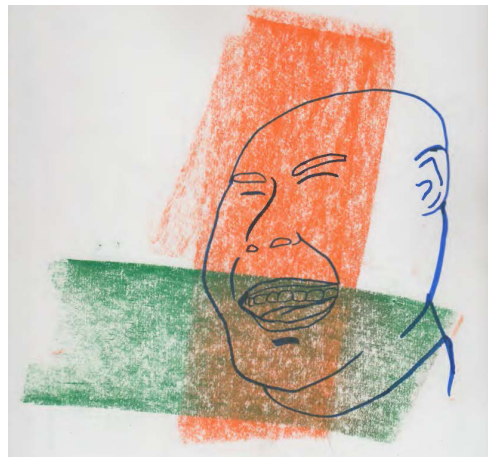
"C'mon, just one game! Trust, Kura, I've gotten better. I know your strategy now. Just one game."

We play three matches until his eyes get heavy as the drugs wear off.

"Tell me, man. Why do you wanna know so much about stuff? About the world, about people, all that stuff. It's all pointless, so why bother? Like shit, s'notgonna make much of a difference anyway."

I shrug and tell him what my mother told me countless times. That I do not exist, that I was just a shell, an instrument whose only purpose is to record important things about this life for the future generation to learn from. That my life exists only in other peoples' stories and it is my purpose to find out what those stories are. That he should not think of me as Kura, a person, but a narrator, a figure who stands apart from the real world and merely observes it.

He thinks about this for a moment and opens a can of pop. "Wow," he says. "That's really fucking sad."



Mirth by Kitty Cheung



Fragments by Appel Cabrera

Jade Tiles

Lydia Tang

“The disastrous year 1940 seemed to cast doubt on the idea that there might be any future for China outside the Japanese Empire.” — Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*

Nanking, 1940.

Yu Weimin tightens his favourite silk tie around his neck and smooths out the lapels of his best suit. He runs a hand lightly over his slicked back hair, tucks an errant strand into place and frowns over the worry creasing his brow. He flashes himself a quick smile in the mirror, but it just looks like a grimace.

“Are you finally going to ask for a job?” His wife is leaning against the doorframe, and Weimin meets her eyes in the mir-

ror. The burn scar on her right cheek, a small souvenir from Japanese artillery fire, gleams red.

“We moved here for that reason, but we’ve been in Nanking for weeks now.”

“I just... wanted us to get settled in first. Shanghai was our home for many years.”

“The lines at the rice distribution centers aren’t getting any shorter, you know. I’ll be back there today. And the vegetables old Mrs. Gao sells me under the table are getting pricier.” Chen gives him a dry smile. “We both know that isn’t why you are stalling.”

“My father cursed the Reorganized National Government with his dying breath.” Weimin turns to her now, and Chen crosses her arms. “It was his dream-come-true when I got a job in Chiang Kai-shek’s civil administration; and when the President left, my father left us too. But here I am, going to work for Wang Jingwei—the da hanjian.”

“If we try to leave, we will all be shot. And don’t you dare call him that here—the rest of China may say so, but we cannot.” Chen’s expression grows cold. “Here—especially here, in Nanking—you must at least believe what I do: Chiang Kai-shek is the true traitor of China. I still haven’t received a single letter from my family since Chiang razed Changsha to the ground before—before they even arrived.”

“I haven’t heard from any of my family in Nanking either,” Weimin spits. “Maybe we passed by a mass grave with their bodies in it on our way here.” He knows that they are dead—he’s read the papers in Shanghai, heard the horrific stories on the radio. To make sleep come at night, he tells himself they got out before it was too late, that his nieces and nephews are living in Chongqing.

Husband and wife glare at each other, until Chen’s shoulders drop. She steps aside, into their bedroom. “There’s a fresh pot of congee on the stove. Eat up before you head out.”

Weimin breathes out a sigh. Chen refrained from voicing her thoughts to his father when he was still alive due to his worsening illness, but often told Weimin about how Chiang Kai-shek is destroying China rather than fighting for it. She had read the papers, discussed the war with her friends. He cannot deny her claims outright—Chiang is not completely China’s patriotic hero. He had, after all, appeased Japan before they attacked and his image only worsened after Changsha was burned, after the news of a destructive flood in the interior, after the withdrawal from the coast which left cities and the burgeoning

heart of a modern China completely undefended.

When Weimin’s father had heard these sentiments on the radio, he shouted himself hoarse about how Chiang was fighting this war as best he could, and that the overall nation had to be saved. That Chongqing still existed meant that there remained hope for the revolutionary dream of an independent China.

Weimin simply saw that his father, who had witnessed the fall of the Qing, was dying of heartbreak as the Japanese entered Beijing, Shanghai and Nanking. He saw the vision of a united Chinese republic crumbling under occupation as neighbourhoods were flattened under airstrikes, as people were stuck through with bayonets in the streets. He saw his wife grow cold and bitter, his children incensed and angry. He lost his job in the civil administration when the Nationalists fled west as his father lay too ill to evacuate, and their savings drained as prices skyrocketed.

Between his father, his wife, and his children, Weimin keeps his own thoughts mostly inside. They all had convincing arguments, but Weimin just wanted to keep putting food on the table, keep their heads down. To dream about the days before the invasion; hope to see the ones after it. He thinks and thinks on what to do to make it there.

As Weimin moves past Chen, he stops and kisses her on the cheek, right by the burn scar. “Things will get better from here. I’m going today.”

“Good luck.” She says this casually, but Chen tucks a hair behind her right ear and hides a smile. The steamy, bland smell

of rice distribution center congee fills his nostrils as he enters the kitchen. Weimin stops by the pot and opens the drawer left of the stove. Three knives gleam in the drawer—a cleaver, a meat knife, and a small fruit knife. Weimin hesitates when he sees the shining steel, the remains from a set that had been a wedding gift from his father to himself and Chen. His hand hovers over the smallest knife briefly before he selects it, wrapping it in a handkerchief and sliding it into the inner pocket of his suit jacket. He smooths down his lapels and closes the drawer.

In the background, he can hear his daughter and son talking rapidly about the news—apparently, the Kuomintang Juntong had managed to assassinate another collaborator. “These are the true national heroes of China,” his daughter is saying. Liyan is dressed for school, an empty bowl in front of her. Her brother, two years younger and ever receptive, is nodding vigorously. “Remember when assassins killed the foreign minister in his own living room? Maybe they can kill Wang Jingwei next!”

“They will kill him—we need revenge. “Liming’s bowl is still half-full. “My Nanking classmates told me all about what happened here. No Japanese soldier or Chinese hanjian should survive. I hope they kill Hirohito next.”

“Eat your congee, Liming,” Weimin scolds, tapping the table. “Your mother waited hours for it, and who knows when looters will raid this center next.” Liming doesn’t hesitate before tipping the water-and-rice gruel into his mouth. Weimin glares at the newspaper laid out between the two of them. It is one

of those resistance papers they keep bringing home from school, hidden between the pages of their textbooks. “Watch yourselves, and don’t you dare say these things at school. Whenever these assassinations happen, a crackdown on everyone else follows.”

Liming sputters in indignation and sets his bowl down, not a grain of rice left in it.

“But we need to resist, Ba! If we do not, we would just be helping the Japanese kill our own people! We need to punish everyone who even compromises with the enemy.”

“Ba is right, Liming,” Liyan says. “When people actively resist the Japanese, innocents die. But if we do nothing, the enemy will keep winning. I believe that we cannot stop, no matter the cost, otherwise Japan will destroy China.”

“Enough!” Weimin says sharply, but he cannot bring himself to feel anger. He clenches his fists to stop his hands from trembling. “Keep out of trouble and this will all be over soon.”

Neither of his children are fazed.

“Chongqing tells us to resist at all costs. Grandfather said that to oppose Wang Jingwei is to oppose all hanjian,” recites Liming. He has a small bit of rice stuck to the corner of his mouth, his round cheeks stubbornly holding onto their baby fat despite his age of fifteen, despite the rationing.

“Do you know what they make us do at school, Ba?” Liyan says, fixing him with a stare that matches Chen’s. The louder fights between his wife and children frighten Weimin the most—all it would take would be one nosy neighbour, one Japanese soldier

passing by. “Whenever one of our cities are captured, they gather the whole school for a rally so that we can celebrate. Celebrate, Ba! It takes everything for me and my friends not to scream against the Japanese and the hanjian.”

Their friends. The schools were rife with child revolutionaries and nationalists, even in Nanking. Martyrs, the lot of them. Generations and generations of foolish dreamers, who still think this half-developed country could be saved.

He grits his teeth. “Just watch each other when you walk to and from school.” Weimin turns on his heel, marching towards the front door when he spots an open envelope on the cupboard. A new letter from Liwei must have reached them. Weimin snatches it up and skims over it quickly—it is much of the same. His eldest son writes to them from ‘Iolani School in Honolulu, always begging them to come to America. Before the Japanese

took Shanghai, Liwei would tell them that the Japanese would never dare strike the powerful United States, but now, he simply tells them that he is scrounging up money to get them out.

It is too late for them now. And if Weimin knew his family at all, they would all die in China than admit there was no future for this country. His father already had.

“Why the suit, Ba?” Liyan seemed to finally notice his attire. Or at least, she finally gathered up the courage to ask about it. “Where are you going?”

“Seeking a job,” Weimin says flatly. He stares at his two children, as if daring them to inquire further. They remain silent. He puts his hat on and turns to leave. Just before he fully closes the door behind him, Weimin hears Liming whisper, “Big sister, doesn’t Ba look a little like Wang Jingwei?”



Nut Vendor by Jason Gallant

Translations

“Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture.

- Anthony Burgess

River of Shadows

By *Chen Li*

Translated from Traditional Chinese by Anisa Maya Dhanji and Amanda Wan

Everyday, a river of shadows flows from our teacups
the places marked by the imprints of our lips
are two banks of an elusive river
the fragrance of tea fills the room, inviting sleep
perhaps we drink time,
perhaps, ourselves
or maybe our fallen parents at the bottom of the cup

we fish in the muddy bottoms of our cups
for last year's landscapes
a jasmine-covered mountain
muddled petals blooming and falling
we imagine the cooled river return itself to boil
dissolving in heat, the darkness dies down little by little

then, seated before the cups that illuminate each other like lanterns
we drink our tea on the banks high like a dream
waiting for the water of the tea to become the river water
waiting for the trees to bear flowers and fruit
until the moment we reincarnate, like our parents
becoming a fruit, a flower
and we retire in a river of shadows





Photo by Amanda Rachmat

Translation Process

with Anisa Maya Dhanji
and Amanda Wan

The movement of time traces its lives through various translations of “River of shadows,” which began as “陰影的河流” by Taiwanese Chinese poet Chen Li (written in Traditional Chinese), became “Fleuve d’ombres” in Martine Valette-Hemery’s French rendition, and is now presented as our English translation, prepared as a collaboration¹. As we translated, our decisions were guided by our interpretations of time as mapped by the imagery throughout the poem: the “river of shadows,” revealed in the tea that “flows from our teacups” (1), provides a geography for the passage of time, whether embodied in sensory experiences and desires—“the fragrance of tea fills the room, inviting sleep” (4)—or the expectation of fulfillment, as the figures in the poem sit on the riverbanks, “waiting for the water of the tea to become the river water / waiting for the trees to bear flowers and fruit” (16-17).

As we unfolded a geography of time in our telling

of this poem, we worked closely with both the Traditional Chinese and French translations in hopes of understanding how fluidly literature can move through languages depending on thoughtful vocabulary and structural choices. We chose to convey the notion of flow which remained consistent in both of our interpretations of the Traditional Chinese and French translations. In English, we attempt to realize this movement of the river in the way that the figures

drink time,
perhaps, ourselves
or maybe our fallen parents
at the bottom of the cup (5-7)

in anticipation of “the moment we reincarnate, like our parents” (18) and eventually “retire in a river of shadows” (20), the figures themselves becoming time in embodied and reflexive forms.

By invoking “fallen parents” and rebirth into these figures, the embodiment of time through drinking tea becomes a moment of intimacy—shared between the poem’s figures and us, the translators

reading and writing them into English—where the poem itself is a translation in a linguistic sense, but also a translation of the points of time that precede the moment of the present.

On a closing note, structurally, we sought to mirror the rhythm and flow of a river in our choice of line breaks. Where Hemery included a line break in “Chaque jour coule de nos tasses de thé / un fleuve d’ombres” (1-2), we chose to gather the two lines into “Everyday, a river of shadows flows from our teacups” (1) as an expression of the way the river as time seems to weave through the imagination of the poem.

We encourage readers to explore both the original Traditional Chinese and French translations and to interpret them as freely and creatively as we have.

Special thanks to Jane Shi for her narration skills, encouragement, and companionship through this translation.

¹This English translation is based on “Fleuve d’ombres,” which is Martine Valette-Hemery’s French rendition of the original “陰影的河流” by Taiwanese Chinese poet Chen Li, written in Traditional Chinese.



From A Certain Quill¹

by Henri Michaux

Translated from French by Dawson F. Campbell

I

A Placid Man

Sensing hands outside his bed, Quill was amazed that he wasn't resting up against the wall. "Hold on," he thought, "the ants would have eaten it..." And he went back to sleep.

Soon thereafter, his wife grabbed and shook him: "Look, you layabout!" she said. "While you were busy sleeping, they stole our house." Indeed, a spotless sky stretched out all around them... "Oh well," he thought, "too late now."

Soon thereafter, a noise could be heard. It was a train headed toward them at top speed. "It seems quite hurried," he thought; "it will surely arrive before we do." And he went back to sleep.

Then, a chill woke him. He was drenched in blood. Several pieces of his wife were resting near him. "With blood," he thought, "comes a certain amount of grief; if only this train could have passed somewhere else; I sure would have been pleased. But, since it has already come and gone..." And he went back to sleep.

"Now," said the judge, "when we found your wife she was portioned into eight pieces. How is it possible that she could have been so terribly wounded, while you—who was right next to her—were unable to make a single attempt at preventing it? and not even knowing what caused it? It's a mystery. Yet the entire case depends on it."

"On that note, I cannot help," thought Quill. And he went back to sleep.

"The execution will take place tomorrow. Does the accused have anything to add?"

"Sorry," he said, "I hadn't really followed the case." And he went back to sleep.

¹"Plume" the name of the main character of this collection of anecdotal stories—here in the title of the original French, "Un Certain Plume"—has been translated to Quill to signify both "feather" as well as "pen" or "the instrument of authorship," analogous to the definition of the original French "plume."



Mirror by Alexander Lowe

Chalo Phir Milenge

Original piece and self translation
By Amal Javed Abdullah

It's the desi within us that has
trouble letting go.

*Aray, itni raat hogae? Jao beta, Abbu ko bulao, bobot
dayr hogae, kal subha school bhi jana hai. Nahi, nahi
Samina, mai rukti, magar waqai mai, inki job bhi to
hai na kal. Chai? Wesai dil to cha raha hai. Achi tum
kehti ho to chai peelai tai hain. Beta aap to jaen, Abbu
ko batain kai thori dayr mai nikal rahen hain, warna
wob to sari raat yabeen na reh jaen. Han Samina, aur
batao, aaj kal kia chal raha hai, koi nayi tazji baat?
Acha waqai? Phir kia hua?*

It's already so late? Go beta, call Abbu and tell him we have to leave. You have school tomorrow after all. No, no, Samina, I would stay, really, I would, but you know how it is, my husband has work tomorrow too. Chai? Well, I wouldn't mind a cup of chai. Okay, if you insist, then let's have a cup of chai together. Beta, you need to still tell Abbu that we're leaving in a little while; there's no knowing him, he might even stay the night if you don't! Samina, what else is new these days, any new juicy story to share? Really? What happened next?

Bag on shoulders, trolley in hand, you turn around and take one last long look. You stand and reminisce. Flashbacks fill your focus; memories and moments, magical and malev-

olent, it all comes back to you. Your train of thought lingers upon the people you love, family who raised and nurtured you in their arms, taught you how to smile and frown, tickled you till you laughed, wiped your tears and snot and cleaned your wounds. You muse over the distantly familiar streets and landmarks and place names; an amusement park you would frequent as a child, the winding road that lead to your grandfather's house before he passed away, the roadside Krazy Kone vendor who sold your most favourite ice cream in the whole world – all hazy in your memory like water damaged photographs, memories and moments decayed in the oceans of water that separate both the ends of the earth that you call home. As you turn to depart, your heart thumps heavily, tugging back like a magnet to the mitti from which it sprouted and grew. This is the restrained tension you always feel. You are ready to leave, but it is bittersweet. Why is there not yet a secret portal between this home and the other, the kind I dreamed of as a child, you wonder.

It's the desi within us that has trouble letting go.

Jee beta, Abbu kia kebrahai hain? Nabi poochna? Kyun nahi? Aray beta, aap apnai friend kai saath kisi aur din khelna. Kal subha school nahi jaana? Jao, jaldi jaa kar pooch kai ao. Nabi Samina, mai thori dayr aur

rehti magar tum kbud time dekho na, tumbarai bachon ko bhi neend arahi hai. Tumhari shadi ki pictures? Kia karun, time to bobot hogaya magar shadi ki pictures ko to mai inkar nahi kar sakti. Jee beta, Abbu nai kiya kaha? Abhi tak cricket ki batein chal rabin hain? Koi baat nahi, itni dayr ham aunty ki shadi ki tasweerein dekh leytai hain. Dekhao na, Samina.

So beta, what did Abbu say? You didn't ask? Why not? Aray beta, you can play with your friend another day. Don't you want be up for school in the morning? Go now on, go and ask him. Nahi Samina, I'd stay a little longer, but look at the time, even your kids look sleepy. Your wedding pictures? Well, what can I say, it is late, but I can't say no to shadi pictures. Yes beta, what did Abbu say? They're still discussing cricket? Nevermind, let's look at aunty's shadi pictures in the meantime. Bring them out, Samina.

You put the roll to your mouth and take a long drag. Here it is, the outer evidence of your defeated inner will. This isn't the first time you have lost, crossed the finish line last, panting and wheezing, clutching your constricted chest. Time and time again, you have declared that this time will be your last. But each time, when you feel the itch in the wound prickling your whole body, you can only sit on your hands so long until you surrender and scratch the sore raw. The blood and pus ooze out of the infection like molten lava in the burning inferno in which you calmly sit, rings of smoke from your

mouth below melting softly into grey clouds from the flames above. The self-assuring vows made to a past self feel like pretentious promises made to a foreign stranger in another lifetime. Now matter how hard you try to resist, the urge is always too strong, like an appel du vide at the edge of a cliff. But at this moment, you wouldn't even mind the cliff to get away from this constant cycle of self-destruction. You have tried so hard to climb out of the hole, but each time, you slip and slam back down into your misery so much harder. You wonder if this is even worth the struggle; it is so much easier to pretend it isn't. When a bonfire is devouring wood, and the reds and oranges glitter like disco balls and flames dance to the music of the blaze, the wood does not cry, it cackles along to the tune. On some days, you embrace the harm that comes with the high. There is an ironic amusement in watching the world crash around your ears and sitting calmly in the rubble – so much easier than the struggle to resist.

It's the desi within us that has trouble letting go.

Aray yaar, shukriya ki kia zurnvat hai, bari kbushi hui kai aap ayai family ko laykai aur humarai saath kha-nai mai sbamil huai. Han, han, inshaAllah ham bhi apkai han zaroor ayengai, aur iss dafa zada jald milenge. Chhalain mai apko gari tak chor kai ajaun. Iss taraf park ki hai? Aap bethain, dayr horabee bogi apko. Sheesha zara neechai kariyai ga. Wesai, bari shandar hai apki gari – kis saal

mai kbareedi thi? Acha? Mehengi ayi thi kia? Bhai, yai jo second-hand gariyan baichtai hain, sab chor botain hain. Mai apko apna aik qissa sunata hoon jo humara saath hua tha jab ham Canada ayai thai 30 saal pehlai...

Aray yaar, no need to say thank you, it was a pleasure to have you and your family join us for dinner. Yes, yes, inshaAllah we will also come visit, and we'll meet sooner this time. Let me walk you to your car. Have you parked here? Get inside, it's late. Can you roll down the window a little? Wesai, you have a beautiful car – when did you buy it? Really? Was it expensive? Bhai, trust me, all these second-hand sellers are thieves. Let me tell you what I went through when we first came to Canada 30 years ago...

There is a heavy bulk in your chest, and you didn't know you could feel this way. Your heart feels like a gangly claw has pressed its thorny talons into the thin flesh and ripped it in two, gory veins and tissue dangling, crimson blood dripping at your feet. "Losing a loved one is never easy," the funeral director said. "We know how you feel, but it's best to move on. Please insert your credit card here." Move on. But whenever you try to walk, a dark shadow always stalks behind. Sometimes it is just the fuzzy outline of a dark cloud above your head. On these days, you say, "I'm just feeling a little under the weather, nothing to worry about," On other days, it is the sharp silhouette of a black shroud-like ghost enveloping you in its cold, clammy grip. You can't move on if your body and legs are clasped in ropes so invincible that you can't



even see them. They say to live in a constant state of departure while always arriving. Everyone has loved ones who die, they say. You learn to let go. The searing pain has now subsided, it is true. There is only a blunt ache, a dull scar that Time left behind after its clumsy surgery sewing the wound. But there is no forgetting; there are only memories and regrets and tears and wishing hard, wishing so hard, for a second chance.

It's the desi within us that has trouble letting go.

Bhai, time to dekhain, ab to waqai mai bobot dayr borahi hai. Aap say inshaAllah dubara milenge. Bobot shukriya apkai aanai ka. Allah hafiz, bhai. Allah hafiz, bachon! Kia kaha? Beta, mai uss ko neechai bulata, magar woh to sogaya hoga. Aap Abbu sai kehega kai aap ko dubara layen, phir aap kbelleega, theek hai? Allah hafiz;

Theek hai, bhai, Allah hafiz. Bhabi, Allah hafiz, duaon mai yaad rakhiga. Allah hafiz, Allah hafiz;

Bhai, look at where the time has gone, it's really very late now. We will meet again soon, inshaAllah. Thank you so much for coming. Allah hafiz, bhai. Allah hafiz, kids! What did you say? Beta, I would call him downstairs, but he has probably gone to bed. Tell your Abbu to visit us more often, then you two can play together, okay? Allah hafiz. Okay, bhai, Allah hafiz. Sister, Allah hafiz, remember us in your prayers. Allah hafiz, Allah hafiz.

The car begins to drive away, the children waving back to you through the rear window. You wave your salams at the receding speck until it finally turns the corner and leaves your sight. Chalo, phir milenge.



2018 Institute for World Literature: Tokyo, Japan

World Literature students Chance Daldy, Dawson Campbell, and Amanda Rachmat attended this year's IWL at the University of Tokyo! Check out their recaps:

Tokyo Travel Log

By Chance Daldy

As I took off on a flight across the Pacific to spend a month at the University of Tokyo for the 2018 Institute for World Literature, many thoughts about Japan were going through my head. Thoughts such as wondering

what kind of culture shock I'd experience, what delicious food I would try, and what I would learn through the seminars of the IWL. Looking back, what ended up having the most profound effect on me was the magnificent history that seemed to constantly surround us.

The Institute for World Literature included many fantastic guest lectures and events off campus in addition to our main seminars and weekly colloquium group meetings. The two main events were a trip to a historical garden with a boat tour around Tokyo Harbour, and an outing to the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno. While I anticipated that I would enjoy the outing to the

Tokyo National Museum, I severely underestimated the awe I experienced walking around the exhibits.

The visit was organized so that we could stay at the museum for as long as we wanted to. I appreciated this as I easily spent three hours exploring the museum and could have stayed longer. Seeing hand written copies of the *Genji Monogatari* (Tale of Genji), original Noh masks and costumes, several of Hiroshige's prints from the One Hundred Famous Views of Edo, and swords crafted by legendary bladesmiths such as Masamune, Sadamune, and Nagamitsu was emotionally overwhelming. It's one thing to read about these pieces of

history in textbooks or online, but to see them in person was an unreal experience! Although the IWL itself was unforgettable, coming so close to so much history moved my moved my soul in ways I could never have anticipated. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to experience the IWL and Tokyo!



Photo by Amanda Rachmat

Tokyo, Déjà Vu

By Dawson F. Campbell

Simply put, Tokyo is a place unlike any in which I have ever sojourned. Yet, on multiple occasions while wandering the many streets, alleys, and gardens in my first two weeks there, I experienced the convulsive feeling of having previously lived some particular situations. Tokyo is, then, for me, coloured by *déjà vu*, *déjà vécu*—the feeling of the *unheimlich*.

The re-appearance of a skyline after being sundered by a passing train—I'd seen it before. Glancing down a Shinjuku street bursting with lights from the endless signs vying for attention—I'd been there before. Turning away from a 300-year-old pine to

face a crowd of my classmates awaiting entrance to the Hamarikyū Gardens—these were old friends I barely knew in a familiar setting to which I'd never been.

While it would be more exciting to attribute these seemingly consecutive instances of *déjà vu* to a glitch in the matrix, the merging of parallel universes, prescient dreams, or moments of prophetic intuition, there is a more plausible explanation. My early experiences of Tokyo were those of affected phenomenology. In Tokyo attention is fragmented by an overload of stimulus causing memory to associate that which was previously registered subconsciously, to what was now being consciously perceived in the present. This

anomaly in memory creates a phenomenon that is simultaneously remembered and novel—during *déjà vu*, as Henri Bergson suggests, perception and memory overlap.

Be it through the amalgamation of shining lights, flashy signs, and many bustling people or through the beauty that surrounds the lush gardens, the juxtaposing new and old architecture, and the entire prefecture in an alluring aura—Tokyo is an over-stimulating experience. It is constantly pulling you in from all sides, leaving memory to pick up the pieces of experience and place them where it will—in some cases haphazardly.

I hope that I may one day see it all again, again.



Photo by Amanda Rachmat

In my experience, the most satisfying culinary experiences in Tokyo are found by mistake. Even while stumbling over what little Japanese I had picked up and making horrific pronunciation errors, finding restaurants by happenchance (after getting lost) ended up being more rewarding than the planned visits to foodie hotspots. Much in the same way you allow a piece of literature to take you on an unexpected adventure, when visiting Tokyo simply go with the flow and follow your nose. Your senses know you better than Google does, regardless of how appallingly spot-on Google seems to be getting.

So, to leave with you with some advice: You can never have too much sushi in a week. You'll regret you didn't have more as soon as you leave.

Food for Thought

By Amanda Rachmat

Cuisine, like literature, allows culture to move through the body and mind by way of shared experience. This was absolutely my encounter during my time spent in Tokyo. By engaging in discussion with fellow colleagues during IWL seminars and through enjoying one or many of the plethora of izakayas on any given Tokyo street, participating in the institute certainly satiated my hunger for knowledge and thirst for diverse flavours.

My fondest memories of the IWL are simply going out for a bite near campus and discussing my new colleagues' current research over a couple of Sapporo's and sharing traditional Japanese dishes. Connecting with likeminded academics from around the

world who are bringing in different experiences from their own lives and the literature that they are engaging with really inspired how I want to pursue literature in my future. Whether it was 'disaster literature', cross-sections between Russian and Chinese Sci-fi, or incorporating climate change into the discourse of World Literature, I was always floored at the endless possibilities of this field of study.

When it came to downtime, my main focus was food.

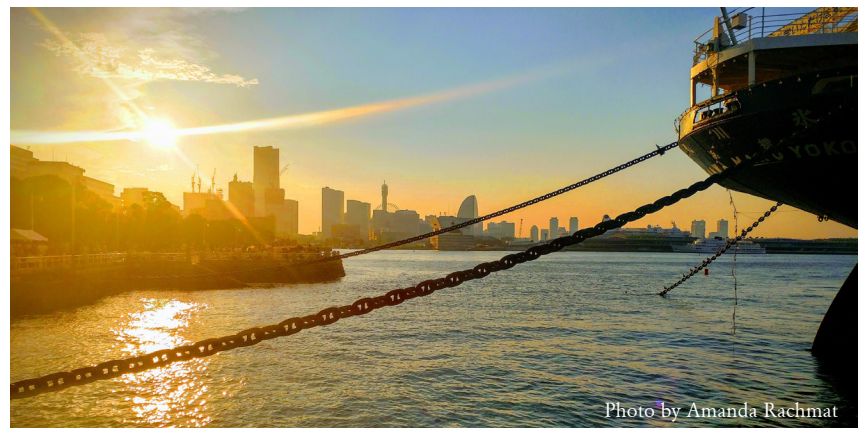


Photo by Amanda Rachmat

Author Bios

Youeal Abera uses the poetry he has written to cover an array of real life experiences he has endured: enlightenment, love, loss, black identity, black pride, etc. He hopes that whoever's eyes read his poetry will be able to appreciate his transparency, vulnerability, and honesty.

Amal Javed Abdullah is an Interactive Arts and Technology and French double major at Simon Fraser University. She enjoys all types of writing, with the sole exception of author bios. Amal blogs at ajabdullah.wordpress.com.

Apple Cabrera is an intended World Lit Major at SFU. A little about me: I am a human who enjoys reading, collecting vinyl, traveling, and taking photos of people while traveling. I enjoy the smell of burning wood and dabble in making beautiful and often times unconventionally beautiful things. I used to cook a lot of eggs on the weekends, but now I just cook (and it pays for tuition, which is a plus I suppose).

Dawson F. Campbell can be found in the depths, sous vide, materializing occasionally to read, write, and enjoy a bit of wine and cheese.

Hanna Chau

Kitty Cheung is a poet, visual artist, and student of World Literature. Her passion for storytelling is evident in her artwork, as well as in her tendency to analyze hip-hop lyrics. She likes to exercise her creativity through writing, illustration, and the serenading of her mother with impromptu ukulele melodies.

Chance Daldy

Mariah Lynne Dear is a majestic woman who lives in Vancouver, British Columbia. She is a poet, a nonfiction writer, a feminist, a nanny, and a writing workshop facilitator. Since her spoken word poetry debut at age seventeen, she has travelled across Canada competing both individually and as a team representing the city of Vancouver. She was pleased to be crowned the Grand Slam Champion of UBC in 2014 and the Youth Grand Slam Champion of Vancouver in 2015.

Jaiden Dembo is a coffee-addict and late-night writer spending her time swimming in texts.

Anisa Maya Dhanji is currently working towards a Double Major in Linguistics and French along with 3 Specialization Certificates at Simon Fraser University. Often, you can find her drifting in and out of the pres-

ent tense. When she isn't daydreaming or with her nose in a textbook, she enjoys the company of these coasts' air, trees and waters nurtured and cared for by the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

Victoria Fraser is a 4th year undergraduate student studying Psychology and Creative Writing at UBC. Her poetry has been published in Pulp, The Liar and a children's anthology that was probably a scam.

Madeline Kang is a born and raised North Vancouver girl (yes, Canada!) constantly running away from home. Often suffering from a burnt tongue (tea) and rough hands (climbing). Heart is in prose-poetry, wallet is in content creation.

Diana Drozdik is a Pharmacy Technician and a third year Microbiology and Biochemistry student. She recently lost someone extremely close to her and chose to revolve her submission around the memories they shared. This is her attempt to preserve her vision of this person over the thickness of time. This is for you Marie.

Usman Khan: "It's difficult to say where I'm really "from" since I moved around a lot when I was young, but I grew up in a small, little-known town called Yanbu on the west coast of Saudi Arabia. In the absence of adhering to any one culture, I'd say I most greatly identify as a Muslim. My passions in life are science and research, but a big dream of mine is to author a fantasy novel/series, since that's what I've always loved to read."

Audrey MacTavish is a student and TA in SFU's English department. She uses illustration as a means of playfully exploring her academic interest in the concept of identity and the self.

George Nevgodovskyy's family emigrated to Canada from Ukraine when he was seven years old. He has lived in Burnaby for most of his life, and is studying at SFU to become a high school English teacher. He enjoys terrible television, sappy rom-coms, and anything written by Shakespeare.

DF Parizeau is a writer currently living on unceded Coast Salish territory. His work endeavours communicate using precise word choice, as well as cope with the crippling effects that nostalgia can have on an individual. When not studying, you can find him earnestly collecting raindrops for his online poetry project belowtheeaves.ca.

Heather Anne-Marie Prost is a settler that lives, works, creates, and studies, on the unceded ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. She is a fourth year Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies major at Simon Fraser University. Her research, paid, and volunteer

work surrounds survivor centred and trauma informed healing and outreach and she is currently exploring how poetry influences and reimagines the healing process(es) of trauma.

Amanda Rachmat won't be seen at Dawn, unless of course she has been up all night. As a sporadic and feverish creator, Amanda's work is fueled by long spells of contemplation and born of spontaneity.

Brittany Rose

Felix Ruiz de la Orden is currently majoring in English Literature and minoring in World Literature at Simon Fraser University. He would like to thank readers for taking the time to read his work.

Anna-Beth Seemungal is an SFU student pursuing an English Literature major and World Literature minor. She enjoys art, poetry and anything with a twist ending. When Anna is not shelving books at her local library or sitting in class, you can find her sipping a cup of tea while burying her nose in a novel.

Allie Shields is a currently student at Kwantlen Polytechnique University's Creative Writing Program. As an aspiring writer and educator, she hopes her writing will touch and connect her readers.

Carlos Suzara is currently a prospective Architecture student in BCIT, formerly in Emily Carr University for Illustration.

Lydia Tang hails from Vancouver, BC, and is a Chinese-Canadian student in her final year of study at Simon Fraser University. Majoring in History with a minor in Political Science, she is also completing a co-op degree designation. Her areas of interests are peace and conflict, public policy, and post-conflict reconstruction.

Natasha Sheena Tar does not like writing bios. Does anyone even read the bio section of anything? No wonder most bio sections are filled with sad attempts at humour.

Azita Teimori

Amanda Wan is a Han Chinese settler writing from the unceded, ancestral, and occupied territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. It is on these lands that she feels her way through the sea of ancestral memory, daydreams about the collective freedom to be soft and strange without fear, and trusts in love and action as revolution/resolution. Meanwhile, she is completing BA Honours English at UBC, with a minor in Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies (ACAM).

Alyssa Belle Z

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