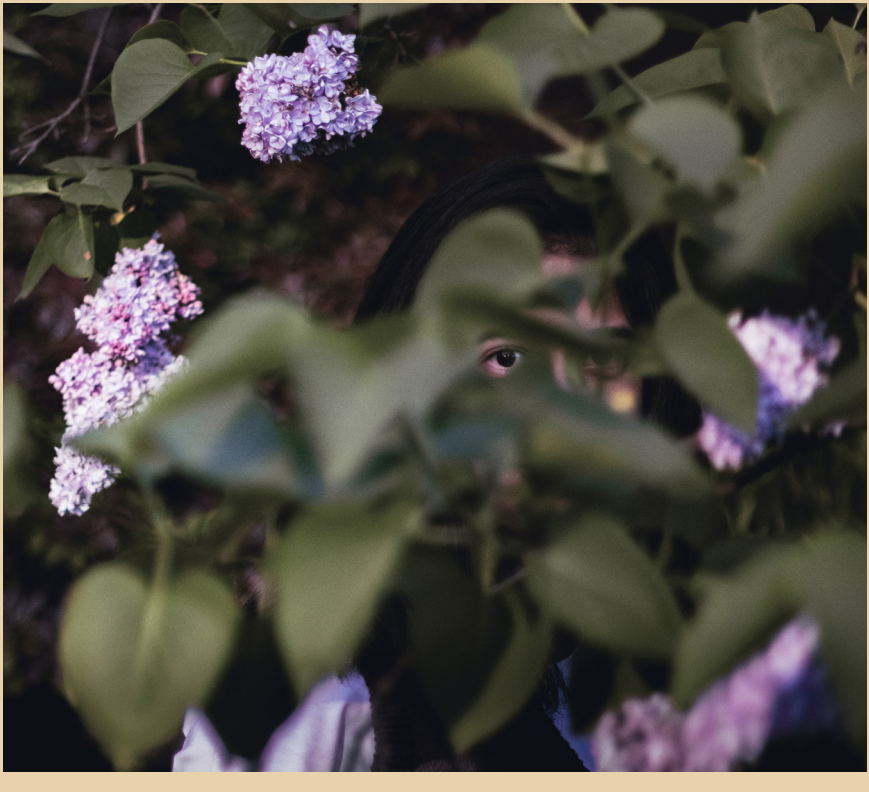
The Lyre

A Literary Journal



Issue 13 | Found in Translation | Fall 2022

Many and Beautiful Things by Nina Houle

The Lyre's Ongoing Commitment to Our Community

The Lyre is published and distributed on the traditional ancestral Coast Salish lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səl̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), q̓íc̓əy̓ (Katzie), kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo, and Tsawwassen First Nations. As a magazine focusing on World Languages and Literatures, we acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous cultures and the ongoing harm of colonization across the globe. Due to this ongoing struggle, it's important that we share stories and cultures that have remained untold. We encourage readers to be mindful of where we all stand within colonial systems, including Simon Fraser University, and how these systems affect the stories of this magazine.

The Lyre is working to support resilient voices and strengthen intersectional communities through language and literature. As a publication, we make efforts to reach out to a diverse set of student groups, are committed to non-censorship in storytelling, and have historically conducted a double-blind editing process to reduce bias. Storytelling allows empathy to flourish, thereby combating intolerance in all its ugly forms. *The Lyre* is dedicated to uplifting all voices, including those of newcomers, LGBTQIA2+ students, and BIPOC students. Literature shouldn't be dominated by monolingual dead white dudes and we invite all those interested to submit their work.

We also encourage you, dear reader, to learn which Indigenous lands you are living on by visiting native-land.ca.

meet the team

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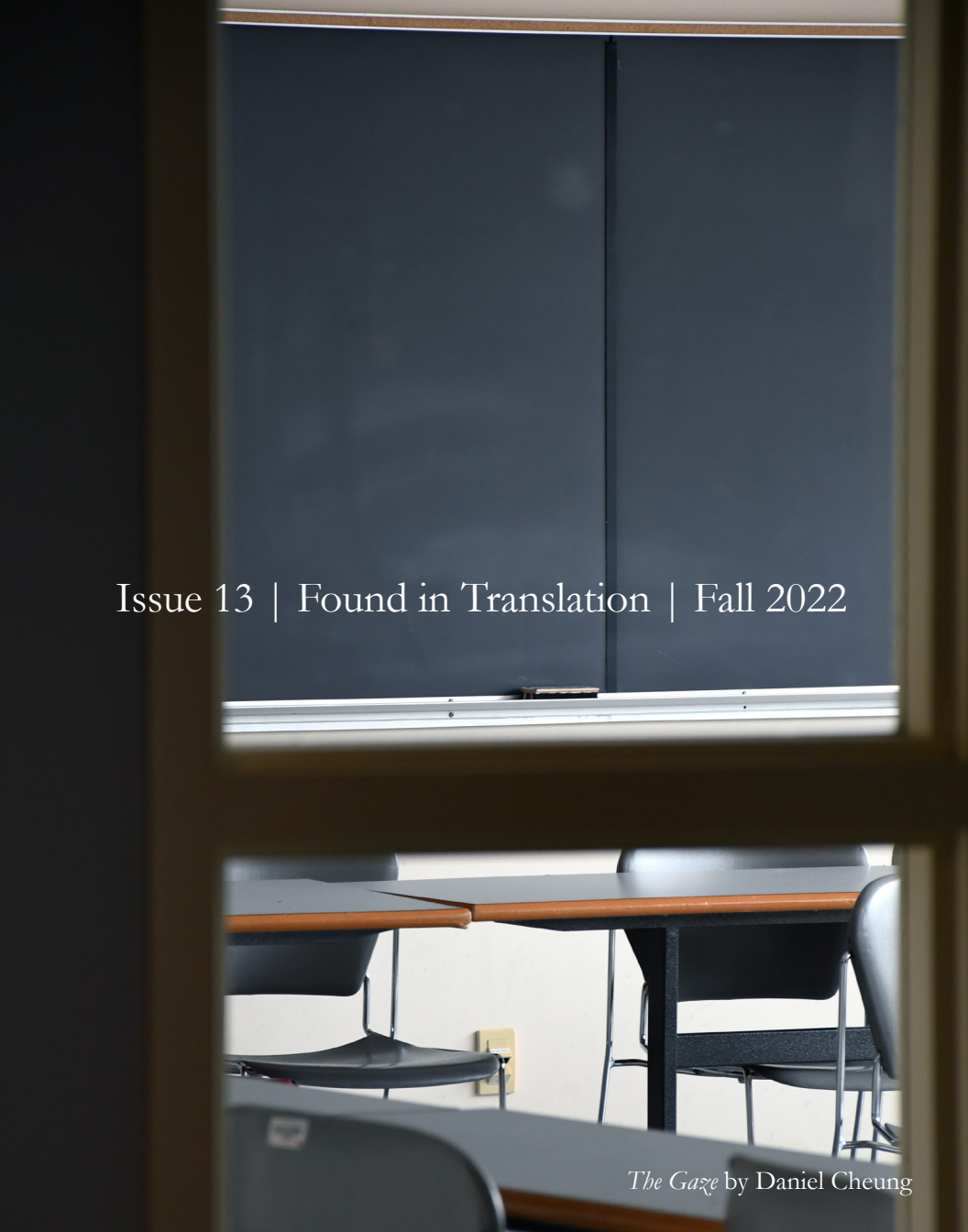
WORLD LANGUAGES & LITERATURES

WLL



Issue 13 | Found in Translation | Fall 2022

The Gaze by Daniel Cheung

from the editors

Thirteen. Our little magazine is now a teenager. For many, our teenage years are times of change and transformation as we translate ourselves into a new way of being. The same is true for our magazine. And when we say "our" we really mean "yours". It is with an open heart and mind, dear reader, that we give this labor of love to you, to read, to feel, and to connect with.

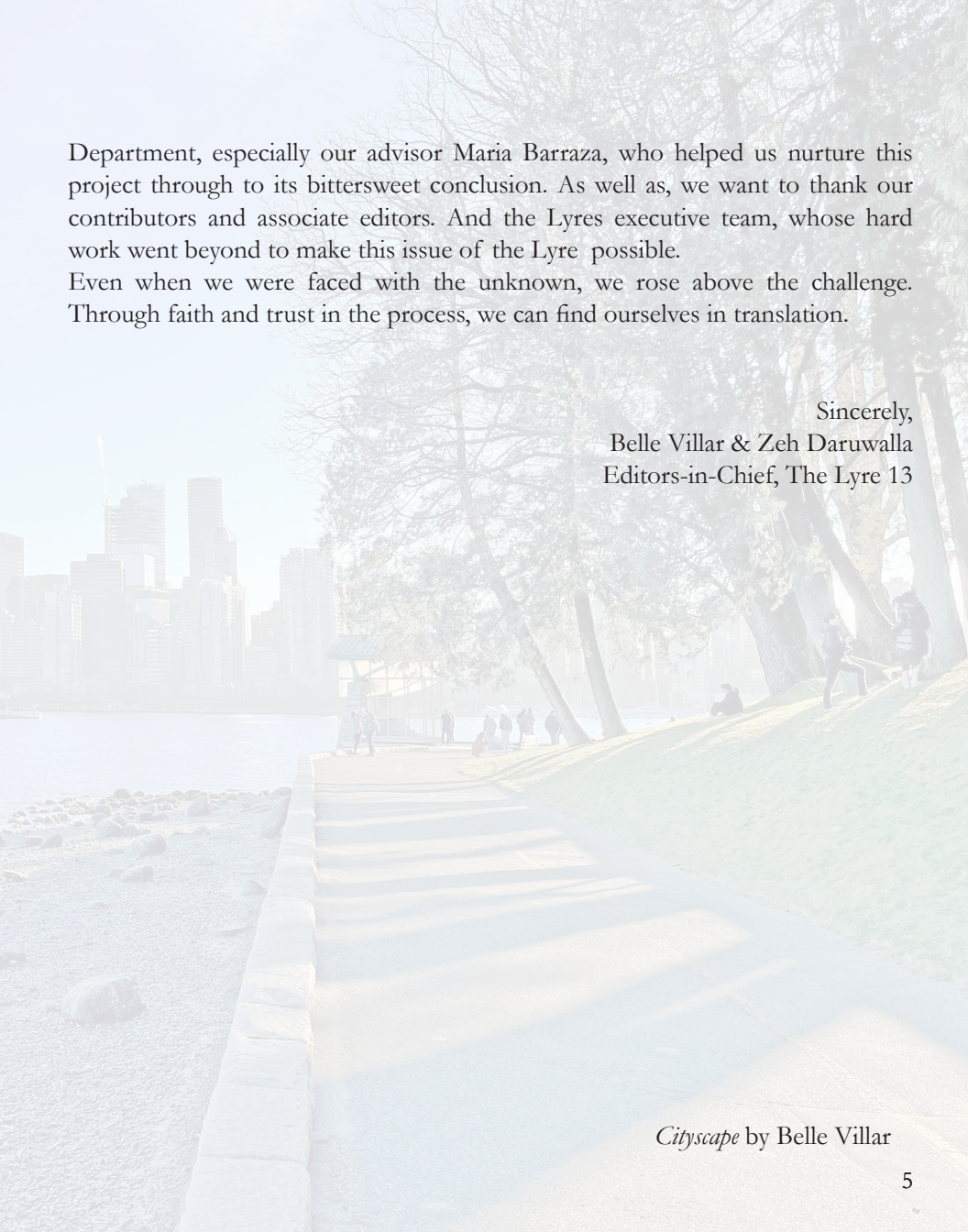
The changes that have happened over the last 13 years have shaped the Lyre into more than just a student-run magazine, but a nurturing place for artists to come together. With attention to diverse voices and translations, the Lyre is a place to truly find one's self while in translation. To be found in translation is in a way to find ourselves within the process of growing. This has been evident as the Lyre turns 13 but even more so, with the challenges we faced. It has not been an easy year, in both life and magazine production. The pressures of being in a global pandemic, has forced us to adjust to new normals, and redefine ourselves in an ever-changing world. At times, it was hard not to focus on what we lost, in time and translation. Yet we knew perception is a matter of choice, and that is why we chose to turn our sights from not what was lost, whether it be time, freedom, and the basic rights of choice, but to what we have found moving forward. Rather than focusing on being 'lost in translation', we shift towards being found. To be found in translation is to connect meaningfully in a disorienting world. The path we embarked on was riddled with challenges, and where perseverance could not take us, persistence did.

Our thirteenth issue, Found in Translation, brings a newly found global focus to The Lyre, following our entangled and ever-changing trajectories in a world that seems to disorientate daily. Notions of love, freedom, and harmony tend to be absent, yet perhaps through introspection and deliberate searching, we may find that what was missing was there all along, only incomprehensible, waiting to be translated and seeking to be understood as we all are. The ability to express the inner workings of the soul is showcased in the works published, in this thirteenth issue. And we couldn't be more proud of what we have accomplished as students, as artists, and as human beings. None of what we have accomplished would have been possible without the support of SFU's World Languages and Literatures

Department, especially our advisor Maria Barraza, who helped us nurture this project through to its bittersweet conclusion. As well as, we want to thank our contributors and associate editors. And the Lyres executive team, whose hard work went beyond to make this issue of the Lyre possible.

Even when we were faced with the unknown, we rose above the challenge. Through faith and trust in the process, we can find ourselves in translation.

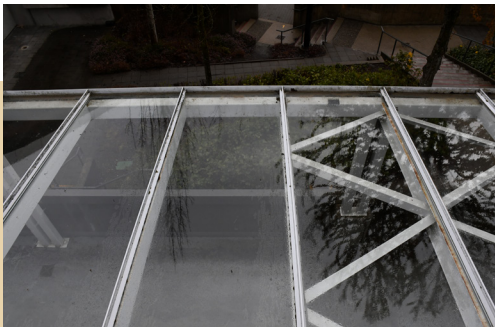
Sincerely,
Belle Villar & Zeh Daruwalla
Editors-in-Chief, The Lyre 13



Cityscape by Belle Villar

The Calm before the Fall (top) and *Birds Resting* (right) by Belle Villar

Nature Reflected by Daniel Cheung



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Wake Up by Zeh Daruwalla

Birthplaces

Shaheen Virk

And what of salmon swimming upstream
Whispering home home home
The water whispering back in an immigration marco polo

And what of us bowing under cottonwoods and cedars
Seeing salmon for the first time
We remember what it smells like to return home

Count the salmon on your finger joints,
They swim lazily in circles waiting to die
The motion of the water is a graveyard homeland

Like memory that sits just below the surface of water
I think of earth, in its sedimentary form, flowing against
the scales resisting
each push
back

Grandmother asks how we've been
So we talk about the weather, the exams, and the cold
And grandmother tells us of the paranthe she made, the way the winter doesn't bite (as usual) the way things are good
(Because they are good)
We say we miss it all we say we'll visit soon

Dreams and Reality by Daniel Cheung

Brisbane Hauntings: Grief and Transfiguration in Drive My Car

Michaela Vaughan

In October 2021, I travelled from Darwin to Brisbane to attend their international film festival. The festival was hosting the Australian premier of my brother's film Friends & Strangers so I decided to go support. I was feeling buoyed – after a long year of not being able to enjoy the film's remarkable international success, James was able to watch his film with an audience. It was coming home. It felt momentous.

My feelings about Brisbane, however, were complex. The last time I was there was in July 2020 to attend my friend's funeral. She was 27 when she died at the height of covid lockdowns. As a city that is largely unfamiliar to me, the sights and sounds of Brisbane were all associated with that time.

I was in Brisbane for four days and James suggested we see Ryusuke Hamaguchi's 3 hour epic Drive My Car while I was there. There are some works of art that you feel like come to you at the right time and this was one of them.

Drive My Car is a slow paced psychological drama set in contemporary Japan. It traces the life of theatre actor and director, Yūsuke Kafuku, over two main

periods – the weeks and days before and after his wife's sudden death and several years later when he directs Uncle Vanya in Hiroshima. Whilst in Hiroshima, Yūsuke is forced into being chauffeured by Misaki Watari, a laconic young woman who is also trying to escape her past.

Drive My Car is based on a short story by surrealist author Haruki Murakami of the same name. Hamaguchi's film is a stunning adaptation of this story. The brevity of the original work provides space for Hamaguchi to zoom in and explore Yūsuke's mourning in greater detail. With a central theme of grief, Hamaguchi sensitively captures the sorrow, the confusion, and the despair that the shocking death of a loved one leeches out of you.

In grief, mere coincidences take on elevated symbolism as we desperately search for meaning when a whole world now seems closed us. In the film, we watch Yūsuke cling to these strange signs as if there is some twisted logic secretly whispering to him, perhaps a puzzle for him to decode. It doesn't change what has happened but there's a comfort in bringing coherence to seemingly disconnected things. In these moments, we feel like we can resurrect and summon our loved one to the real world once more – they are here now and they did exist and they mattered to me.

Friedrich Nietzsche is a philosopher who was interested in the question of how we cope with suffering, death and pain. As a starting point, Nietzsche says that humans are driven by a thirst for knowledge of the world and understanding ourselves. However, we find that the conditions of life do not easily yield to these desires and we are therefore left deeply unsatisfied.

For Nietzsche, the solution to this disillusionment is transfiguration. Rather than simply enduring the negative in life we can transform these painful experiences. Through this process we can find joy and gratitude in the midst of the negative. For Nietzsche, when we transform our relationship with the negative we are able to celebrate the worthwhile in life. My friend who passed away wrote about Nietzsche and art as a salvation in her English Literature Arts Honours thesis. She quoted Nietzsche in The Birth of Tragedy stating, "repulsion at the horror and absurdity of existence into ideas compatible with life: these are sublime – the taming of horror thought art" (Nietzsche, 40). Nietzsche offers the creative arts as a mechanism in which we can transform ourselves.

In Drive My Car, we find Yūsuke adrift

in Hiroshima undertaking a residency at a theatre there. We frequently catch glimpses of Hiroshima's stunning ocean views, mountains and woodlands in crisp Winter weather. The undeniable natural beauty obliquely hums with the trauma of a city that we all know was obliterated by an atomic bomb in 1945. It is a place too enmeshed in grief.

Much to everyone's surprise Yūsuke resists casting himself as the title character but choses to direct Uncle Vanya instead. The lead is a young actor who Yūsuke knows was having an affair with his wife before she passed away. With martial-like reserve, Yūsuke begins to unravel the extent of the young actor's relationship with his wife. The discoveries are devastating.

When someone dies, they may leave behind many unanswered questions. Nevertheless, we may dwell on these questions, endlessly searching our finite bank of memories for scraps of assurances. As our memory fades, so can our once strongly held convictions. While his wife was alive, Kafuku rationalised his wife's infidelities and believed that regardless of her affairs, what they had was rare and special. This confrontation with her lover disturbs Yūsuke's narrative and again he must make sense of who his wife was and what their relationship actually meant.

Yūsuke shamefully avoids taking the part of Uncle Vanya as he fears Anton Chekov's work will expose him: he is not ready to interrogate who and what he has become. Yūsuke confesses, "Chekhov is terrifying. When you say his lines, it drags out the real you." But when the young actor is no longer available to play the titular role, Yūsuke steps into the part; recasting himself. The result is transfigurative.

At the conclusion of Chekov's Uncle Vanya, we are urged to believe that Uncle Vanya is on a path to peace thanks to the quiet counsel of his niece Sonia:

Voinitskey [Vanya] [to SONIA, passing his hand over her hair]: My child, there's such a weight on my heart! Oh, if only you knew how my heart aches!

SONIA. Well what can we do? We must go on living! [A pause.] We shall go on living, Uncle Vanya. We shall live through a long, long succession of days and tedious evenings. We shall patiently suffer the trial which Fate imposes on us; we shall work for others, now and in our old age and we shall have no rest. When our time comes we shall die submissively, and over there, beyond the grave, we shall say that we've suffered, that we've wept, that we've had a bitter life, and God will take pity on us. And then, Uncle dear, we shall both begin to

know a life that is bright and beautiful, and lovely. We shall rejoice and look back at these troubles of ours with tender feelings, with a smile – and we shall rest. I believe it, Uncle, I believe it fervently, passionately….[Kneels before him and lays he head on his hands, in a tired voice.] We shall have rest! (Anton Chekov, 244-245)

This scene makes a moving appearance in Hamaguchi's film. We too sense Yūsuke is on the path to peace through the unlikely bond he establishes with Misaki, his own real life Sonia.

It can take a long time to overcome the death of a loved one but ultimately we cannot live life engulfed by grief. If we do, we miss out on "life that is bright and beautiful, and lovely". Brisbane will forever echo with the memory of my friend, but each future visit will also be an opportunity to transfigure the negative into the sublime. Drive My Car reminds us that through our darkest days, we must engage the things that rebind us to life, whilst still honouring the darkness and the horror we've had to overcome. I believe it fervently, passionately…after all, the richness of our lives depends on it.

Works cited

Chekov, Anton. Plays. Penguin Books, 1985.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. Birth of Tragedy. Penguin Books, 2003.

Wrapped World by Daniel Cheung

Masala Chai Tea Latte

Carina Rawal

I stand in Starbucks, waiting impatiently for my drink
The one that used to be my mother's favourite too
"I'll have a tall chai latte, please."
"A chai tea latte?" the white barista confirms
I nod. I don't bother to tell her that chai means tea
So, calling it a chai tea latte is redundant

My friend asks to try my drink
She won't like it, but I let her try it any way
She is from Delhi
She has real masala chai with her breakfast
Makes it the way her mum made it
The way her Nani made it

When people ask me where I'm from, I say, "Canada"
When they ask where I'm really from, I say, "Canada"
Not because it's true, which it is; I was born here
And not because I'm offended, which I am
I say that I am from Canada
Because I do not feel Indian enough

My skin is brown
But I dress white, I speak white
I listen to white music and watch white movies
And I read white books; I am studying English after all
My aunties and uncles never forget to remind me
I am not Indian enough

But my skin is brown
I am acutely aware of the fact
That I am the only person of colour at my workplace
The other day, my co-worker said, "eating with your hands is gross"
I wonder if she knows most Indian food is eaten with your hands
Suddenly, I remember all the times I've brought roti to work

Eaten with my hands in the lunch room
She always says my food smells good
Does she think I'm gross for eating with my hands?
Why do I care if she thinks I'm gross?
What does she eat a sandwich with, anyway?
A fork and knife?

My mother was not a traditional Indian woman
She was the breadwinner for our family
But she could not make masala chai
So, we frequented Starbucks together
And gossiped in broken Punjabi
Both here and there

Break Time by Belle Villar

The Alphabet Pasta of Ancient Times

Swagi Desai

I have always wondered about how some equivalent words of the different languages I know sound so familiar, like the Hindi word for cut is kaat, for lantern is laltain, and for better is behtar. Setting the deep and convoluted history of how languages borrowed or stole words and phrases from other languages over the course of trades, wars, invasions, and such other points of interaction between countries and cultures; a younger version of myself resolved to board a highly imaginative thought train that explored this very topic while being physically seated on a bus between two countries.

Suddenly, the names Meghna - megh meaning cloud - and Meghan flew into the sky of my mind. As I closed my eyes and carefully rested my head against the bus window, the image of a sieve held by two wrinkled old hands appeared in front of my closed eyes. I was privy to a swarm of traders gathered on the shore of a calm The air-view shot I had of these strange merchants painted the air with the color of ancient magic and long-forgotten arts.

Honour in Translation by Laura Kirk

The youngest of the elderly traders volunteered to be the one who walked up to the trader with the sieve. The youngest then proceeded to pour a thin and translucent soup in through the sieve and onto the sand that guzzled it up as soon as it touched the ground. As the focus swiftly shifted back inspect that which had remained in the sieve, I saw that the pale red soup letters were held back by the grid of the bamboo strips that formed the sieve. The traders all gasped as the soup that had disappeared into the ground rose up and transformed into a hand that reached up for the letters. Quivering, the youngest and the original sieve holder held their position as the liquid hand rearranged the letters to form the message that it once was. It started the endeavor correctly by placing the letters as: M, E,

G, and H. However, its watery fingers faltered as they reached the N, and in haste stuck the A after the H instead. The skipped N remained crooked to the right of the A. Thus, Meghna became Meghan. A few of the merchants seemed to notice this slip-up and debated whether or not they should question this oversight, but the mutual uproar of disbelief at what they had just witnessed drowned out the sound of their speechless protests. And so the letters remained the same, but the word changed. A legend was birthed. A tale to tell was formed.

This tale, unfortunately or undeniably, was one of those tales that are soon forgotten, just for the origin of the occurrence to be considered as something worth investigating. Just for a little kid to picture a vivid retelling of the incident molded by the pop culture and fictional tales that their impressionable mind is subject to on a regular basis.

Rondeau. All that there is

Carmen G. Farrell

In translation, where did they go?
Boarded a ship, no books to stow.
No words to scribe, no way to see
their feelings, landing at the quay.
Schooling not part of their cargo.

Its old-fashioned language, although
hard to decrypt, penned long ago:
Land transfer tracts of the prairie.
Found in translation.

Historical papers don't show
ancestors' work, hearts all aglow,
what their motivation might be,
building the true north, strong and free.
Treaty 4 lands, what did they know?
Lost in translation.

Rumination by Belle Villar

To Be Lost

translated from Tagalog by Jeraldynne Gomez

Writer and translator's introduction:

This poem titled Nalipol (translating to 'to be lost' in Tagalog) is written in the form of a Filipino haiku called tanaga. The 7-7-7-7 syllabic verse with an AAAA rhyme scheme allows for short prose with impactful meaning. Using such a format presents the importance of every single word and every single syllable yet when translated from Tagalog to English, some of the meaning is lost while new ones are made. Nalipol is about watching the world unfold right in front of our eyes and trying to find our place in the grand scheme of things. We're always searching between the lines of the world, gaining experiences that shape us to be who we are. Pieces of ourselves are lost between the translations of our experiences but new pieces are gained that bring us closer in our search for our own place in the world.

Nalipol

Hindi nga ba mahirap?
Kapag wala rin sulyap
Sa mundong nasa harap?
Palaging naghahanap.

To Be Lost

Don't you find it to be hard?
When you can't glance in regard
At the world ahead? I'm barred.
Always searching, always
scarred.

Transform by Daniel Cheung

when I close my eyes the island rhythms

Kathy Mak

the taste of salt and humid heat
burnt incense and graveled voices
fill through empty pores and crevices of
memories
not made to remember
  I see Popo
who grows smaller and smaller from the rear
window legs crossed against the curving bench
shrouded by hedges gently nipping at the nape
mapped hands I've learned to know stay twined
atop bony thighs eyes seeing and
unseeing

離 to part to leave
an ancient Chinese character in shape of a bird
two lines crossed within the heart of enclosure
each strike representing a shift in meaning
a trickle of change
dragged and recalled into the aftermath
of every parting

we learned to write
by fingering charcoal lines on gridded
paper the depth of our nails covered in residue
as sweated dents streaked across
the page it took eighteen strokes to brew
a character of complexity
eighteen strokes to hover in gray before
understanding what it took to

離

yearning comes when we no longer
have when the way to remembering is
desperate
and deliberate no use counting the paces
between ocean and land
each breath a puncture to every step
not taken
who is it that leaves
and who returns?
sometimes neither gets to decide
questions laid bare permeates into dreams
an awakening reminder for what we
cannot
change

Gradient Gliding by Zeh Daruwalla

Loud Ghosts by Belle Villar

Riding the Waves by Belle Villar

Interview with Carleigh Baker Author of 'Bad Endings' a short story collective

Interview by Tamanna T

In 'Bad Endings', Baker stories dives into stories that aren't always tragic, but are often uncomfortable. Throughout this interview we get an inside scoop on Carleigh Baker writing process.

Tamanna: What inspired you to write 'Bad Endings' and how did you come up with the stories in the collection?

Carleigh: When I was in my early thirties, I found myself in a bit of a situation— I was recovering from drug abuse and my marriage was essentially apocalyptic. One thing about these situations is obviously there's a lot of drama but sometimes when [my] back [was] against the wall, that is, when [I had] nothing to lose, I found myself asking, "what would you do if you could do anything?" and writing was the answer to that. So, I had to go back to school. I chose Douglas college, and I honestly didn't know anything about the writing program but it was just down the street so there was no, "oh I can't go to class today. I don't want to take the bus." I learnt many things, Wade Compton is the chair now, although he wasn't at the time, it's just an amazing department. I felt ancient compared to the students, especially as I was ten years older. I was very aware of my maturity as a student, which made me have this expectation that I knew everything. I was keenly aware that I knew nothing. And when we got into writing, the first thing I noticed is that I wasn't good at it right away, because no one ever is.

With writing I felt that I am not very good at this, and I'm really excited about the prospect of getting better. [Afterwards] I found this program in the writer's studio at SFU and that was a really good certificate program that sort of was a bridge because it had been a long time since I've been in university.

The Barricade by Daniel Cheung

My life start[ed] to fall apart for me [soon after] that point so the stories [I wrote] made the most sense to me as far as where they came from.

My plan was always to write fiction. And I would be making these decisions not to include those darkest part. Yet, what I also found is that I started to laugh at myself for my own ridiculousness. For the most part these [stories] are anywhere from lightly fictionalized to fairly heavy fictionalized stories about my life, and about mistakes and bad endings. My mom always used to say to me, "you're bad at endings, you don't end things when you should, and you're bad at knowing when something is over."

T: How did you build up your style of writing short stories from theatre-writing, which is a big jump, and how did you work on your storylines and what influenced them?

C: I love that you brought up theatre because a big influence that came from my theatre background was dialogue. Plays are entirely dialogue and dialogue is a tough thing to get the hang of in writing. When you're writing a play, it's easier to understand when a character says something with subtext. So, if they are dripping with sarcasm, it's very obvious. It is not obvious with writing, so you must work harder but playwriting assisted with that. Secondly, voice was really important for me, and I wanted to write in my own voice, so I get to be my best self in stories. I don't rip off with these clever one liners that I have had six months or a year to

assemble. I want to write the way that I speak, with its imperfect grammar, and its dangling modifiers and I wanted that to be a part of the character's voice - just a cleaned-up version. A theatrical sort of style is very challenging to write so it took quite a long time to learn and I'm still refining it.

T: What was the biggest inspiration that made an impact on your work?

C: It was trying to work out times in my life where a relationship has gone wrong and I don't always mean a romantic relationship. Even where friendship had gone wrong or times where I had done something wrong like mistakes or when I faced the unknown. Sometimes if a friend or a loved one breaks up with you, they don't always tell you why. I'm also aware that my truth is not the absolute truth. My main reason for writing is that I wanted to work through that. Writing gave me a chance to work out times when I felt bad, or I felt upset about something and I got to create a scenario that explained it The second thing is climate change. It was factoring into a part of my early stories and now it's factoring in really heavy, so it's wanting to wrestle with that. I can also say going forward dealing with the anger and frustration at the state of the world, and again there's dark humour. I personally don't understand what's going on in the world. I've never been so keenly aware of how little I know, and so writing gives me an opportunity to explore it. It is a bit controlling and I think writers like to create worlds because we can. It is a chance to simultaneously escape from life and engage with it and we could all use that right now.

T: The title 'Bad Endings' sets the reader to expect a disastrous ending in the stories, but for most of them that is not the case. Yet they still don't follow the typical linear trajectory of a story line. In other words, the stories don't have a disastrous ending, but they also don't have a happy one. So, what made you write stories in this way and how do you feel about these stories, not that the book is a few years old?

C: Some of the early stories that I wrote did have an unhappy ending. The first time that I wrote a story with the progressive trajectory character, where the character goes backwards. It's a story where the character deals with an addiction problem relapse. So, in that case, it was a bad ending for that character but there's a couple of other reasons why I called it that.

One big one was that when I started writing I remembered reading stories with endings like mine and what I mean by that is that they cut off pretty snippily— like when it's time when I decide that the story is done and it's usually at a point where a character is on the precipice of change. I really like that because that's more what life is like. In my experience, that's more what the last several years have been like. It feels like we're standing on a precipice looking out over where change could happen. And you know something is going to happen, and I really like those moments. I remembered reading those stories when I was a younger reader thinking, "What is the end game?" and being so angry. Now it's funny to me that I am writing these stories and not only writing them, but I felt like this absolutely is the way — this is where the story needs to end. When you're a writer you've always got to be open editorial but there are a few things that I stuck to, and that was deciding when the story ends. It's a bit of a joke in a way because I sort of suspected that some people would read the book and be like, "I hate these endings", and it's the reviewers were very generous and the reviews were positive but that was the thing that came up, that these stories need to be longer. The way I see it is that if a reader thinks about what happens next, such as 'where does this character end up', that's the end goal.

T: The short stories are set in Vancouver or BC in some of them and many stories have a natural element in them, as well as hinting towards climate change and how is the setting of stories important in your storytelling and you also have magical realism in your stories — how did these themes come to be?

C: Writing in Vancouver was just a given for me since it involved less imagination. I could certainly be a person who wants to write about Chicago in this day and age. This was before Google would produce accurate images of the streets and places, so it was just a no brainer for me that I would write locally. I do admit it was a bit ridiculous that everything is so American focused here. I get why people would want to set a story in Chicago because of the history but I just didn't want to do that. Setting is really important to me; I am a watcher — I watch people and I look around at stuff and as it turns out describing setting a lot was something that was important to me. The nature element part — I love animals, bees, and fish

and perhaps not the kind of animals that people find cute but they're really cute up close. So, when I was in the process of recovery, I didn't go to a detox, I just stopped using and the first thing that I wanted to do is go to work at a honey farm. While I was detoxing, I was connecting with nature in a certain way and seeing these bees and how hard they work and the way that they work together as a whole. I went from being afraid of them early on, to thinking of them as my coworkers after. At a time when I was pretty vulnerable and pretty tender still, these animals had a big impact on me. My next book has more animal elements in it. There's a story where the woman is taking care of the bees and their hives, and we get a glimpse of a camera moving inside the hive and see the honeybee's work.
I think sometimes you reach an inevitable conclusion based on everything you set-up and what I found even more so with my stories this time around is that the world is impossible to understand in so many ways.

T: How did 'Bad Endings' depict variety? and not only characters but also culture, nature and the city so how do themes impact your story according to you and how can it change the story?
C: A lot of those come from the way that I think, When when I was younger the way it manifested was a very common feeling that a lot of people have, where it feels like you're in a movie all the time and have those 'main character moments', like if I was sitting way off in the back of something there were times where I felt that I was watching other people. Seeing people and trying to figure out what they were doing, or observing a conversation between two people. I wondered if they're going to hook up and that is what makes these stories special for me. Secondly, the themes in my stories sort of build on themselves. I have an idea of what the story is about but I often don't know ahead of time what where the story is going to go. I know what I want to write and then they start to present themselves to me.

Yeah I think that's what this is about I'm working on the story right now that again was I called up in memory but it was a memory that it was else I guess kind of painful like there was too much drama in that memory I'll shall say it lightly rather than and and also it involved a person who I'm not in contact with anymore an I didn't feel comfortable even under the veil of fiction representing a time in that person's life that was obviously very

very dramatic but I thought I could still start the story the way the evening began and turn it into something else and here's talk about demystification of process I started watching Netflix specials about multi level marketing schemes then I just got totally hooked on con man and multi level marketing and Lula Roe and and so I just decided like these characters some few folks have shown up at the apartment of some people they don't know and the main characters not really sure why they've been invited just not sure if this was hitting on her on her partner or what's going on and I thought yes these people that have been invited over because this couple is going to pitch a multi level marketing scheme to them so there was no like flow to this I am totally like inserting jamming another theme into a story that was completely different yeah and there's more revision in that case that means that I'll get to the end and be like yeah this is really working but but that's my choice so I have to revise until it's ready.

T: What made you write Short stories and not a novel for your first book?

C: I absolutely love short stories. They just crackle and they are manageable from a pragmatic perspective. You make a change in the novel and it just echoes through the entire theme - short stories are always more manageable. I can keep a whole short story in my head but also, I think of them like floating poems. There is of course narrative poetry, but short stories generally function as narrative so there's an opportunity of writing more compacted, because you're dealing with seven to fifteen page short stories that you can dig into the language. With novels there are often unnecessary details that the reader probably doesn't need at times, such as events being explained in great detail and length. Now having worked on a novel, which will eventually be done, it feels out of control sometimes. The novel, it's so big and it feels like I'll never get it the way exactly that I want it whereas with the story I do there's a lot more control. There's that word again — control, but you can just really dig into the story when it's shorter. [Short stories] don't sell as much, you don't make as much money for a short story collection as you do as a novel from the business end of things and that I completely understand why people want to immerse themselves in a lengthy novel. But some people want to immerse themselves into something for 15 minutes and then pull out of that world and enter a new world.

I understand that so for me, I love reading them and I love writing them. They are the most exciting genre for such readers.

T: The theme for this year's issue is 'found in translation' which could be any sort of translation of the soul translation, of the body translation, of literal like language - it is a world literature magazine. How do you tackle language and its interpretations, as well as how has translation affected your writing?

C: Language for me works around communication or the translation of how bad endings came from within. I want to write the way that I speak.

I want to write in my most honest voice but also like, I said, keeping my best self. I think a lot of what I don't understand comes out in my writing, so you could look at it in waves— like translating my confusion about things I don't understand about people, social interactions or relationships, and the world onto the pages. This means that while things that would normally sort of create frustration, honestly, create the same frustration anger in me, yet there's an opportunity to use language to work that out on the page. I remember once a student saying I want to write this story about a South Asian woman and asking whether they need to put a bunch of South Asian food in it so that people know it's a South Asian story and I said well if it's a story and you're writing it.

T: what comes next for you and is there a novel in the future?

C: When the stories are done, yes. At this time I've been working on a novel, which is taking seven years to write! I remember thinking I'll never take that long to write a book again and I seriously think that the novel is going to clock in at about seven years but I'm jamming in a short story collection in between there as well. It's coming together. I've been working on it for a long time, and I've been very intimidated by the process. It's funny, being a creative writing teacher, because you say things all the time, like with short stories— it doesn't need to do everything. Keep the scope narrow. Yes, novels are bigger but I think I fell into the very common first novelists trap of this book. I was going to do everything possible in this novel. I was going to save the world! It was going to fix racism, it was going to solve climate change.

I was going to go deep into my identity

in the novel. It was called the matriarchs before it was called mud lockers because I also wanted to confront my relationship with my mom. How does one person not try to do all of that in a book?

I've been told, "Your first novel probably won't work very well", so I had to take myself down from the high horse of my novel that was going to save the world and my fear that if there wasn't so much going on that I wouldn't be able to fill that number of readers. That took a while to digest, I really was not prepared to let that go and so there's that.

Now, I'll just focus on answering this question, that the novel is based on a true story and it was actually going to be a memoir first which is about a canoe trip through the Yukon and northwest territories. A lot happens but there are 10 or I guess nine other people on that trip. I think there were twelve of us in total on the trip — real people, real lives, real things happened.

There were mental health issues, there were personal issues, there were breakdowns. I felt different about everything as a more emergent writer as I was a little bit younger. It's really hard, if not impossible, to be in someone else's body and write from their perspective, see the world through their eyes and do it justice. I wanted to add another theme on an already full boat! I mean my friends and my partner Shaun asked me over and over again to step away from what actually happened and just write a story, so that's what's happening now. There are 60,000 words sitting in the draft. I've wanted to throw it in the trash a million times, as every writer does, but it needs to be revised and revised. I have time to put it together to make it look as understandable and as clear as possible and then my editor is going to take a look at it and then we're going to discuss the process after that, so that editors have different functions — some are willing to guide you through the process. While others or like go through chapter one rewrite it. We got to learn how we work, we got to know each other in general, and to also trust each other. It's hard to step outside your comfort zone, but it is essential to do so at times, and this is one of those times for me. My comfort zone will come back though, in the form of a honey farm story I really want to write, which will happen sooner or later. So that is what comes next for me!

Textuality by Daniel Cheung

Interview with Pilar Quintana Colombian writer and screenwriter

Interview by Tamanna T

Tamanna: OK! Hello. Thank you so much for being here and from our publication and from the World Literature team we're much obliged. Would you like to introduce yourself and your preferred pronouns if you want to tell them?

Pilar Quintana: Okay, I'm Pilar Quintana. I'm a writer and I'm she/her.

T: Beautiful OK! Let's get into the questions that I have over here. First of all, congratulations for the success of your novel, La Perra and also the translated version The Bitch. You tackle the intense theme in this novel of wanting a child and what happens when you don't get what you want. How did you come up with the storyline of the novel? What inspired you to write it?

PQ: Well, I lived in Colombia's Pacific Coast for nine years and I think in the intensity of the life there showed me this story. At first, I thought I was going to do a crime story, but then I realized it was going to be a story about motherhood, and about a woman who really wanted to have kids, but she couldn't and that struggle. I have always liked The Old Man and the Sea very much and I think I wanted to do my own version of it with a woman as a protagonist, a woman against nature in the sea and in the jungle.

T: Yeah, I know this is a very relatable theme for a lot of people in the world which could contribute to its success as well. This is also your first novel to be translated from Spanish to English. Do you think that there was enough equivalency in the original text and the translated version? Do you think that everything kind of went over well, like came across beautifully and did you have any complaints at all or anything at all?

PQ: I think in translation it's always a new work. It's not a different book but it's a new work. And I think Lisa Dillman, the translator, I think she did an outstanding translation. When I first realized the novel was going to be translated, I was afraid of the language because it is very subtle in Spanish but it is there that the narrator of the book is not an educated woman from the city, but it's not either like a peasant or a person ignorant from, with no status at all yet but I wanted the translation to be able to translate that. I think she did it and I think that was the most difficult part, so I was really happy to do it and it's very interesting because for me as a writer it is difficult to read my own work yeah? I don't know if it's good bad.

T: Well it's definitely good!

PQ: Yeah but I cannot judge it.

T: Exactly.

PQ: It's like when you see your kid and you see he's beautiful yeah, it's the same kind of thing but when reading it in English, I liked it and I said oh this is a great novel! I can't believe I wrote this! Yeah so it allowed me to see my work with new eyes and that was wonderful.

T: I noticed that the language of the translated work used very simple language which made it more accessible for readers to read and get the gist of it. Is that what you wanted it to be portrayed as when you wanted to translate it because of the language barrier?

PQ: Yes exactly. Exactly that and I think that's how I write. I do not like ornaments in the language. I like it to be a simple language and I think Lisa Dillman got that perfectly.

T: An important point about the novel in the translated version, I wanted to discuss was the theme of Afro-Colombians and the slang that is used in the novel. When translated do you

feel that the translation did justice to the feelings you were wanting to invoke in the reader with the use of the language? For example with the slang language, do you think that whatever you wanted to portray was carried over?

PQ: I'm not sure. As in, I speak Spanish and I can speak English and I can read it, but I think I get a bit lost in translation sometimes, and there are some subtle things in the language that I don't get. So, I'm not sure I do get that in the language but what I found very interesting about that is that I realized from when Lisa was translating the novel, the novel does not tell you by itself that the character is a black woman. In Spanish no matter where you read it even if you're from Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, you realize she's a black woman. The novel doesn't say it, but you realize it because of the way she lives, how she speaks, her kind of life, you realize it but in English that was not evident. So, Lisa had to do some tricks to let the reader know she was a black woman and that I think she did also very, very good.

T: We could tell that that was Afro-Colombian slang being used and everything, so I think she did a wonderful job with that as well. I will move on to the themes and imagery that you use in your novel. The dog imagery is a key Latin American theme that many authors have written about, especially in this past year apparently when I was doing some research where the dog is integral to the story. Street dogs represent abuse, poverty, female violence, and especially in the case of The Bitch as we have seen. Why was it important for you to inculcate Chirli into the story? Because it was a big shock to us as North Americans because we treat… well North Americans here, I'm not North American. They treat dogs like their family members like India also has a lot of street dogs so it's the similar kind of representation in India, so I just wanted to know what made it important for you to include the street dog in the story?

PQ: I think we didn't have many books about dogs in the past and I think our relationship with dogs and cats has changed dramatically. When I was still a kid, dogs and cats were not part of our families. They were animals that you used because you needed them to protect your home or to eat the mice, but that was it. They were fed and they would treat them mostly like things not like beings. And I think that changed

dramatically. When I went to live in the jungle the treatment of dogs and cats was different there and it was different because of the kind of life they live there. They live in an isolated area of the country, and they have no access to health care for themselves neither for the cats or the dogs. And the dogs sometimes are free there and they go wild. It's not the same when you have a dog and you have it in your apartment, he will behave good because he has no choice, but when I went there to live in the jungle, and I had a dog they became wild. So, I wanted to explore that. I wanted to explore the relationship between humans and their pets. And I wanted to explore the relationship of a woman who couldn't have kids and adopted a puppy as a kind of a replacement. What would happen there, and what would happen if this, if her daughter, her puppy did not obey and did not remain beside her as she wanted. And it's kind of like the call of the wild. The dog gets called by the wild, but the woman is also called by the wild.

T: Oh, that's so interesting! You mentioned the jungle. It was an intriguing aspect of the novel, how the jungle is depicted. When I was doing my research, I read that the jungle is a strong force which can often swallow up the protagonist even. It is essential enough that it becomes a character in itself at times. So, what was the symbolism of the jungle in the novel?

PQ: I think the jungle is very important in the novel and it's not just where the novel is set, but it changes the characters. It changes the time, it changes the dog, it makes Rogelio who he is, so it's a strong force inside the novel. The novel happens as I said in an isolated area and that area is isolated because of the jungle and because of the scene, and it's a huge area but sometimes it feels like a jail, and the jail is made by the sea and the jungle. I think westerners, and I am both a westerner and not a westerner because I'm Latin American, and I think you as an Indian can understand that. But sometimes westerners feel like nature's wonderful and it's a happy place and that if you go to live in nature you live in harmony with nature, and when you actually go to live in nature and in a jungle you realize that in order to live in that you cannot live in harmony with nature, that you have to get your machete and be aggressive, to be able to live there. It's a constant fight between you and the jungle and that in order to survive there you have to be hard. So, I wanted also to portray

that. To define that idea of nature as a beautiful and lovely place which it is, but it's also horrible and difficult.

T: No I can agree to that and I've seen it first hand as well because I come from the north so there's so many jungles and lot of a lot of wildlife that you have to be hard hearted if you want to live there.

PQ: Exactly what I what I mean yeah exactly.

T: Another theme that I noted was the guilt and burden, and how it feels like a major factor in the novel. How did you tackle this issue in the novel and what led you to explore the theme of guilt and burden like in Rogelio and the main character and even with regards to Chirli and their relationship with themselves?

PQ: I've been exploring that a lot lately, thinking about guilt, and I think womanhood in Latin America and I think in our Hispanic tradition, womanhood is related with guilt. I've been reading a lot of Colombian writers from the past and I've been thinking and I'm reading in the works about guilt as well. Like I was reading a book, it's not a book, a play of [Emilia Larosa] and it's about a woman that cannot have kids. She wants to have a kid but she can't and the husband leaves her but it's her fault. If your husband has another woman it's your fault. If you have husband leaves you it's your fault because you did not make his life happy and if you have a husband and there are no kids soon enough it's your fault even if it's his fault even if he's the one who has fertility problems. So so I think I was exploring in my own way into that, into a girl that is made to feel guilty because of a death that happened and it was not her fault but shegrows up feeling guilty because they tell her it's your fault and she believes it. I think that's the case of many women, if not all women in our culture, we grow up feeling guilty for everything.

T: I'm sorry, when you were talking I was relating it to my own culture and it almost brought tears to my eyes because this is like a persistent problem even in India. Even if it's the man like that's infertile or there's some infertility problems it's always the woman that gets the blame. I think that's why I could relate more to the novel because it applies to my own culture as well.

PQ: I used to think, and I used to say until recently that it was because

of this culture of guilt. Woman were made to feel guilty since we're born with original sin. We're born and we're guilty and we need to be purified in order to live our lives and there's that but I think women carry a bigger guilt because we're guilty for everything that happens. (Editors Note: We understand the problematic matter of this theme and recognize that bringing awareness to it, is a step towards healing.)

T: Yeah I think it's a woman thing more than it is like a cultural thing all across the globe which makes this novel even more relatable. I was looking through your recent novel Los Abismos and it also mentioned recurring theme surrounding motherhood and it automatically like invokes emotions from the reader and after writing La Perra did you automatically know that you wanted to write about the motherhood theme again because you just mentioned that you've been exploring it more or did it come more naturally to you when you were writing it?

PQ: I was writing something very different. I wanted to write a gothic story and the gothic story is still there. Los Abismos has a gothic part yeah but it's not a gothic novel. It's a novel about motherhood and I did not realize when I started writing it that I was gonna write a novel about motherhood once again. I guess I have still still have a lot of reflections on that topic, yeah, since I became a mother when I was 43, it was such an important event in my life and that I think I need to talk about it, I need to process it. Because it's very complex, and because I was not giving the whole truth about it when I talked with my mother, my grandmothers, my aunts, about motherhood they say it's the best thing that happened to them and it's wonderful and it's what a woman needs to do because they become happy instantly and forever once their mothers and I became a mother, and that was a lie. It had some truth in it, but it was mostly a lie. So,I wanted to and needed to write about the things that I wasn't told. That women are not allowed to talk because they're not their seniors. If you talk about them they tell you, 'you're a bad mother'. If you talk about the challenges of motherhood even when you desire to have a kid even when you wanted motherhood if you talk about the challenges society tells you shouldn't say that those things.

T: You wanted to bring out the realism of motherhood throughout the novels that you've written.

PQ: Yeah, and I wanted to explore its complexities.

T: I think that's very important because it's not all happiness and roses it's the thorns that come with it too that people don't really like to think about.

PQ: Exactly yeah, I mean its not like you're a mother and you're always happy or always or always sad about it no it's like any other thing in life, yeah, you sometimes are happy you sometimes are not that happy yeah so, I wanted to talk about all of it.

T: The last question I have is about the epilogue which the double does not have so it ends on a shocking note of the dog being killed, my poor heart I love dogs. But the ending gives the story an edge that like kind of leaves the reader wanting more so I'm wondering if you would ever like even want to write an epilogue for the story and if you did what would that look like and if you don't obviously like because the story ends at a powerful note, but I was just wondering if you would want to write one?

PQ: No I wouldn't and I do this on purpose and I know some readers do not like it because they wanted definite ending where they know exactly what happened and how everything went but I'm never going to do that in my stories well I should never say never because maybe one day I will, but for now I don't believe in writing definite endings because I think life does not have a definite ending not even death is a definite ending. It is for the person that dies but not for the people around the dead one. So I want that in my books I want the reader to be a bit frustrated and thinking well, it just went on and I don't know how. It's like the feeling you have every day in your life you just live and you don't know what's going to happen.

T: It's that empty feeling at the end. We we were like, oh I want to read more but I don't. Theres there's nothing more to read.

PQ: Exactly. Then you have to think and perhaps that's what I want, yeah that the novel keeps living inside you and that you perhaps think about it.

T: I think that's a great point about being an accomplished author as well because I'm a literature major, and so many novels and sometimes the best ones are the ones that don't have a definitive ending that make you want

to think right at the end. You're sitting down and you're like "What did I just read?" or "What happened at the end?". It's that shock that kind of hits you and that's what happened with this book as well.

PQ: I think for Latin America readers that's especially difficult because we're used to watching soap operas and so the soap opera has a beautiful ending and you know the protagonists kiss and they're happy forever. Yeah, well in real life, we know that's not the ending. When they marry and kiss each other, there's another story starting there.

T: Yes, it is just the beginning. Those were all the questions that I had, but I did want to end by saying that I'm actually waiting really badly for Los Abismos to be translated as well so I can read that because from what I got from the synopsis it's such a wonderful read. Do you have any plans to get it translated anytime soon?

PQ: Yeah it is being translated already yeah.

T: That's wonderful.

PQ: It will come out in in 2023, so it's still awhile.

T: I will wait that's all the questions that I had thank you so much for answering the questions.

Warp by Daniel Cheung

Interview with Rhiannon Wallace Children's author, and librarian. World Literature SFU Alumni

Interview by Tamanna T

Tamanna: What inspired you to write Leopold Leotard? Does it stem from a personal experience or perhaps from a general observation in your surroundings?

Rhiannon: I used to dance when I was little — I did highland dancing. Even though I didn't do many recitals, I did pull inspiration from my experience as a dancer. I also have siblings who did danced when they were younger, so I would go in and watched a lot of dance recitals as an older sister. That was just a very cute image to me. There's always so much personality in those recitals and they're all kind of starting to do their own thing. Like there's always the one kid who really knows all the steps and the another is copying that kid so that was kind of image I had in my mind. But I came up with the idea of the title Leopold's Leotard and then from there I started thinking about, like who is this character and why is he wearing a leotard, and so for the specific story, the title came first. It was a phrase that sounded good together and that's how I was inspired to write the story. And a lot of the inspiration was from watching kids dance, so that's research

T: How did you come up with the story line of the book, and was the writing process straight-forward for you, or was it a more tedious journey?

R: I think that in general kind of broad strokes of the story came pretty fast, which was the scenario in which you would have a child who is wearing a leotard and doesn't like it. And from there I figured out what would the logical response for kids of that age. When I first wrote it, it kind of came out a bit more like a short story — it was longer and there was more detail to it than required for a picture book, so the real challenge was to get that conciseness perfected. I had a lot of

help with that because I was in a class at the time with peer editing in my second degree in library and archives and I was in a class called writing and illustrating. I'm a librarian so that was my training which I worked on but there were a lot of people in the class in the master's in children's literature program who had a lot of knowledge about picture books and how they work. The whole experience was cool! I've always kind of had a passion for children's literature and loved that so much. With this story especially, you don't have that many words to tell the story, so every word in a picture book is important. So, I think that, that kind of training and education around me helped me look at every single small piece of a text and how they all work together helped me kind of think about children's literature differently.

T: Did you work closely with an illustrator to create the picture book and how was that experience?

R: In the end it is very collaborative piece of work but in the process at least the way I experienced it, you don't actually work that closely together. So, it's the publisher and editor who is directly communicating with the illustrator. After my manuscript was accepted and then they chose an artist, they sent me her information and some of her work and told me this is who we're thinking of.

Once everyone was on board, she went through and did all her own work and I got to see pieces of it in various stages and I could give suggestions but there is also the editor involved, so I didn't directly meet the illustrator until after it was already published, and we were promoting it. The editor is very much the middleman and communicator in this whole process. It was, very collaborative with the publisher as well as the illustrator.

T: Leopold reads as a character that challenges gender norms and the story pertains the notion that clothing should be comfortable regardless of gender. Was challenging these norms your intention while writing the story?

R: I think it was important for it to be a story that challenges stereotypes and norms around gender without making that the focus of the story completely. It's not a story about a child who wants to dance but no one will let him dance because he's a boy. Every character is fine with him dancing. He doesn't dislike the costume because it is a girls

costume, he just doesn't like it because he doesn't find it comfortable and that's all he wants — to be comfortable.
I keep thinking about more stories in the future and to prioritise incorporating challenging norms without too many words, since I don't want it to be the main focus but what still stands out in the underlying story.

Challenging these norms becomes a part of this world and it's nothing unusual to go against what is considered "proper". Leopold doesn't like wearing the leotard for any reason and you don't have to explain it and that should be OK. He likes flowers and dancing and things of that sort, so it doesn't make him connected to any gender, that just makes him who he is. Some of the first feedback when people were reading the advance reader copy was that a lot of people really picked up on the gender elements. He is diligent and persistent and loves dancing. He does everything this teacher tells him and ultimately sometimes artistic expression just must be free. And there's so much value to practicing free artistic expression every day and learning the steps and kind of maybe wearing the costume sometimes that's uncomfortable. At the same time his true passion for it outshines everything else, and that was my main focus in the story.

T: How would you say writing children's book is different than writing like a fictional novel or short stories?

R: I love writing children's literature and have always been interested in it. Even when I submitted to The Lyre a few years ago when I was studying in the World Literature department, I remember my story reading like a children's story. I didn't plan on focusing on this genre, but children's stories have familiarly since I've done is more analytical writing. And it just turned out that way because we analysed different works from different people in school. From that, I learnt a lot. It's a bit different when you compare that to other forms of literature or genre. I am kind of thinking through some ideas for some novels and kind of chapter books for kids and I haven't done a lot of that before, so I want to explore different genres.

Writing a picture book for children reads more like a poem. You're working with a small kind of phenomenon or moment in time. Sometimes picture books are spanning over the years but some kind of idea is necessary and should be small enough to hold within

Cloud Windows by Belle Villar

30 pages. It's sort of a form of artistic expression that's very creative in a very particular way to affirm expression. I want to write different things though, currently what I have in my mind is more of a young adult fiction or possibly sort of older middle grades like maybe 11-to-12-year old's. I want to explore other genres like, fantastical and historical.

T: What sort of impact are you wanting to emit on your audience?

R: I'm hoping, at least with this book, that it brings joy to children, and adds to their happiness. In this way it adds on to my work as a librarian, because I work a lot with kids as well and there are so many kids who want books that are kind of funny and entertaining in that way. Books are so important to them and that's how they learn at that age, so they learn how to read. This is also how they start thinking about a lot of big ideas too. I would love to keep working directly with kids and different books in the future.

T: So what comes next for you?

R: I graduated from library school and I'm kind of at the beginning of that part of my career that I'm focusing a lot on that right now and I'm doing a lot of work with organizations in that realm around children's literacy and things like. And with an organization I'm part of quill DC which is a group of children's writers and illustrators of BC. Then I'm also part of a section of the BC library association, so I am interested in doing a lot of volunteer work around supporting children and families in BC. In terms of writing, I am working a little bit, like I said on

a chapter book idea, which is more of a realistic fiction about two kids in school. Then I have another idea for a more historical kind of young adult novel as well. Two very different organized genres that I am thinking about. Still working on some ideas for more picture books but I keep kind of going back and forth as I think it would be fun to try and write some things for different ages. It is always good to have different things up there.

T: Is there anything you'd like to share with the students reading this magazine?

R: I was very involved in a lot of school I've just gotten very excited about being involved in like the Lyre and the student union and then also some of the organizations at my grad school and I feel like that is that's giving me like a lot of insight and a lot of opportunities to explore things that I wouldn't have necessarily had just from class. Not that class is also great, still I recommend getting involved. Although, I recognize not everyone has time for that since people must work and people have families to take care of and all these certain wonderful things. I would say if people have time and they are interested in getting involved in those things that I think it's a really great way to meet people and learn more about what kind of field you're interested in.

T: Do you like when you were working on your stuff while, you were working on something else, for example when you were like at SFU in the department?

R: I mean I guess I wasn't at that time since I wasn't like expecting to be writing something in in children's literature that would be published. That was kind of a shocking surprise to me to have that possibility, but I definitely was interested in writing. And I was interested in kind of like working in something involving literature in some way and so I think that helped me to think about that and definitely gave me skills in terms of being able to like present my work. I would definitely recommend if people want to promote their work please submit pieces to the lyre.

T: Last question, curious to know what is on your to be read list?

R: I just started a book called *The Beatryce Prophecy* by Kate DiCamillo. I'm excited to read the rest. I feel like I've got like some adult books that I've been reading and then also some kids books.

In Transit (top) by Belle Villar

Uncanny (top) and *Desolation* (right) by Daniel Cheung

Sān Sè Jǐn

Mina Han

Bloom by Belle Villar

"Méihuā? No flower? Why is it called 'no flower' when it is clearly a flower?"
"The 'méi' means 'plum' in that word. Méihuā. Plum blossom."
Cecilia drew a breath.
Ah, plum blossoms. They were Li Xue's favourite— they'd bloom in the winter, red against the snow. They'd stand alone amidst the harsh, barren landscape. They should've been a beacon of hope— but the red was only angry, and the thin branches pointed like persecutory fingers. It's all your fault. All your fault!
Did they ever bloom or did they just come back from the dead? Was there ever a season for them? Just them?
She tried her best not to bite the inside of her cheeks. Nothing was more adept at making her feel like a terrible person. And nothing— that is exactly what she had done. If only she had sacrificed more. If only she had said more. Said more.

Duǒ— a counter for flowers. Duǒ— to hide.
Huā— flower. Huā— to spend.
Méihuā— plum blossom. Méihuā— did not spend.
"I see," said Tadeu. "Everything sounds the same in Mandarin… you have to rely on other words to figure out what one word means, and then those other words

also sound like other words! What do you do then? Hah!"

He glanced at Cecilia. She was looking at the ground. He looked back up at the trees.

"...So I'm glad we both speak English. I would like to understand you."

The leaves were green and the branches were spread out like an umbrella above them. Should he tell her that he had looked up the difference between plum trees and cherry trees just in case they'd ever go on a walk like this one?

He shoved his hands deeper into his pockets. No, no. It's not necessary.

The two walked in silence for a bit, the uneven pavement crunching beneath their steps. Tadeu rolled the lint in his pockets between his thumb and index finger. A rock was stuck in the groove of his shoe sole, but he didn't stop to get it out. Cecelia was a fast walker.

"You know," Tadeu started, "I think my host family's daughter is named Mei Hua. Is it normal for Chinese names to be words?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, the… the name is a word. The actual word used today."

"Huh?"

Lan Ying— Orchid beauty. Cecelia— Blind.

"For example, 'Kevin' is not really a word, but 'Mei Hua'—"

"How about 'Rose,' is that not a word and a name?" Cecelia offered a small chuckle.

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet!" She flung her arms out, missing him by a hair. He flinched, before straightening up.

She does this often— the sudden bursts of energy in an attempt to keep her thoughts from showing on her face. He smiled, almost resignedly.

"Tic-tac-toe, three in a rose."

"I am going to kill you."

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow, between the crosses—"

"Don't even try to finish that one."

Tadeu laughed, as she tried to laugh too. She had skipped her last high school Remembrance Day assembly to text in the washroom. It would have been around midnight where Li Xue was. I'm still thinking about you. Erase. I hope your parents aren't still angry. Erase. She finally settled on a zuìjìn hǎo ma, which remains undelivered. The last message that had been delivered was her birthday message— February the third— which never got a reply.

How very like her, to start pouring her heart out only after they couldn't speak anymore. To start only when she knew no one was on the other end. She only

blooms in the winter— what a coward. What a coward!
Tadeu nudged her in the side. "Which do you like more, poppies, or roses?"
Cecelia blinked. What had he asked? Ah, right.
"Roses, probably. Not the red ones, the white ones."
"Are those your favourite?"
"Favourite roses? I guess."
She sighed. Tadeu scratched the back of his head.
"...Then, what's your favourite flower?"
"Uh… peonies? I think?" She thought a bit more. No, not peonies. Whatever— she already said that peonies are her favourite, and she doesn't feel like thinking about flowers anymore. It's a little difficult when they're surrounded by flowers.
Tadeu cleared his throat.
"My own favourite might be the pansy," he said.
"Why, because they're edible?"

Chī huā— eating flowers.
Huā chī— "flower crazy." An anthomaniac, someone extravagantly fond of flowers.
Huā chī— someone who is smitten, a love-struck fool.
Pansy— someone just like her.

"No," Tadeu shook his head, "it's because of their name in Portuguese. Do you know what we call them?"
"Of course I don't."
She looked up, only to catch Tadeu's expectant face already turned her way. She made a show of rolling her eyes.
"...Well, what do you call them, then?"
Tadeu grinned.
"Amor-perfeito!"

Pansy— offensive slang— weak, effeminate. A gay man.
Pansy— perfect love.

A droplet hit the ground, leaving a dark spot. Perfect love. Perfect love. Perfect love.

Rise by Belle Villar

ghost story

Julia Lunot

do you believe in ghosts?
my lolo was born haunted in
haunted land maundering phantoms met
him prior to his mother land habituated by
prior history of use / do you
believe in ghosts? buried bodies
Battle of Manila Bay become buried
broken bottles / military waste invents
restless phantoms / do you
believe in ghosts? colonialism is justified
as using what is unused
or so signed the Spanish Fleet
and so signed the United States across
the right to retain rent-free
use of land unused / do you
believe in ghosts? violation of the Philippine
Constitution and feigned liberation have
no half-life / persisting in viles of
my lolo's childhood

I believe in ghosts
spirits stow secretly away in a
Japan airlines seat manifests absent
parenting abusing vice / alienation
from one's mother land from
father's home from Subic Bay
from Luzon Island / I believe
in ghosts / neoliberal language is the promised
exorcism resembles the same apparition
nagging my father's guarded

Concrete Jungle by Belle Villar

work ethic wary political
participation / mindful risk-
management

my father fears failure because
his father taught him to
living in oriented proximity to
haunted conceives minor feelings
anger of unrendered possession:
starved anger becomes racial self-
hatred becomes walls of apologetic
space my father cannot
speak Tagalog

Intermission by Belle Villar

L'Éternité by Arthur Rimbaud

Translated from French by Kayla Tso

She has been found.
What? Eternity.
She is the sea which left
With the setting sun.

Elle est retrouvée.
Quoi? - L'Éternité.
C'est la mer allée
Avec le soleil.

Sentinel soul,
We shall whisper confessions
Into the empty night
And the days on fire.

Âme sentinelle,
Murmurons l'aveu
De la nuit si nulle
Et du jour en feu.

In human suffering,
In common impulses,
It is there which she shall emerge
And fly by.

Des humains suffrages,
Des communs élans
Là tu te dégages
Et voles selon.

Since she is alone,
Her satin embers,
Must exhale
An unsaid: finally

Puisque de vous seules,
Braises de satin,
Le Devoir s'exhale
Sans qu'on dise : enfin.

There is no hope,
No existence.
With knowledge and patience,
Torture is certain.

Là pas d'espérance,
Nul orietur.
Science avec patience,
Le supplice est sûr.

She has been found.
What? Eternity.
She is the sea which left
With the setting sun.

Elle est retrouvée.
Quoi ? - L'Éternité.
C'est la mer allée
Avec le soleil

In-between by Daniel Cheung

Recipes for when you are (home)sick

Priyasha Shri Saravananselan

I used to make chai for my father every morning before school. I would wake him up with it at 7 am and he would drop me off at 7:20. I did this throughout middle and high school. And then after I was done with school and school was done with me, I started packing for Burnaby.

I packed my suitcase so poorly, with things that don't fit and other things that would fit well for a party but not for a commute to a classroom. but I wasn't paying much attention to the suitcase, I was paying attention to the passport, the ticket, the study permit, oh god I hope they don't find an issue with the study permit, and with saying bye.

let me say bye clinically, efficiently, let me not linger in the last word, my voice might break and they might see the fear through the cracks.

I said bye. My voice was firm.

I was headed to my first year at the university my brother went to. He has charted his way through this place, so if I take the same steps I cannot get lost - I clung to this affirmation but of course, the affirmation refused to cling on to me. I got lost. I mean, I found my way to Burnaby just fine, I said bye to India just fine, I reached my brother's home just fine. But for the first two years, it felt like one shoe was smaller than the other and whoever had knitted my sweater had missed sever-

al stitches; something was consistently off with me.

for the first two years, I forgot how to make my home smell like chai. I watched packets of instant rice circle the blocks under the microwave's tangy orange light, I watched packets of channa masala do the same, and for, oh gosh maybe more than two years, my taste buds forgot their mother tongue.

What is the right spice blend for the dal I want to make, why are these questions congesting my lungs, why am I not able to ask for help, and why am I not able to make a home here?

I reached a state of acceptance.

you have forgotten the ingredients that turn into a meal you call home because you never knew that one day you will decide to leave it and you will miss it and want to recreate it. you did not realize that roots cannot be ripped out and replanted into new soil.

Two years offered plenty of stories to fill this chapter, it was time to move on. When I went back to India to visit, I watched every movement in the kitchen with intention. I asked questions, I noticed how there was never an exact tablespoon measure to anything, spices were added by feeling.

Now back in Burnaby, I was confident knowing I brought back the right utensils and memories of the emphatic sound mustard seeds make as it pops in hot oil. Golden turmeric stains under my fingernails were proof of fieldwork. I ground fresh ginger garlic paste and when it hit the pan I was greeted with a familiar smell. The paste, some hot ghee, tomatoes, onion, turmeric, chilli powder, oh what joy to see the colours befriend each other. The right combination of smells is a time machine for a home-sick heart.

Anyone who moves to another country, away from family, has pieces of home-sickness stuck to their heels, following them wherever they go. I search everywhere with my hands outstretched, looking for scraps of familiarity to keep me warm. I found that warmth in food.

Reflect by Belle Villar

Just Three Words

Joy Kuang

In fresh flowers by a grave,
(clean water and a sparkling vase),
Surrounded by teddy bears and windmills
Keeping the weeds from the neighbour at bay.

In a sneeze at the bus stop,
Excuse me
Bless you
Thank you
You're welcome
Between strangers muffled by masks
And a gap of six feet.

In the kitchen before school,
With no bustle of breakfast (and lunch) being made,
How silent, how nice,
(how lucky)
To relish the stillness of an empty house.

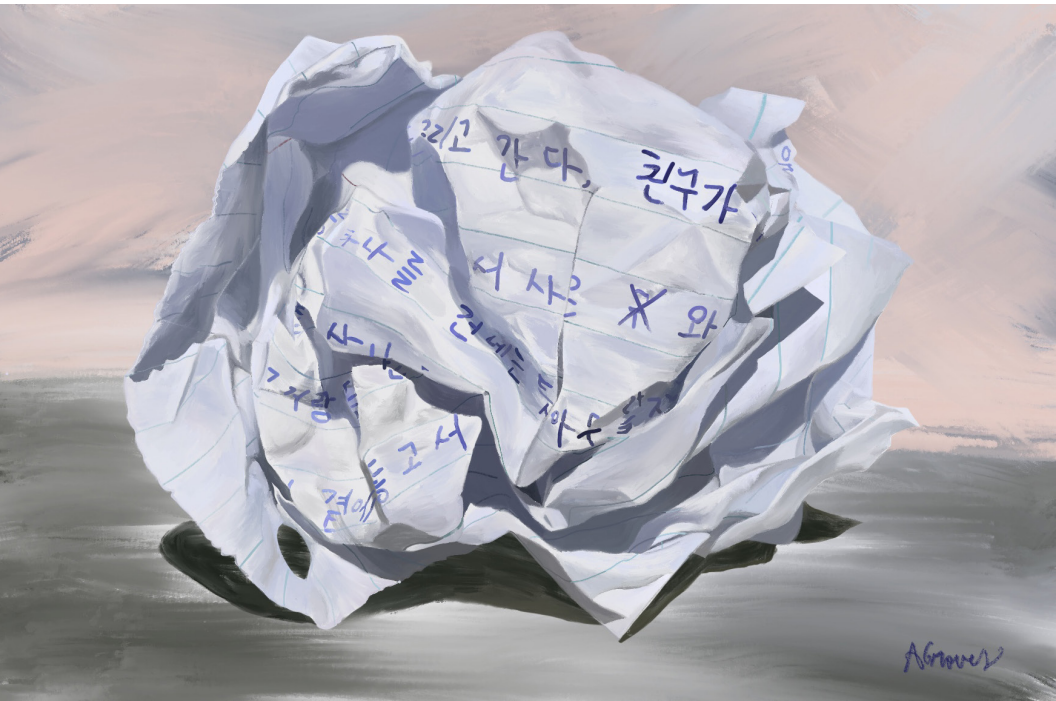
In my phone on the bus,
We're homeee
Get home safe!
Thanks almost there!
Tell me when you're back
(after a sudden Ikea trip
planned twenty minutes before leaving)
I'm home:)

In fake flowers by your grave,
Looking the same as they did four months ago

Taken In by Belle Villar

(and ten and twelve and sixty-eight).
One day we'll leave a potted plant,
You'd always found cuttings a waste.

Work in Progress by Amy Groves



meet our authors and artists

Swagi Desai is an undergraduate student in the second year of a Bachelor's degree. He transferred from the Fraser International College to Simon Fraser University in August, 2021. In addition to programming, He is an avid reader of books all of genres and a passionate writer who likes to keep a pocket diary full of random thoughts.

Carmen G. Farrell is a third-year English student and SFU alum (Beedie School of Business). Engl 234 with Professor Didicher gave her the courage to start writing poetry this January. She thanks the editorial staff at the Lyre for the opportunity to submit, and Nicky Didicher for rich learning experiences.

Jeraldynne Gomez is a fourth year History and World Literature Minor at SFU. Language and translations are important to her, as someone who has been multilingual at a very young age. 'Translations to me bridge cultures and allow me to share my experiences with Others'.

Amy Groves is currently pursuing a major in History and a minor in World Literature. Her preferred artistic mediums are mixed media, textiles, and words.

Mina Han is a Taiwanese-Canadian World Literature student at SFU… who hasn't visited Taiwan in 13 years. Her favourite season is Spring. She will never stop talking about—and writing about—love!

Laura Kirk is a 4th year English major at SFU. She is passionate about travel and often use art such as graphics and writing poetry to express myself. As an athlete, self-care and well-being are paramount in her life, and expression is a large piece of that. Her submission was taken on March 22nd, 2016 in Kakani, Nepal, a trip she holds very close to her heart.

Joy Kuang is a fourth-year student studying Cognitive Science and World Literature at Simon Fraser University. She is interested in how language and the mind work and how they relate to each other and the world. She enjoys poetry as a way of gathering her thoughts while leaving gaps scattered about that, like the synapses between neurons, are where communication and change can take place.

Julia Marie Lunot is an undergraduate student completing an Honours Sociology major and an English minor at Simon Fraser University. As an undergraduate student specializing in Sociology and

English, she finds it most compelling to explore the micropolitics of identity alongside structural influences. Interests include formally and creatively expressing forms of cultural memory, specifically, plights of immigration, and how they inform ambiguous identities. Her academic work also explicates topics of environmental sociology, specifically through an ecofeminist lens, wherein she pays acute attention to issues of racialized, queer, and low-income folks against impending environmental crises.

Kathy Mak is the author of chapbook *Another Day* (845 Press, 2020). She creates to capture fleeting moments of life and to reflect on her experiences. Visit her website: http://kathymak.weebly.com/

Carina Rawal is studying English (with a minor in creative writing) at SFU. After graduating next spring, she hopes to go into the book publishing industry to work as an editor. Hobbies include overthinking and explaining the difference between commas and semi-colons.

Priyasha Shri Saravananselan is the recipient of the Emily Dickinson Award for poetry (India) and panellist in the World Literature Conference held at SFU 2020.

Kayla Tso is a World Literature and Global Asia Studies student currently completing her fourth year at Simon Fraser University. She is often involved in various ways in her community, including producing the annual World Literature Student Conference, and acting as the President of the World Languages and Literatures Student Union. She is currently a co-op student working in International Education with Global Affairs Canada. "L'Éternité" is her first translation.

Michaela Vaughan is a lawyer and writer based in Darwin. When the theatre is on she likes to write reviews for *The Music* magazine. She has been published in the *Court of Conscience*, the *Human Rights Defender* magazine and the Human Rights Institute blog. In 2021, Michaela was a finalist in the NT Literary Awards for her play, 'If I Had Known You Better'.

Shaheen Virk is a third year English student at Simon Fraser University. She enjoys writing poetry that explores ideas of identity, immigration, and the environment. Her hobbies include drinking chai, cursing at multi-factor authentication, and looking for Bigfoot.

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