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CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE

VOLUME VII

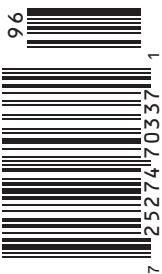
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COVER ARTWORK BY LORI MCPHEE
"Conducting Quills Magazine"

Please see biography on facing page

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Cover Artwork by
LORI MCPHEE
“Conducting Quills
Magazine”

WHAT DO YOUR WALLS SAY ABOUT YOU???
THE WHIRLWIND TOUR CONTINUES.....

Art is a way of life for Lori. It engages the intellect, softens the heart and frees the spirit. Born in Montreal, Lori obtained her Degree in Fine Arts. She continued her journey to British Columbia and attended Emily Carr Institute in 1991. Now, living a life as a full-time Artist, Lori McPhee’s untamed passion has no limitations.

About 10 years ago she began a series of Musicians described as contemporary with graphic elements. Lori is painting these stylish musician figures in various prominent Landmarks abroad, and meeting up with famous people such as Oprah! Capturing a night in Vegas!, feeling the beat on Vancouver’s Granville Island!, Jazzing it up at the Gastown Steam clock!, Rolling with the Stones!, Raising the roof with BC Children’s Variety Club!, and now honored to be Conducting on the cover of Quills Canadian poetry magazine!

Lori McPhee’s paintings are investments that can personalize and add life to any space you choose! They are collected both privately and corporately around the world!

www.lorimcphree.com

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FARAN GHahremani



ZENOBIAS

i am here
knees on your feet
face in your belly
let me reply to its grumble
there is an army of us at home
and we worship you
can you hear me down there
the grumble rose back
and oozed into his ears saying
what army is this and where is home
she's watching him as you watch
a child or a lover at your feet
i will sing you all my songs
its me and i
and home is here
in you
her guts flood his throat
on their way down
shrieking against ribcage
then death shall be your bride
white cancer awaits you
young boy

JESSICA WIDNER



UNDER

You broke me-that hard burnished part of me that wore its rust like glory. That secret part of my soul that found a sort of beauty that could pull it from the air. You wore it away, like water thrusting against glass, wearing the rough edges into something smooth and lovely. Something a child could enclose in their hand. Water can be so dangerous. Choking, killing, it can steal past your lips and fill your lungs, turn you inside out. It can crush you. You were like water, pulling me under and touching my lips. Surrounding me, like it would all be fine. Pulling the waves tight against my body so I could no longer tell the water from air, breathing in and swallowing gulps of it, not feeling the steady flow into my lungs. You wore it away, all my jagged parts until I was soft as sea glass. Give me a tempest, storm within my blood once more, let the water heat until it scalds, rather than flow mildly from my heart to my lips to my head. You didn't see-I always need something to fight against. Give me a storm, instead of letting me drown complacently, the last bubble long gone from my lips the very lips that said that word to you like it was something real-love. You stripped me of my skin gently; fingers like butter so I did not even notice the ragged beating of my own heart, even as you covered it with your hand, fingers looping into arteries. Intercepting blood flow and I whispered back to you "Yes, please, give me more." As if what we had was beyond speaking, beyond feeling. You took my feeling away from me, no longer can I see the people who wear their ugliness like a medal, their beauty like a shrine. Instead they are just people who pass, like stars meeting in the night. They are dead long before I truly see them. I would take myself back, the rust and all the jagged edges, the things you cut yourself on, blinded by faith that I wanted you to drown me, surround me. It was so easy for you, wasn't it? To make me believe that all there was in this world was love. To forget and forgive the sharp corners that plunge us into ugliness. When I

thought I was in love, all the edges were blurred. And I couldn't touch any of them without my fingers sinking into them, as if they did not exist. And you told me that feeling was love, that pure poison I drank like a child at my mother's knee. I was not made for it, not made for loving someone weak who did not try to win me, only to kill me so I could not fight against being drowned. Did I take you down with me? In the end, did you cry out for mercy? You broke me.

ALEXANDER BUCHANAN



STREET

So, here I am; adjoining you. It's morning.
Last night, a complete stranger let me watch her undress.
Now, she's next to me.
And for the time being, your spine is a Church organ -
each note I play, you are further awakened.
Without eye contact, you are able to sit-up. Unlike last night,
at a loss of depth perception.

Like the first man, climbing trees in hopes of harvesting stars.
On the street, we elicit everything we told each other, in this
place, last night.
How, when I was younger, we used to set up our father's
fishing line between the fences.
So that we could stop whoever tried to bicycle away with our
youth.
And how, Despite how empty it was, this entire street was the
trailing wake through this massive sea of lights.
Let's sail into someone different tonight.

HEATHER GRACE STEWART



GOTTA TAKE THIS CALL

no. you're breaking up.
call me back on the land line.
that's my battery
about to lose power.

well i left the charger at home.
it's got one of those funky
wire ends - doesn't
fit anything.

can you text me? LOL
well i'm driving too!
yeah - dialing and driving
that's me.

OMG. that's another call.
can i call you later? shit.
well call me back and

then i'll have your number.
right? no, i never answer
around the boss. he gets mad.
well jesus.

just send me a fax. it's easier.

MATTHEW MANASSIS



HARD WATER

I like my water hard,
cold,
metallic and ungrateful,
blade-thin and substantial,
to feel like black ice under me,
like a worn steering wheel
under my frostbitten thumbs,
like the dawn air lining my throat,
thickening it,
filling cracks
like ancient groundwater did to stalactites.

I want it endured
like I'm holding my breath;
like the school bus window
with my tiny, frozen hand-prints,
the first morning after winter break;
sharp like that focused sunlight,
flooding my face,
sitting heavy in me, late,
still slushy from the road,
like gritty snowmelt under gravelly banks,
flowing from a spotty faucet
into a rust-stained sink.

I want to taste it
through my midnight,
cheap-mint tooth-paste.
I want it to flow,
sulfurous and thick
over my lips,
in my mouth,
sweet and stinking from the well,
with its mineral twang

like singing wine-rims
and chipped teeth.

Fill my belly,
make it swell,
for I couldn't find a meal this evening.
For I need to be reminded that I'm not home,
that this is no replacement,
that I haven't found a place yet.

MELANIE PIERLUIGI



YOU DISAPPEAR

You disappear

and suddenly the world blooms
in your absence.

Dust unhinges
from your mouth
over late night coffee,
past shaken sidewalks
at midnight.

The moon is a slow
carousal turning
on rusty hinges. The white-faced angel
beneath your bed.

What do we see
but songs coming together
in shattered collisions.
An over-grown field.
A farmer sighing into the earth.
Or the red sky
closing and opening
in small gasps.

You remember
the heaviness of birds.
The sewn-shaped
tear of stars.

How you sever memory
and begin anew.

URSULA TILLMANN



WEEPING FOR YOU

Weeping with leaves
along riverbanks
like willows dressed
in autumn to fall.

Wet roots on muddy
shores leaning against
leaves of grass left by
mowers of sorts to cut
and harvest before time
runs late this season.

Shedding mountain dew
to quench aches from
crumbling into waves,
floating passed daylight,
to fetch the trip south.

Weeping with leaves
and dancing like heroes
of risen hope after the fall,
before night, beyond repeats.

Weeping with joy
for you.

T. W. TRAVIS



FOR C. E.

This isn't the first time this air has been used,
It's been inhaled and exhaled and slightly abused,
When it finally finds its way to my lungs,
It's been shot full of holes by thousands of guns

I've got shelves full of books on the same subject matter,
My guitar neck is bent and its body's been battered,
These walls were made from an old pontoon,
But I'm happy right here in my second-hand room

Torn-up drapes and broken down fans,
Clashing colours from half-empty paint cans,
Though I'm frightened to death and my hair is uncurled,
I'm happy right here in my second-hand world

Whoever discovered this old beer-keg first,
Suffered from a truly terrible thirst,
Leftover food is all I can eat,
I rest my body on a dirtied-up sheet

Not a single new thought comes into my head,
They're old and they're tired and they're practically dead,
But there's comfort in knowing that nothing is new,
Like knowing your spouse will die before you

JUDE NEALE



HER SMALL BREATH

My being clenched in a chemical straitjacket
as tough as any Kevlar vest or stranger's lean stare,
coiled like a sniper,
depression,
counting the fluorescent sheep
on the ceiling that my daughter's
fingers placed there
I lie waiting for flame to enter me ,
not safe in my closet of velvet and lace
buried in clothes that no longer grace who I was once
...Whispered longing from outside the closed door:
"Are you awake Mom?"
All I can do is sigh, "yes"
Praying
that this single word
will carry my longing
To plummet
To be set free

Feeling her way across the dark carpet,
her small breath grazes my cheek,
She curves my fingers round the mug's sturdy handle
and says, "Drink".
Held close to gasp like a fish,
my story of clamped beginnings,
stifled cries
I swell like a sponge
to press
my love to my shoulder,
Then pull the net round my heart

so she cannot touch me,
my mother,
my daughter,
my own

KYRA LEE BENNETT-RICHARDSON



LIFE IZ HARD...

Some people say life iz hard,
I say mine iz worse,
To see people come and go,
Watching me with their eyes.

I get so nervous when they buy me,
I get scared when they hold me,
To feel their warm breath on my outer layer,
Then...chomp, they eat me.

Now I'm in their stomach,
All in pieces,
I really wish I wasn't me,
Life iz hard being a Twinkie!!!!

ZORAN TODOROVIC



DIRECTION

the dull grounds interchanged their bodily harms
And I had passed through the landmarks of inclined passages:
The silver throats, the shackled minds, death rise on both doors
Softly resembling the tranquil pride of twinkled families in the sand

Where no roads crossed the temple heads that called to announce me:
St. Madness, St. Flower, orchid mantles shines the sacred moments,
Save me from this fist of glass, this midnight dance, this corner is
Getting smaller and I have no more room to breathe.

He is older and wiser but he lacks the courage to speak.
Do you want to know his name, his secret mask, his final opus?
They are all written in the bridge light, below the circus fruition,
Dancing in its birth, such a horrendous beast was on the loose.
Now he is dead and grows apples on the moon.
Don't go asking me, I killed him for some food.

KEVIN HARKNESS



FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE FLATS

We agree,
You are absurd,
a lie, no more
no less,
flat as fog,
a symptom of
tectonic stress.

We have watched You
for a geologic age,
seen you spreading
lies,
At night, even
the lights
refuse to rise, instead slip
right and left.

We see the cities close below,
where people wait,
(Up drift their prayers for snow!)
Even here, about Our knees
terraced, falling equities,
a low flattery
of hills and slopes,
punctured skies
until, no!
The last dip
declines to rise.

Impossible!

We agree,
Best to look away
towards granite heft,
To the three points of
the compass left We'll
add a fourth,
straight up,
a grander, truer North
turn shoulder on false
children far below,
who ignore their parents
and refuse to grow.

AMY GLEESON



SUGAR

you'd think it'd melt on the tongue like snow,
but it's tough, grainy
hard, crunchy
like tiny ground up bones in your teeth.

right now, it's the perk I need,
the treat I bleed. those delicious tiny pebbles
rubbing on my gums in all the right ways

JOHN YON



An Ill Referenced Love
It is quite studious, in fact, to say
the night could not be better for a moon dance
or with the stars if it pleases you.
Take heart or take my heart.
Speak softly and love viciously
but never in the reverse;
vicious love spoken softly can stop hearts,
a motionless heart calls for bad hymns...
or is that bloodless limbs?
Either way,
who wants a prayer of ill symphony?

ANTHONY FALCONE



VAMPIRE CARE ABOUT DENTAL HYGIENE

Vampires care about dental hygiene
And are always brushing their teeth

The fangs above
The ones between
And the sharp incisors beneath

For children, you see, are a dirty lot
Covered in filth and germs

They rarely bathe
And play all day
Rolling in mud and worms

Vampires don't have the luxury
Of washing food before they eat

They see a Jimmy and pounce
A Sally and jump
Or grab Billy from the street

So when they get back home
They rush right off to the sink

Toothbrush in hand
They brush up and down
Cleaning off blood and pink

Vampires care about dental hygiene
And are always brushing their teeth

CASSIDY ANDRYANA WALKER



THE WINDS POWERS

When a baby laughs
The wind starts to roar
A shouting stare goes through the sky
It opens up with a big bright light
And then a fairies born
With long brown hair
And blue bright wings
The wind starts to chime

ANDREW THOMSON



LISTING BLOODLINES

the string section overcoming
the woodwinds
and the brass tucked away
under the cover
of quarter notes
and
peaking in and out of the
chorus

sit tight my friends,
and don't forget
we know each other
and we're all in this together
in the air
and in the tulip
and in the pollen
and in the bee

so we sit here together
at dinner
listening to Bruckner
miming conversation
our family tied and knotted
our family disguised and
splintering
conducting
conversations
like we're
def in the
orchestra pit.

GARTH VON BUCHHOLZ



BEADS

“What do you want to know about me? Ask me anything,”
He said, and for a moment before my father died I marveled
At the helpless transparency of life when it collides with
The orphaning of opportunities, the check-out of choices,
The abrogation of alternatives.

A trillion moments strung into beads, each bead a word,
A gesture, an emotion, but once the string is covered,
It snaps under its own burden, and every bead hurtles
Floorward, away from the throat, into crevices and
Drains, through open doorways and across cement pathways,

And Father, I might have said, had I answered quickly enough:
Shall I spend my days gathering the beads you so carefully
Strung around you, shall I catalogue each color and cut and
Reconstruct the patterns that made this your mystery,
While my own string grows and winds around my
Mortal inarticulation? Or shall I collect the few rare stones
Of yours that once were polished by your perspiration,
Then add them to my own, so you disappear into me?

Or would you rather I search frantically for your extant pieces?
Scramble about on my knees, straining half-focusing eyes for
Naught? Fly through your cavalcade of minutes while I
Squander my own. I want to ask, my Father, I want to know

In those beads broken and scattered throughout creation
Where was I when you gathered them in the sum of your years?

M.J. CHATTAWAY

AN EXPLORER, NOT A CARTOGRAPHER

I crave the granular life.

If I must sit in a room,
I want to know all its pieces -
The curtain fabrics, plugs, baseboards,
The chemistry of paint, the way it adheres,
The crystalline beauty of common
Panes of glass, I want to know why
The shape of rooms is never round
Like all the natural shapes of earth,
Like your eyes, like the sun.

The curtain rods are correct, and the
Sun shines through these windows correctly.

I want to explore the fabric of these curtains -
Weave some myself with rougher hands
In a room with the dust particles flying
A spray of glinting extravagance in sun's rays.
I want to impale these suspiciously smooth
Walls with a nail, expose dry wall, marvel at plaster.

I want to travel - not to the
Next tourism generality of comfort -
But into things, deeper.
Inside of basic cells I'll pounce on nuclei,
Into the photons of plans, the blueprint,
The Why of what you envisioned, the burning
Blue of Secret codes.

These air-conditioned extremities
Are without dialogue -
I need to be in the thick of the splashing
Of words and water
One of the women at the village well
Who are living without conceived backdrop.
This set design world
Has already answered questions patly
That were lead-in questions, that decided themselves
Midair of the question's inevitable mark.
I need to explore it all -
Not merely make another map through it,
In neutral colours - no, tangle me
In the unruly underbrush, instead -
Alchemize my breathing
With my native unmarketables,
Those earthen hues, with shapes that cannot be parodied.

M.J.CHATTAWAY



WHERE IT MEETS

for Franc B.T. Grove

When I was six years old, camping with my family,
Awake when everyone was sleeping
Magical with stars on my skin, brushing up against
Sweating cedars, alone in my own wonder in the night,
I blew kisses to you, my Unknown.

When I found myself as a teenager newly aware of differences,
When something entered into the childhood sense of the linear,
Some Magic and Danger – a Time and Eternity mixed elixir -
I looked everywhere for You, knowing that
It was not as simple as now or there or here and that
You could be immaterial, not a person at all.

Or wandering down the dark aisle, ivy-dripping lanes to Croagh Patrick
Everything still and the fog rolling over the Clew Islands –
The hunger I had for You then overwhelmed me.
And the You I hungered for was a person, finally, in my heart.
I remember touching the stone bench at the cemetery by the shore,
tracing its contours as if I were tracing your eluding hands -
And I wondered where and when I might finally make my Holy Meeting

All those years You were my found sense, my only opinion,
The companion I took with me like a favorite book,
My chanted mantra, some strain of music I hummed over and over.
I built for You as madly and certainly
As Noah built his ark on dry land.
My heart, having known You, remembered your quantum self -
You teleported through my every landscape
Awakening in it all something inescapably True.

All these years limping bravely, a half soul,
Trying to sculpt her willful whole out of earthen, brittle clay.

All the postcard simulations of sunlight and moonlight rested on
The one truth of what I knew Sunlight and Moonlight really was -
The sleeping and waking in the
horizon-spanning arms
Of where it all finally meets.

ANNA YIN



I OFTEN DREAM OF FISH

Wake up surprised
by my nudity.

Fish is a symbol for sex,
a specialist explains;
she offers a miserable look.

Distressed, I remember
removing all belongings
before bed.

Lying beside my lover,
quiet and gleaming,
my lover is a river.

Yet in my dreams,
there is only one fish,
no river, no water.

GEOFFREY K. BLAIR



JUST A LITTLE STORM

Just a little storm.
The lightning never touched the ground
But leapt from cloud to cloud
Shooting upwards too
And didn't make a sound.

Sprites they call them.
So, spritely, it moved over us
And rained, summer rain, on our heads
Leaving us looking up.

Raining
He quickly dissipated his form.

He was just a little storm.

[In remembrance of a little boy who died]

DELANEY CUNNINGHAM

ONE SINGLE KISS

The first time I walked
With a boy, I was twelve.
Our own hands clasped
In front of us, strolling
Down the middle of my
Broken road with its
Cavities and clefts,
Trying not to step on the
Cracks, "lest we break
Our mothers' backs."
Our packs heavy,
Weighted down with the
Knowledge of Nelson
Textbooks, our long division
And language skills
Absent from our lips
Now. The silence separated
By our breathing and feet.
My flats make a small
Clacking, his sneakers
A soft thudding.
Our hands, pendulum-like,
Graze each other's
And our eyes flick
To one another's
Round face.
The apples of his cheeks
Freckle with red, and
I can feel mine
Get hot as well.
Our high-pitched voices,
Still scant of puberty,
Trickle out from our lungs
In light laughter as

Our cheeks smoulder.
And our palms perspire,
The sweat quickly
Becoming cold.
The moderate pace of
Our legs has been set,
Not once slowing or
Hastening in the two
Blocks it takes to
Reach my house.
He walks me up
The concrete steps
Lined with plastic
Railings. We stop
Facing one another.
Staring at his sneakers.
My eyes skirr up to
His face. His blue eyes
Like searchlights in a fog.
He is nervous and I
Now see the top
Of his chestnut-coloured
Hair. I grab the
Handle of the screen
Door. The frame
Creaks in protest.
He quietly mumbles
Goodbye, but I swiftly
Peck him on the
Cheek with my small
Raspberry lips, childishly
Claiming it with
One single kiss.
Then I dash through
The aging screen door
Up to my room to
Cast a gaze out the
Window to the
Chestnut head bobbing
Back down my street.

MICHELLE MCLEAN



A LA CARTE

You only ate my heart out because
I set it on a plate before you,
beaming proudly as you polished off every bite,
sopping up the juices of my best intentions
with a piece of day old bread.

A novice cook, I underestimated
the feast required, panicked
when you asked for seconds -
Scrambling through cupboards, clawing my way through old recipies,
processed foods. Stirring up dust.

Hoping to find something
to appease your hunger;
My own stomach growling
like a cornered animal
as I toss and toil,
bringing my rage to a strong,
slow boil

My cup runneth empty,
though you say you still want something sweet;
Tonight, I suggest dining out -

This time, your treat.

TIM ANDERSON



TONGUE

As I needed a word I opened
The Oxford Canadian Dictionary
to the M section, and a tongue lashed out
of the crease. I believe it was misfiled
Or maybe it was referenced with the mouth
I tell you this tongue was long, pink and wet
dripping on the definitions of more
and morae, then it rolled or folded back
and I watched as the dictionary choked
I wish now I'd held it down with a pen
I was too afraid to call 911
I was in shock. I stuffing the thick volume
in a box labeled: Donate to Church Sale
Had my son bring it in with in his car

He complains: My car smells worse than the church

I didn't dare open my thesaurus
Threw it to the back corner of the shed
I dare you to get me a better word

J. J. STEINFELD

TOWARD THE VICINITY OF CHILDHOOD

Caught in adult traffic
a harried, misshapen philosopher
contemplating failures
and falling short
of even modest loftiness
amidst horns berating thought,
fumes throttling breath,
you seek childhood safety
your parents' arms and voices
gentle traffic cops at work.

Nothing in the dark
can uncomb your hair
or sadden your eyes
if you whistle a brave tune
into the face of anything
bigger or louder than yourself
that's what your father taught
his gentle arms
a whole planet of protection
he whistling along with you.

Your mother
equally gentle
dealt with fear differently
sometimes the tunes were frozen
but the fears would not scatter
she patient and mystical
with her teachings.

Screech of brakes
close call
spit three times
the way your mother taught you
to defuse any fright
or abrupt horror
day or night
your own personal therapy
instant, just add water.

A lifetime of foreboding and jolts
and betrayals of the ordinary
you have learned to deal
with the horrors
and sudden frights:
spit and repeat
repeat and spit
your mouth is dry.

Then you whistle your brave tune
your hair nicely combed
your eyes glimmering joy
and you drive away
toward the vicinity of childhood.

GREG BAUDER

LOST PROGRESS OF INSANITY

“I was crowned with a spike right through my head”

– JUMPING JACK FLASH (The Rolling Stones)

Each night I drown more
In the gulf’s poor sea
Morning sun dries demons
In my wet brain
I wander barely mobile
Among shells of life

Long ago the standard was
To drill for schizophrenia
Stakes were driven high
With no political platform
Now crudely impoverished
With plastic dreams
Our heads lose power
Like inquiring minds
Who still pray for our surrender

Tonight energy diminishes
And washes me darkly
Until the rigged slick of water
Tugs me back to shore again
Tormented and wracked
With pain in my middle age.

JENNIFER L. FOSTER



White flag on a mound
Light rain washes red stained earth
Fall plantings in rows

A.R. LÉVESQUE



CAR POOL

Going home with E.
Her pretty troubled face
And heart-breaking voice
Her delicate beauty
And unreason)
Jesus Jesus Jesus
 In her mouth
 On the radio (when it's her turn to drive)
 Why she found
 Those linen pants at Value Village they skim
 Her fragile hips skirt the tops
 Of her bird-bone ankles everyone else
 Has failed her.

The girls
Are wearing sunburns and bikinis and glory
What a hoot, hitchhiking all the way from
Montreal for a swim at Parlee Beach - Wave
Of cigarette smoke and coconut oil spill of
Their bangles and bags and laughter
The tumbled tops of their brown breasts
The sand between their toes

How rich they are in their resplendent flesh
Their clear eyes despite a sleepless night
The certainty that they are having the time
Of their lives.

I leave them downtown.
The sun shines on their bright heads
The red and white parasols on Main Street
The waitresses carrying Margaritas
The tidal river mud

Home to supper and bed and morning
Again how was your evening I painted
My cupboards got some groceries did you watch
Survivor I have that training today, do you?

Just fourteen more years to retirement.

DELARA M.T.

The City Sleeps
I was thinking of
a great event,
some peace of mind
to outdo you-

my bones, after all, after this,
have grown tired-
they are fragile, lonely things.

To rearrange chance,
and dare to ask,

dare to ask,
am I whole enough for me?

It's great work to take apart
and repossess that something lost-
place claim on the fickle shadow
of an unnamable thing.
Still, I cultivate the blooming rose,
my pulsing cup too full of you,

I care for it
and this disease-
a slow peeling of my thoughts,
the mind's striptease,

am I?
am I whole enough for me?

My ticking clock
is out of sync,
it too is a fragile, breakable thing-

but mammoth time
swells and counts
each attempt

counts each attempt
and sidles by.

The city nods
and rocks to sleep-
there is little here
but a hanged moon,
a cityscape
and I turn in,
I turn around,
there is no-one here
and the city sleeps.

TOREY MARKELL



IMPERFECTION

Black, Blacker, Blackest.
Tainted, cracked with rot,
soft curls of grey
nothing but a wallpaper covering
the (chokinghackingcoughing) Blight.

The Oni's masquerade ball
invites the weak-willed woman
to be Tangled in Tango
and Snared in Salsa.
Dancing, twirling, dying,
crushed by the mass of faceless bodies,
"Forever and always" the Oni tempts.

Her resistance is meager.
Laughing happy no-faces
steal her worries.
She is (chokinghackingcoughing) okay.
She trades her eyes for a new mask.
She presents her ears for admittance.
Blind and deaf to the (chokinghackingcoughing) music
she dances to the rhythm.
She feels the horrendous way
it rattles through her bones
but she can't stop, her partner's holding her fast.
The brilliant masquerade, unmasked,
is a dark dangerous cacophony
of Choking Hacking Coughing.

Death lounges in the caged bellows,
His ugliness bared for all to see,
going unseen by the sightless.

The Voiceless One's squirms
go unheeded in the rumbling tumbling disharmony.
The oily not-air chokes it,
tainting it with rot,
cracking the perfection.
The pure wallpaper is stained grey
with a vague imprint of Death.

JOSH MORRISSEY



A VACATION FROM REALITY

Playing on the outdoor ice emits emotions that are hidden away.

It's you, your equipment, and the wilderness together as one,
The feel as your skates grip the fresh hard ice
the feel as snow gently falls over your beet red cheeks,
the crackle you hear when you take a stride into the ice,

An amazing emotion, desired by all.

It's a feel similar to that of your first goal,
The memory of the round black disk reaching your stick,
the 6x6 mesh gaping wide in front of you as time slows down,
The spin as the puck gracefully releases off of your blade,

The feel of freedom in a life so unsure.

These emotions in a world so blank became a release,
I could breathe in the fresh country air and live whatever dream I wanted,
I was in control of my own emotions and I was choosing my path,
I could never be separated from this love,

Divorce wasn't an option, it was just us forever.

Adversity is among us in everyday life, and it shows in many forms,
Often it's a disappointing feeling that is not desired yet despised,
It is similar to that of the last stride taken before exiting the ice,
You know as soon as you leave the 200x85 foot confines of the arena,

Reality sets in and life isn't so effortless.

As you untie your skates and sip on a warm drink,
You envision that goal you just scored to win the Stanley Cup,
The crowd cheering, your team mates buzzing,
It's a lot like friends who are there when times are tough,

Friends like team mates that will help you through anything,
Even if it's just imagining with you on a frozen pond in the seclusion of silence.

TIMOTHY MALONEY



GLENN GOULD

Stooped and pale
he emerges from a limo
into late-July heat
carrying a green garbage bag
full of paraphernalia
wearing a shapeless tweed jacket
two heavy shirts
two shabby pairs of pants
cinched loosely with frayed string
odd socks and badly scuffed oxfords

shock fades as awareness grows
in the hours we record together
that outward appearances notwithstanding
there is greatness in the room
and one of the most original minds
of this or any century
draws us deep into his musical world
before tying the strings
on his plastic sack again
and trudging off
to face his demons alone

GARY PIERLUIGI



GRAND BEND

There's a comfort
in closings, endings, finales;
in rooming houses boarded.
Cottage windows sealed.
Refreshment stands
left barren but for their
now
ludicrous
embellishments.

Comfort in peeling paint,
disused garbage,
rusty coca cola signs.

Comfort and security.
A knowing familiarity.

Twilight absorbing
worn pennants and all
the liquor and beer cans that
that once fueled desire
lost and spent
on empty
furrowed sand.

GRANT LOVEYS



THE AMBER WARS

Always wanted to crack your comb,
scoop out your most tender parts.
You were never enough without licking the bowl.

Somewhere hives burn in fallow fields,
bees drunk on the smoke of their own destruction,
tugboats weaving in a slant of purple light.

On the day we met,
cities burned on the other side of the world
and the sugar scales fell from our eyes.

Do bees face their own mythologies?
(my heart just a pearl drop of blood suspended in an amber jar)
And do we face our own?

The earth murmuring beneath us,
a catacombs ten miles wide
mired in work.

The exact tone of the static behind my eyes
when you clank home in your dented armour,
weary from the war.

Foes scalped, scorned and bonebroke.
Come, let me lift your helmet,
rinse the blood from your hair.

A breath of bees awaits another dawn
to paper their corner of the earth
and start over again.

DANIELA ELZA



YOU CAME ALONG

on a misty night. hands in pockets
your self-made dark-blue beret tilted.

you walked along the river toward me
your eyes searching for stars.

I walked backwards. in the darkness
we reached for what we keep pressed

under lids between pages
hidden in ink.

lifted the water so we could both walk
on this river bed where we assume
things are lost forever.

the flint arrow-head— someone's purpose
turned to stone. our glances—

a rope bridge teetering over first words—
hands untying old knots of doubt.

the lampposts looked like dandelions
(past bloom in the night) 'til the city dawn

blew them out.

THOMAS CALVARY



SANITY IS INNOCUOUS TRUST ME

Immaculate white linoleum
illuminated under angelic lights

seeps across elaborate passages
of the witnessing psychiatric ward

serenity calculates every step
attended by diligent mental hygeinists

at punctual intervals paper gowns gather round
linen lab coats dispensing care and moral support

and all the while people smile and play
suitably quiet games in between waking up and

going to bed where arranged dreams await them
indistinguishable from their daily routines

because everything is everywhere perfect here
since no one is even thinking of screaming

NATASHA BOSKIC



WHY NOT?

Because

When I wake up
I don't recognize myself.
let alone you next to me.

Because

I don't know how to
touch a warm body
and not burn my fingers.

Because

your next breath will be
with the Danube in your mouth,
and mine with the Fraser river.
They don't share the ocean;
different fish spread their skeletons
on different shores.

Because

the wine is too light
and the wish too heavy
to taste good.

Because.

IAN KENT

ROUGE MASSACRE

They toiled when
they were told
food must be ready.

They starved when
they were told
food was not enough.

They collapsed when
they were told
to bend their knees.

They died when
their death told
of its coming.

Bowel caverns hard crusted bones
vanished blood
speak now.

Voices in the soil
they are telling
of their coming.

Discreetly calm
those of life whose
bones are shattering.

Come voraciously
innocent blood guilty
now forever of its history.

EVA WALDAUF



HOT CHERRY MAN

I love to lie
full body naked
along your tattooed body
your story on your skin
I soak it in
breathe you fucking
you suck in my breath
leave me voracious, scattered
disrupting my life
but now it's beautiful
your love is raw, intense and painless
you run and I wander,
but we end up
stripped open, hearts locked together.

ANI ARTINIAN



TO RESPIRE

I discovered that
When I press my nose against
My window's wire screen and exhale
The emitted sound is delectably similar to that of
The wind.
It was in that instant I understood more about that being
That force that
Presses its nose against the world,
Expelling his breath over us all-
Through each divine creation,
Mermaid to cockroach.
Today, she dispels a sweet sigh
That makes an oak tree stir
Drawing groans and creaks
Rattling, ruffling
Every leaf.

KIMBERLEY DAWN



LONGING

Not daring
to flush his wife or daughter
from their hot-flashed and fourteen-year-old slumbers,
he pisses against the cedars
outside the cottage kitchen window
every morning after
his solitary trip for coffee and newspaper
and what northern small-town gossip
he can gather without getting involved.
His strong neck and shoulders visible
among the panties still wet
on the line between us from the roaring
storm last night. He shakes and zips
unaware I am
there with French lace under tired fleece warming
muffins and slicing fruit and wanting
to taste his salty, summery nape. A teasing
cackle of crow from above surprises
him and he responds with genial comments
I cannot quite make out
but wish were for me.

JOHN B. LEE

TOWARD THE HORSES

In spring, the wind of dream
is moving
toward the horses—
there in blue surrender
a white drift
of easy mist
wings its way west
ghosting away like thought trails
of the dead
what clarifies the water completes the sky
like time that solves
a footplash in the rushing up
and silting down
of sand
I see in sunlit forsythia
and the photosynthesizing green
how the soul sees
how the heart sees
in the radiant blush
and the breath-on-glass
of the spirit in the flesh, I'm in
the old osmosis
of a gauzy milk-in-linen
mood and I'm
the world in thralls of being
I am the verdant push
the open palm, the one
that blooms in sleep to hear
the hooves within the hill
sound out the hollows of touch
like the living heart of the land
where what caressing gives
the hand receives
the resonant bone of talk

like darkness on the edge of light
surrounds the language
of the living drum we are
in silent beauty and in quiet
grace—what hears is heard
what speaks becomes the vessel
of a fuller phrase
oh there, toward the horses
farther than the farthing of farthest stars
the mind lies darkening with dawn

LISA SHATZKY

ANOTHER VERSION

For once let the tough
good-looking motorcycle man
in the black leather jacket walk
toward the frumpy old woman
with the crooked front tooth and the grey
fly-away hair so wild it has become
its own country, eyes fierce and wearing a skirt
with every colour imaginable and let him
take her hands and tell her she's beautiful.
And let it be the woman is not surprised,
that she has expected him all along,
and does not eagerly climb onto the back
of his bike to go soaring off into the hot
purple summer bruised night.
Rather let her lead him slowly
up the rickety black iron stairs to a gritty
rooftop littered with cigarette butts and empty
Molson Canadians and mistaken identities.
And let it be here, here in the raw stunning
and aching imperfection of broken armour
and cast away masks, the motorcycle man
falls unabashedly into her
strong arms in front of the whole city
and a billion galaxies watching.

DON SCHAEFFER



THE DESTINATION

In a place of vibration,
where color and form
don't meet an eye,
I have built a nest.
My body
equipping me with
translation.
Uncertainty is
deeply real.
Where I reside is
construct, theory
if not fictitious
sleepwalk.

TODD SWIFT

AMIRS OF THE HOUSE OF RASHID

Pull closed the tent and light the lamp;
Outside the sand is wild as time
And goes about the world as if at last
The maker at the first had been tamed

By a later, lesser, angrier blast -
And now, brought low before the lowest
Was found unworthy by its own creation
And sent out to a crowd to be torn apart.

The heart of the night is terrified -
Only this thin flap, these cords, hold
A whirling torment of wind at bay
So we two might sit here in this calm

To drink of the bean and bow, to say
Old truths in tender new ways, beside
The Book of prophecies we have by heart -
Written into the silk threads of our souls.

For each student of the night is dressed
In robes lined with deeper light,
Tailored with a fearless hand a thousandfold
More assured than ours, which, when it sews,

Pricks skin to bleed or is too narrow, tight
Or loose with pulling all the fabric right.
So: against this rabble of the outer storm
Here in my paradise-cell, too warm or dim

To serve as any model to fit a heaven on
What brings you in across twelve dunes my son -
Water-drained, fig-denied, burnt of the sun?
You come to declare a war or fend off

A question or request, to pronounce a law
Or buy a wife or camel or claim new powers -
Or perhaps to take a cup in silence an hour
With your uncle who has lately lost a brother

To share in this threatened space remembrance
Of your unwise, heady father, who led
His groundless campaign against that tribe
Had done us no harm nor intended any.

All sweet injuries imagined were repaid
With bitter blows in a desert flood
Of curved swords raining from riders.
Nod, be quiet, hold out your hand. See,

The lines that move on your palm do so alone.
Your caravan has broken and been lost.
Singular, you struggle to locate a line,
To stumble across a holy furnace to a well.

Drink of your heart, though its pain
Not be balm. Cool your mind's sword, until
It be sheathed. Be regained. At home.
Be at home in your emotions, guided back

Safely, to open that first book we each carry within -
Printed, as I said, with love, not desire
Or madness for revenge. I grant you your peace
For you to fully command. Your companions will have

Rest and time here for the coming days
Until this mindful air has blown itself out.
Then, go back to your people and claim defeat.
For me, it is time to see the clean stars. Wrapped

With care, staying in a modest position
I can withstand the eternal moment's rage
For enough of loud war in an hour's tumult
To make this best journey to be starlit, blessed.

BONNIE NISH

WHEN SOMEONE FORGETS TO SAY GOODBYE

For Robin E. with much love

In the morning
the rain collapses my garden
long forgotten in the business of summer,
now just a mix of
tree roots and weeds
nothing of substance left to contemplate.
The crows, heads hidden
beneath soaking leaves,
don't try to follow me
down the road,
their babies grown
they have left the street.
I am mindless,
half drugged with sleep
watching as the morning moves
across town, lethargic
with this last weekends shifting.

As I enter the kitchen
remove the sweater
thrown over pajamas,
a chill runs through me
and I ignore the phone
that seems to have been ringing forever.
I can't wash away the fear
that if I pick up
something more terrible
will happen,
that when I hold the receiver,
it won't be your voice I hear,
it won't be your joke reminding me
I can laugh when I don't want to.

It won't be your smile
shining through to my end.

I make tea even though
I know I won't drink it,
keep warm by the fireplace
that gives off no heat,
the day walks away from me
and I don't care.
The world has stopped
and words are becoming too vast
as I drown in a vocabulary
that makes no sense.
The storm that is soaking
through the depths of soil
which surround me
carries away all absolute truth.
I know you would be poking me
in the back if you were here,
telling me to get off it
and move on.

I have been dreaming about you
for a few days
and it is your smile
that always is there,
your quiet voice laughing
as you let my hand slip
and you wave goodbye.
Then in the morning
the frigid rain
again washes dreams into mud.
Now as the tea turns cold
my hands are empty,
there is no answer
when I ask the clouds
if you have found the peace
which eluded you for so long.
A crow flies by and I know
winter will soon arrive.
I return to the garden in the heavy rain
feel the abandonment creep towards me
as I cover snap dragon roots with old tea leaves
well aware that even this will all die too.

Contributors

TIMOTHY CHARLES ANDERSON lives in Toronto. He is the author of *Funtimes The Snail*, a musical storybook for kids. His poetry is featured in the short film, *Orbit*, directed by Shunsuke Teshima.

ANI ARTINIAN has been writing poetry since she was 14. She graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University with a degree in English Language & Literature. Ani is currently working in Toronto as a copywriter, itching to write more poems than ads.

GREG BAUDER has a BA in English from UBC and has had seven books published. His first novel, *The Temptress Ariel*, will be a feature film in early 2011.

KYRA LEE BENNETT-RICHARDSON is only 15. She is in grade 10 and lives in B.C. on an island called Haida Gwaii, in a town called Port Clements. She has always loved writing poetry.

GEOFFREY BLAIR is a Canadian father, son, husband, brother, friend and pediatric surgeon in Vancouver who sees birth, life, conflict, triumph, nature, tragedy, comedy, death and love in the family context everyday. Occasionally there are poems.

NATASHA BOSKIC writes poetry and short stories in English and Serbian. She has been living in Vancouver since 1999. Interested in exploring digital technologies for creative expression, she experiments with narratives in different media.

ALEXANDER BUCHANAN writes for the sole purpose of inducing simple thought through the simple word. In hopes of creating moments and furthering the human condition, he scribbles down what he indulges in. He believes that every dreaming-to-waking second is for living, not interpreting.

GARTH VON BUCHHOLZ is a Canadian author of short fiction, poetry, drama and non-fiction who has been published in magazines, journals and anthologies. His new book of poetry, *Mad Shadows*, was published in June. Garth lives on Vancouver Island.

THOMAS CALVARY is a Canadian born writer whose work, regardless of particular subjects or genres, is always primarily concerned with communicating something of depth. Such communication he believes essential to any good art.

M.J.CHATTAWAY (No biography submitted)

DELANEY CUNNINGHAM is an avid reader and enjoys the works of both classical and contemporary authors. She has a passion for writing fictional pieces as well as poems. Her favourite poem is Percy Shelley's *The Cloud*. Delaney will be graduating from Sacred Heart CHS in June and go on to attend Wilfrid Laurier in September for an Honours Bachelor of Journalism.

KIMBERLEY DAWN is a mother of four and Massage Therapist near Hamilton Ontario. A lover of gardening, cooking, long flowery dresses and the creative process of writing. She has poems published in the Summer 2010 edition of *Tower Poetry Society*.

DANIELA ELZA has released more than 140 poems into the world in more than 42 publications. She recently completed her first full length poetry manuscript. Daniela is the recipient of this year's Pandora's Collective Citizenship Award.

ANTHONY FALCONE is a freelance writer living in Toronto. Considered by many to be the finest gentleman ever, he rocks the party that rocks the body and more of his work can be seen at www.comicbookdaily.com and www.thenerdalert.blogspot.com.

JENNIFER L. FOSTER, of Hamilton, Ontario, graduated from Queen's University with degrees in Honours English and in Education. Her poetry for children has appeared in *Cat, Cats, Cats and More Cats* (Mini Mocho Press) and a short story in *Perspectives Magazine*.

FARAN GHAREMANI was born in 1989 in Tihiran, Iran. He moved to Vancouver, Canada as a teenager and embarked on scholarly work at the high-school level. He now is reading English at the University of Capilano.

AMY L. GLEESON (No biography submitted)

KEVIN HARKNESS is a Vancouver area Secondary School teacher and writer. He has always been fascinated by the variety of terrain that surrounds him.

IAN KENT has written and produced two children's plays for the Edmonton International Fringe Festival. While working abroad in India in 2007, he taught Shakespeare to Tibetan artists in exile and edited and contributed to *Contact* magazine.

JOHN B. LEE was appointed Poet Laureate of Brantford. John B. Lee's most recent books include *Island on the Wind-Breathed Edge of the Sea* and *The Place that We Keep After Leaving*. "Cloud Pillow" is taken from his forthcoming book, *The Burning Sweater*.

A.R. LÉVESQUE's writing has appeared in journals such as *Room Magazine*, *The Danforth Review*, *The Dalhousie Review* and *The New Quarterly*. She lives on Cape Breton Island.

GRANT LOVEYS lives in St. John's, Newfoundland. His work has appeared in numerous North American publications. Earlier this year he was awarded the 2010 Newfoundland and Labrador Arts & Letters award for poetry.

TIMOTHY MALONEY is a musician and music historian. Formerly the Director of the National Library of Canada's Music Division, he is now Head of the Music Library and teaches in the School of Music at the University of Minnesota.

MATTHEW MANASSIS is a seventeen-year-old native of Aurora, Ontario (b. 30 January, 1992), currently studying English at the University of Guelph. Besides reading and writing, he enjoys cycling, music, and the outdoors. Please direct complaints, comments, and bug reports to feedback.matthew@gmail.com.

TOREY MARKELL is a seventeen year old girl from Toronto, Ontario. She didn't originally have an interest in poetry but after taking a Writer's Craft class where poetry was involved she found she liked it a lot.

MICHELLE MCLEAN is former High School English teacher who is currently employed at a special care home. She has received prizes in various poetry contests – most recently from the Ontario Poetry Society and the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg poetry competition. Her work has appeared in *Ascent Aspirations*, *OM Quarterly*, *Toward the Light*, and *Other Voices*. She lives in Lower Brighton, New Brunswick with her husband, their daughter Sophia, and their new baby girl, Lillian Grace.

JOSH MORRISSEY is 15 years old Calgary native who has been playing hockey since the age of five. Drafted 6th overall into the WHL by the Prince Albert Raiders this year, he hopes to play in the NHL one day.

JUDE NEALE has just completed her second book of poetry, (Leaf press) *Only The Fallen Can See*, which explores and chronicles the compelling journey of a mother struggling with bipolar illness.

BONNIE NISH has been Executive Director of Pandora's Collective Outreach Society, a Vancouver charity established to promote literacy and self-expression for the past seven years. Published widely throughout North America you may view some of her work in the anthologies, *Undercurrents*, and *The Toronto Quarterly* and on-line at blueprintreview.com, hackwriters.com and greenboathouse.com.

GARY PIERLUIGI has worked in Social Services while continuing to write. Since first being published in *Quills*, he has been published in numerous poetry journals, including *CV2*, *Queen's Quarterly*, *On Spec*, *Filling Station*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *The Nashwaak Review*, and *Grain*. He was short listed for the CBC 2006 Literary Awards in the poetry category, a finalist in the Lit Pop Awards and received an honorable mention in The Ontario Poetry Society's "Open Heart" Contest. His first poetry book, *Over the Edge*, has been published by Serengeti Press. He is currently completing his first novel.

MELANIE PIERLUIGI is currently attending graduate school in Brooklyn, NY. Her poetry has appeared in journals, *Quills*, *The Nashwaak Review*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *White Wall Review*, *Other Voices*, *Precipice*, and others. She won Waterloo Universities, 'English Society Creative Writing Award for Poetry'. She is currently working with singer-song-writer Joseph Arthur on his upcoming poetry book.

DON SCHAEFFER (No biography submitted)

LISA SHATZKY's poetry has been accepted for publication in *Grain* and *The Sun* (U.S.), and has been published in *The New Quarterly*, *The Prairie Journal*, *Jones Avenue*, *Monday's Poem*, *The Nashwaak Review*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *The Antigonish Review*, *The Vancouver Sun*, *The McGill Daily*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Canadian Woman's Studies*, *Quills Canadian Poetry Magazine*, *Cahoots*, and anthologies across Canada and in the U.S. She works as a therapist by day and a poet by night and lives on Bowen Island, British Columbia, with her husband and three children and various animals. She is currently waiting to hear if a particular publisher is interested in her new manuscript, *A Pail for the Blackberries*.

J. J. STEINFELD is a fiction writer, poet, and playwright living on Prince Edward Island. He has published nine short story collections, two novels, and two poetry collections, the most recent being *Misshapeness* (Ekstasis Editions, 2009).

HEATHER GRACE STEWART's poems have been published in Canadian literary journals, newspapers and magazines, nation-wide school textbooks, online journals, international print anthologies, and in the British small presses. She was awarded Queen's University's McIlquham Foundation Prize in English Poetry (1995) and the UK journal Various Artists' Poet's Poet Award (2007).

TODD SWIFT (No biography submitted)

DELARA M.T. is a twenty-year-old English student currently living and attending university in Vancouver, BC. After completing her degree, she plans to study Education as well as pursuing her writing.

ANDREW THOMSON is in his early 20's and recently graduated with a English degree from the University of Western Ontario. He currently lives alone in London On. And is active in the art and music scene.

URSULA TILLMANN, born and raised in Germany, now a Canadian citizen, lives in Canmore, Alberta. She studied journalism in Calgary, published her first book of poetry *Till Tales* in 2008, has received newspaper - and poetry awards and photography prizes.

ZORAN TODOROVIC, is a painter and poet. He has a degree in Life Sciences and his main interest was psychological analysis of artistic work. He was born in August 1983 in Former Yugoslavia, Bosnia in a city of Zenica. After the ethnic war in Bosnia he and his family moved to Canada, at the age of 11.

T. W. TRAVIS is an accomplished young poet, musician, and songwriter living in Southwest Saskatchewan. Some of his major literary influences include Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, Edgar A. Poe, and C. S. Lewis. Travis spends a lot of his time alone, in quiet reflection and prayer, writing poetry and music.

EVA WALDAUF is a Visual Artist, who surprised herself by writing her first Poem at SFU in 1998. Eva featured at Blue Moon Readings November 2008. She is published in *Poets and Painters* 2009. Eva's Poetry is at: www.pandorascollective.com/EWaldauf.html

CASSIDY ANDRYANA WALKER is 10 years old.

JESSICA WIDNER is a U of T student, studying English literature. She enjoys poetry, prose and all else to do with words. She has been writing forever, but has not yet been published.

ANNA YIN won several poetry contests including 2005 Ted Plantos Memorial Award from TOPS. CBC Radio interviewed her and aired "Toronto, No More Weeping". In 2006, she was selected as "CFP Feature Poet". Her works in translation were in Humber College' Canadian Studies' textbook. website: anna.88just.com

JOHN YON lives in Barrie Ontario. He grew up in Lahr Germany and moved to Vancouver when he was 6. John started writing when he was a teenager living in North York area of Toronto. He is currently 25 and completing a post-graduate in computer science.



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