

**THE 59 SOUND: A FICTIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE TISH
POETRY MOVEMENT**

by

C.A. Mash

B.A., The University of British Columbia Okanagan, 2015

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The College of Graduate Studies

(Interdisciplinary Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Okanagan)

August 2017

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the College of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis/dissertation entitled:

THE 59 SOUND: A FICTIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE TISH POETRY
MOVEMENT

submitted by Cole Mash in partial fulfillment of the requirements of

the degree of Master of Arts .

Dr. Karis Shearer

Co-supervisor

Anne Fleming

Co-supervisor

Lisa Grekul

Supervisory Committee Member

Dr. James Hull

University Examiner

ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the *Tish* poetry movement in Vancouver in the 1950s and 60s, yet currently no major historiographic study on the group exists. This project takes an interdisciplinary approach, working at the nexus of English, history, and creative writing, and takes the form of a critical thesis and accompanying novella in order to contribute to existing historiography on *Tish*. The two parts of this project are located within the historical discourses of narrativism and constructivism, and the narrative traditions of historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction. By identifying the major gaps, silences, and erasures in the received *Tish* historical narrative, the critical section works with the accompanying novella to attempt to address those limitations through the use of a historical narrative.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I offer my emphatic thanks and appreciation to the FCCS staff who helped with generosity every time I ran into the office with a problem. To the raddest committee out there: Dr. Karis Shearer and Anne Fleming, without whom I might have remained an incoherent writer and might not have made it to grad school, and Dr. Lisa Grekul for her feedback and support on this project. To my other writing mentors, Drs. Jake Kennedy and Sean Johnston—thanks for putting up with an obnoxious, table-sitting twenty-year-old me. To my Mom who got me a French press when I needed it most (also giving birth or whatever). I also owe a debt of gratitude to those whose feedback has been imperative to the development of this project including Brittini MacKenzie-Dale, Juawana Grant, Erin Scott, and Caitlin Voth. To Karolina Bialkowska for being my teammate in the sanity-games through our coursework. To my grandma for our conversations about Vancouver. Honourable shoutouts to harsh-bros Cody, Nicky-westside, Matt, and Rupert—love you dudes. And finally, to Dr. Constance Crompton for keeping me employed for the last three years.

To whoever you are holding [screen or codex] in hand. I give you fair warning before you attempt this thesis further: you should probably be out reading in the sun while there's still enough ozone left to hold back the fire.

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FOREWORD

The following project is the result of years of work on a memoir about my time with *Anarmag*. While writing a memoir on the topic, I was discussing my years on the magazine with my mother. She asked me if I remembered sending her a letter when I first moved to the coast, telling her how much I loved the rain. I said that I did not remember it, and that I also did not love the rain so I don't know why I would have sent that. My mother, not being the type of person to argue over the phone, dropped the subject; however, being the kind of person who keeps every trinket, and further being the type of person to win arguments, not for the sake of winning, but in the interest of precision (or perhaps verity is a better word) my mother pulled the letter out the next day, and sent it to me in an envelope with another letter telling the story of how she found that letter. A letter contextualizing her letter. A metaletter, if you will. And she was right. I had written a letter saying how I loved the rain. Perhaps I had romanticized it so much being from the interior that I wanted to love it. Or perhaps I did love it authentically, but after years of the soggy déjà vu of waiting for the bus to come in it, I grew to hate it. Though this letter to my mother was insignificant in the grand narrative of my life, it caused to me ask what else I had forgotten or misremembered, which caused me to doubt my ability to write a memoir without somehow, after years as a poet and novelist, distorting it, even unintentionally.

Instead, I have written a work of fiction, with a fictional thesis criticizing a fictional literary movement I have dubbed, *Tish*. The thesis contains a foreword claiming that I am a fictional character that the narrator of this thesis created in order to self-reflexively

point to the constructed nature of academic writing. This is false. Cole will make the same claim to being real, and, perhaps even do so convincingly. Same authoritative font and everything. But I promise you, I am the real one. I have all of these memories that though, like my aqua-obfuscated memory of the rain, are potentially inaccurate, I could not possibly have made completely up. Though, I would like to apologize. I am not historically known for dwelling on the past in order to create.

- S.O.

INTRODUCTION

In his article, “Movies as the Gateway to History: The History and Film Project,” historian Paul B. Weinstein notes of historical film, as a teaching tool and popular source for history, is more pervasive than ever. He writes, “We should acknowledge film and television as the great history educators of our time” (27). He argues that although film has no obligation to the truth in the way that traditional historiography does, the historical limitations of movies “can actually be turned to advantages when students and instructors utilize film as a gateway to history” (28). In short, where the fictional narratives of historical film are often limited as traditional historiographic studies, their limitations can be perceived as benefits if their function is reimagined as a precursor to engagement with a more critical form of historiography. In this thesis, I mobilize the term *traditional historiography* to describe discursive history, typically in the form of the essay or codex. Although I will not be dealing with film, and do not agree that the only benefit of a more creative form of historiography is to function as a gateway to a more traditional one, the logic of acknowledging the limitations of a work and then focussing on the remaining strengths is central to my project, which uses fiction to supplement the limitations of the historical narrative of the *Tish* poetry movement in Vancouver in the 1960s.

The shortcomings of historical film, by which Weinstein means perceived historical inaccuracies, are often the result of concessions made in the interest of a more entertaining narrative. But the very ‘shortcomings’ that make the film more entertaining also create a wider audience. Simply put, more people are willing to watch a movie than read an essay. Weinstein suggests that after watching a movie the audience may then be more inclined to engage with more critical forms of historiography. By Weinstein’s logic,

film should not be a substitute for traditional historiography, but rather an addition to the discourses surrounding a given history. If the film's limitations are acknowledged, and then supplemented or accompanied by traditional historiography, it can serve the important purpose of reaching a wider audience or providing a different look at a historical moment.

The advantages and limitations to which Weinstein refers are not exclusive to film, and can be extended to this the focus of this thesis, historical fiction. Similar to historical film, historical fiction is allowed a certain amount of inaccuracy since, as Weinstein notes, it typically does not make truth claims in the way that traditional historiography does. Historical fiction is instead a work of artifice, which, by virtue of being a fictional representation of the past, formally admits its limitations and its mandate: to immerse the reader in a "verisimilitude" ("Historiographic" 1988, 105) (as opposed to a facsimile) in order to create a version of the past that while providing a form of entertainment also adheres to the demands of the craft of fiction. The concept of verisimilitude is key to the tradition of historiographic metafiction, as theorized by Linda Hutcheon in the 1980s, a literary tradition within which my own work is situated, if not perfectly.

The traditions of 'historiographic metafiction' and its descendant 'neo-historical fiction' are central to this thesis. Theoretically founded on the work of theorists such as Hayden White and Jacques Derrida (among many others), historiographic metafiction refers to a type of fiction that has a meta-awareness of its construction as a work of artifice, and which "paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" ("Theorizing" 4). Examples of works in this mode are Rudy Wiebe's *The Temptations of*

Big Bear (1973) and George Bowering's *Burning Water* (1980) (Wyile 24). Katharine Harris notes that the neo-historical aesthetic can be distinguished from its predecessor, historiographic metafiction, in that it "simultaneously and contradictorily works to create coherent stories about [the past] that recognize their own limitations even as they attempt to overcome them" (194). According to Harris, the major difference between the two is that the narrative in neo-historical fiction is coherent, wherein historiographic metafiction it is not (204). The other difference is that neo-historical fiction reinterprets a current narrative in the past, as opposed to reinterpreting a past narrative with the knowledge we have in the present (199). Examples of neo-historical fiction are Sarah Waters's *Tipping the Velvet* (1998) and Emma Donoghue's *Life Mask* (2004) (Harris 195).

Historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction have qualities that combat some of the criticism of historical fiction in regards to its usefulness to historical discourses. Unlike traditional historical fiction, historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction reject the notion that an historian or author can represent the past accurately, reject totalization, and reject the coherence of what philosopher and literary theorist Jean-François Lyotard refers to as a "grand narrative" or master narrative (Lyotard). In other words, a master narrative is a narrative produced by those in power that dominates a given topic, giving the impression of coherence and connectivity between the otherwise arbitrary events that make up that narrative. But what about historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction's potential as a tool for traditional historical research? If created alongside critical academic work what are the benefits of these types of historical fiction to the discourses of a given historiography?

This project takes an interdisciplinary approach, operating at the nexus of history,

English, and fiction, in the form of a critical thesis accompanied by a novella written in the tradition of historiographic metafiction and the neo-historical aesthetic. In addition to Hutcheon's work and neo-historical fiction, this project builds upon the work of historical narrativism, constructivism, and fiction's application as a both historiography and a historical research method, as well as the discourse of the *Tish* movement. The novella explores the Vancouver poetry scene in the late 1950s and early 60s at The University of British Columbia (UBC) surrounding the publication of the *Tish* literary magazine, which included prolific Canadian poets such as Frank Davey, Daphne Marlatt, George Bowering, and Fred Wah. I outline the scene's existing historical narrative, explore its limitations, and then illuminate the gaps and silences within the received historical narrative of *Tish*. I mobilize the term *received narrative* as a term denoting a given narrative that has become generally accepted or dominant within the discourse of a given topic, in the case of my project, the *Tish* movement. Through fiction, I attempt to address the gaps and silences in the *Tish* historical narrative, as well as those which traditional historiography insufficiently describes, such as the metaphysical aspects emotion, collaboration in the art world, and creativity, in addition to the constructed nature of historical narrative, and how we remember the past.

The critical section of my project progresses in three parts. Part 1 outlines my methodological approach in regards to historical discourses, historiographic metafiction and the neo-historical aesthetic, ending with an analysis of how this methodological approach informs my novella. Part 2 reviews literature on the history of the *Tish* scene, situating my own project within this literature and then addressing how my argument is constructed in the novella. Part 2 also contains a conclusion outlining the findings of my

research and the limitations of my project. The novella comprises Part 3.

The parts of this project aggregate in order to address the limitations of the current *Tish* historical narrative, and ultimately provide an alternative to that narrative in the form of fiction. This project matters not only to potential researchers or readers of the *Tish* history, but also more generally to scholars of literature and history, as well as to those who wish to build upon the current definition of historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction and consider how the writing of these modes of fiction can accompany the practice of historiography.

PART 1: NARRATIVISM, HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION, AND THE NEO-HISTORICAL AESTHETIC

Stories may well be lies, but they are good lies that say true things, and which can sometimes pay the rent.

- Neil Gaiman (“Neil Gaiman’s Journal”)

In his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995), historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot states that the word *history* has two meanings. First, it can be interpreted as a “sociohistorical process” and secondly, as “our knowledge of that process or [as] a story about that process” (2). Trouillot urges us to see the duality inherent in the common usages of the word “history”: that is, the actual occurrence of history and the discourses about that occurrence. This distinction is important to the way my project situates itself within the discourse of the history of *Tish*. I want to separate the history of the *Tish* movement from the received narrative constructed by those who have written about it.

The questioning of ‘historical fact’ is, according to Trouillot, “as old as history itself” (5); however, within western historical discourse it was pioneered by Edward Hallet Carr in his book *What is History?* (1961). Carr’s book, which is now considered foundational in the discipline but out of date, argues for history as a subjectively written discipline that cannot be divorced from the bias of the historian. Carr’s book was the first to question the objectivity of the historian, and immediately placed him in opposition to traditional ideas of empirical historiographers who maintained that an historian should

strive for objectivity, as seen in the work of Gertrude Himmelfarb, for example, or Geoffrey Elton. Elton's book *The Practice of History* (1967), which defends a more classical style of empirical historiography, was written in direct response (or rather, opposition) to Carr's ideas.

I situate my work in the strain of history that follows the work of Carr in which historical acts are not objective depictions of the past but rather complex works which are constructed, and heavily influenced by, variables such as time, geography, the historians themselves (and therefore the time period in which the historian is writing, the historian's own biases, and their preconceived notions of the past), the artifacts¹ and historical material available, and the dominant historical narratives already in place. Literary historian Leah McCormack posits that all texts, archival or otherwise, can be interpreted, and as a result the "truth claims of historical narratives" are "problematic, at best" (38). Historical materials do not have objective values waiting to be discovered by an historian but, rather, are interpreted and narrated by that historian. The branch of history that foregrounds the narrative interpretation of history was pioneered by 'narrativists' such as Frank Ankersmit, Fredric Jameson, and most notably, White. Narrativists take the position that history is 'emplotted' (to borrow White's term) with narrative and requires hermeneutic attention like any other form of art. For White, the process of deciding on the facts of a given history and then animating its story is known as emplotment (Doran xxii).

¹ The 'Fraudulent Artifact' as theorized by David Shields and Matthew Vollmer uses the American spelling of the word artifact. In the interest of being consistent throughout the document, I have elected to use the American spelling as well.

White is one of the foremost scholars on historical theory of the past century whose book *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973) established a new kind of historiographic practice, assenting to the use of narrative

rather than renouncing it. Historian Kalle Pihlainen defines White's historiographic practice as "narrative constructivism," a term which he borrows from Alan Munslow, and which Pihlainen sees as a more fitting description of how White's practice is distinct from other forms of historical constructivism, specifically in the way it embraces narrative rather than rejects it ("Rereading" 524). Historian Richard Carroll summarizes the type of historiography pioneered by the likes of White and Keith Jenkins:

Both history and fiction are interpretative by nature. Historians, for their part, interpret given evidence from a subjective viewpoint; this means that it cannot be unbiased...Both fiction and history are narratives, and "*anyone* who writes a narrative is fictionalising," according to Keith Jenkins (cited in Southgate 32).

The novelist and historian find meaning through their own interpretation of the known record (Brown) to produce stories that are entertaining and structured. Simply put, like a fiction writer, the historian must arrange facts through narrative in order to create meaning out of those facts.

White makes the important distinction between a list of facts and a narrative; he compares this distinction to the difference between plot points and story in literature.

White writes:

[a] set of events arranged chronologically is not a story at all, but only a chronicle. In order to be transformed into a story, a set of events must be organized in such a way as to inspire a certain type of question in the reader, such questions as: "What happened next?" or "How did that come about?" Answers to these questions have two dimensions, a factual one, consisting of mere information, and a conceptual one, consisting of the patterning of events into motif-clusters. ("The Structure"

121)

Here White refers to the ways that narrative is used to organize the ‘plot points’ of a given history, which serves to transform that history from a list of arbitrary events to a text with meaning and coherence.

More recently, in his article “Rereading Narrative Constructivism,” (2013) Pihlainen asks the question, “[w]hat may legitimately be inferred from these individual facts?” to which he answers, “the answer, again: Nothing, really. All stories that are constructed from these facts are equally propositional” (512). For Pihlainen, any narrative an historian constructs from the facts is as subjective and interpretive as any other historical narrative. But if history is subjective, and therefore accuracy is unachievable, why pursue history at all? Acknowledging the unknowability of the past, the job of the historian is to foreground the interpretive nature of their discipline, and then, embracing historical procedure, and a combination of empirical and narrative strategies, try to tell the most accurate history they can, while being transparent about the shortcomings, silences, and erasures (“Rereading” 512).

For White, it is not that scholars must invent history, but instead that they must decide, based on the knowledge available to them, what the most likely history was, and then use the tools of narrative structure to animate the possible history or histories. White asserts that “[i]n histories, unlike novels, the events that make up the storyline are not (or are not supposed to be) products of the historians’ imaginations but must be attested to by evidence” (“The Structure” 121). This is key to my treatment of the *Tish* historical narrative. Though through my deployment of historical narrativism, historiographic metafiction, and the neo-historical aesthetic, I admit that all historical narratives are

constructed and that the facts which make them up potentially flawed, ultimately I have no choice but to embrace this, and work with the available facts, relying on fiction in order to address the limitations of the received *Tish* narrative and reimagine it.

Many past and contemporary scholars have built upon White's work (see Hutcheon; Pihlainen; Herb Wyile), and others have complicated it, forging their own historiographic practice from both positivism and constructivism (Trouillot; Keith Jenkins). White's theories have been subject to criticism from such historians as Georg Iggers and even White himself who has admitted that his book *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe* was a certain "structuralist moment" and if he were writing it today he would "do it differently" ("An Old" 391). Pihlainen writes that, in general, historians, as opposed to literary historians, have taken "the kind of narrative constructivism associated with Hayden White to hold no significance for them" ("Rereading" 509). Both Pihlainen and Trouillot highlight common criticisms of White's brand of constructivism. Pihlainen states that in the narrative constructivist argument history and fiction are inherently synonymous, but what is often overlooked is the demands of each form. Where historians may 'emplot' and create narratives out of their historical facts, they are still "bound by the 'historian's promise' of truthfulness" ("Rereading" 512). The fiction writer is similarly bound by the demands of their craft, but they do not have materials (historical facts) from which their story must be derived, or at least, they are not bound by them like the historian is. As I will return to in Part 3, in this thesis I have struggled with the demands of both the historian's promise and the demands of the craft of fiction, and ultimately, do not satisfy both. So, if adhering to both the demands of fiction and the demands of history, what

kind of work can the writing of historical fiction do to supplement the shortcomings of a given historical narrative?

Wyile writes “the notion that historical discourse is essentially speculative rather than mimetic,” and that this has “given novelists the elbow room to develop their own speculative fictions.” These speculative fictions have the potential for “probing the gaps or ‘dark areas’ of received history” (13). Wyile acknowledges fiction’s ability to address the silences and gaps caused by the biased narrative constructions of historiography. As Neil Gaiman states in my epigraph, “stories may well be lies, but they are good lies that say true things” (“Neil Gaiman’s Journal”). Gaiman’s point is clear: fiction, despite being made up, can access and represent knowledge that we often, problematically, call “truth.” My project uses fiction to contribute to the *Tish* historical narrative in a way that I argue is as “true” as any form of historiography, whether empirical or narrative. If, as Pihlainen notes, all historiography is constructed, biased, and narrativized, then fiction can be a legitimate addition to the discourse of a given historiography, and, as Wyile notes, can do speculative work in order to fill gaps and silences that perhaps traditional historiography cannot.

Trouillot describes how silences occur in historical production. He writes: “silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of sources); the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance)” (26). That is to say, first, historical silence occurs when an artifact is produced, or when the historian decides which events in a historical narrative will be privileged as facts or fixed points.

Second, silence occurs in the creation of archives and repositories of historical knowledge: choices are made, human errors occur and not everything is recorded. Third, in the narrativization of history certain occurrences or aspects must inevitably be left out or, as White notes, it would merely be a list, not a narrative. Finally, not every narrative is canonized as part of the history to which it belongs. Trouillot's focus on silence in historical narrative has guided my historical interrogation of *Tish*. I allow that there is a received narrative associated with the group, one marked by gaps, silences, and limitations, and that perhaps I can tell a different story that seeks to first illuminate, and then fill, those gaps, silences, and limitations.

My project locates itself between the polemic discourses of historiography I have mentioned above, similar to *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, which situates itself as both in between and rising above the "dichotomies" of empirical or positivist and constructivist history (Trouillot 4). Therefore, I do not allow that history is completely constructed, but rather that there are empirical sets of data that can be gathered, which then must be constructed into a narrative in order to have meaning, and be engaged with as historiography. Moreover, there are benefits and opportunities both when a scholar looks at history as something that is inherently emplotted and when they look at history through the lens of empiricism. A given history gains complexity and nuance from the dialogue between different forms of historiography, and the different opinions on that history. My project does not claim to be the one truthful, accurate representation of *Tish*, but rather contributes to the discourse of *Tish* through privileging the work that fiction can do to accompany traditional historiography.

*

White's work has been foundational in regards to literary postmodernism in the work of Linda Hutcheon and her theories of historiographic metafiction. In Medhi Gashemi's article, "Revisiting History in Hayden White's Philosophy," he cites Fredric Jameson, Jean-François Lyotard, Hayden White, and Linda Hutcheon, all of whom have contributed to literary theory's postmodern questioning of the historical discipline (1). Robert David Stacey notes that, though many have written on literary postmodernism, the "dominant view" has been that of Hutcheon, and for many "postmodernism itself is reducible to the fictional genre of 'historiographic metafiction'" ("Introduction" xiii). Though this thesis does not focus on literary postmodernism, I am participating in its history of questioning historical narratives, and traditions, through the writing of fiction situated in the tradition of historiographic metafiction and the neo-historical aesthetic.

Historiographic metafiction has the potential to disrupt received historical narratives through the use of metafiction and postmodern narrative. Historiographic metafiction participates in the postmodern questioning of the coherence of narrative while simultaneously participating in historical revisionism (that is, to reclaim, rewrite, illuminate silence, ask questions about existing historical narratives). Wyile states that "[i]n questioning and/or questing beyond received history in Canada, [writer's of historiographic metafiction] raise important concerns about the cultural, racial, gender, class, and colonial biases of that history, illustrating that while Canada does indeed have a rich history, it may not necessarily be the kind of history or version of history that has typically been provided" (24). Though Stacey notes that writing about Canadian postmodernism is somewhat of "an historical exercise" ("Introduction" xv) and that

[t]o write about postmodernism in Canada, even now, is to acknowledge that

literary history is a field of competing interests and desires, just as it is to recognize that debates about the meaning and value of postmodernism must inevitably retrace the rejection of totalization that postmodern theory, in all its various articulations, takes as its point of departure. (“Introduction” xiv-xv)

In short, postmodernism as a literary movement is over, but the gesture of the postmodern, to reject coherence and question the construction of meaning, may well not be.

This is precisely what historiographic metafiction can do as a contribution to historical discourse: to question the construction of meaning through narrative. Hutcheon states: “Historiographic metafiction works to situate itself within historical discourse without surrendering its autonomy as fiction” (“Historiographic” 1989, 4). In other words, works of historiographic metafiction participates in a dialogue about not only the historical period on which they focus but also the discourse of historiography in general, while simultaneously retaining their status as a piece of fiction and, through self-reflexivity, more generally participating in the discourse surrounding the construction of meaning through narrative.

However, not everyone agrees that historiographic metafiction is equipped to do legitimate historiographic work. Critics of historiographic metafiction (see Katharine Andrews 9, Jennifer Blair 209, Sylvia Söderlind) have noted its apolitical nature. Katharine Andrews sums this up writing: “with so much emphasis on the stylistic characteristics of postmodern texts, [works of historiographic metafiction’s] political intentions get left behind” (9). In other words, often a work of historiographic metafiction focuses so much on executing a postmodern antinarrative that the politicized

historiographic work that could have been done gets lost in favour of a critique of narrative in general. Andrews also writes: “From the point of view of historical theory, this primary focus on discourse and textuality is problematic because, by reducing the past to text, historiographic metafiction loses its grasp on history both as lived experience and as process” (8). In short, even though Hutcheon sees her work as being political in the way it deconstructs master narratives, her critics think that often she focuses her argument about a given text on the way it engages with the concept of a master narrative in general, which sanitizes the potentially individual political labour that could be done by historiographic metafiction in revising a given history.

However, not everyone views historiographic metafiction as being apolitical. McCormack argues that those who have been marginalized and “delegitimized” by master narratives stand to gain the most from calling attention to the general construction of the history that legitimizes those narratives (39). McCormack writes:

[I]n cases where the history being contested is especially fraught: the histories of the ex-centric and the marginal whose pasts have been largely silenced, erased, and narrated from the hegemonic center, or, in other words, misrepresented to serve the center’s own purposes at the expense of those in the margins. (39)

Even though historiographic metafiction may not do specifically revisionist historical work, the macrohistorical questions it asks stand to benefit those whose histories have been silenced.

Although historiographic metafiction’s ability to do legitimate historiographic work is up for debate, it may not matter. Similarly to Stacey’s assertion I previously

noted about the postmodern, discussing historiographic metafiction has been argued as an historical exercise. In her article “Part of the project of that book was not to be authentic’: Neo-historical Authenticity and its Anachronisms in Contemporary Historical Fiction,” Katharine Harris notes that at the end of the twentieth century there was a turn in the discourse surrounding narrativist historiography and contemporary historical fiction, which she calls the “neo-historical aesthetic.” This contains within in it the more specific form she calls “neo-historical fiction,” noting historiographic metafiction as a precursor (194). Harris summarizes the work that is done by neo-historical fiction:

Neo-historical fiction is not postmodern-aware factual history that constantly critiques and acknowledges its own lacunas and influences nor is it a complete deconstruction of the capacity of narrative to provide any ‘true’ meaning about history. Instead, neo-historical texts create new histories that are ‘authentic’ in that they recognise their own narratives as problematically constructed but continue to function as (fictionalised) narratives that have something to say about the past as well as the present. (194)

In short, neo-historical fiction achieves historical “authenticity” by way of a coherent narrative. It is not perfect in its ability to do historical work, and it is honest about that, but without the suggestion that this makes all historical narrative impossible. Harris states: “There is openness and honesty that history is not reliably accessible through stories about the past but this paradoxically takes place within a coherent story” (200). She notes that it is not flawless, and the problem of neo-historical fiction is that by anachronistically critiquing the past by way of reference to the present, neo-historical fiction makes a claim that the narratives of the present are superior: “Ultimately, the

anachronism risks implying that there is no more ‘progress’ to be pursued in the present, because its superiority over the past is so secure” (209). She sees neo-historical fiction as resisting this by virtue of its admission of its own limitations (simply put, as the title implies, works of neo-historical fiction never intend to be accurate, about the past or present).

But what does my use of neo-historical fiction and historiographic metafiction look like in the fictional portion of my thesis, *The '59 Sound*? Firstly, as I have noted, my novella addresses the limitations of the current *Tish* historical narrative, which I will outline in the Part 2. Secondly, it employs aspects of both historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction, as well as aspects unique to my project in order to do historiographic work. *The '59 Sound* does not perfectly align with either historiographic metafiction, or neo-historical fiction. Like historiographic metafiction, my novella seeks to disrupt a given historical narrative, while also questioning our ability to know the past through narrative in general; and like neo-historical fiction, it attempts this disruption through a coherent narrative. Additionally, similar to neo-historical fiction my novella employs obvious anachronisms, and similar to historiographic metafiction it employs metafictional aspects, the fraudulent artifact (theorized below), as well as intertextuality. But unlike historiographic metafiction, my novella is not a postmodern narrative, and unlike neohistorical fiction, it does not fully critique the future through its use of anachronism; rather, it uses anachronism to explore how people remember the past. Furthermore, my project works against the apolitical nature of historiographic metafiction by politicizing the *Tish* narrative through the exploration of silenced and marginalized voices within that narrative.

Two of the main aspects of historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction that I employ extensively are the ‘fraudulent artifact’ and anachronism, respectively. In their book, *Fakes: An Anthology of Pseudo-Interviews, Faux-Lectures, Quasi-Letters, “Found” Texts, and Other Fraudulent Artifacts* (2012), David Shields and Matthew Vollmer theorize the “fraudulent artifact.” That is, the ‘fraudulent artifact’ a fictional version of so-called ‘real’ historical artifacts that, according to Leah McCormack, “call attention, not to the process of imposing order and narrative on documents, but rather to the “‘authenticity’ of the object, the document, itself” (39). In other words, the ‘fraudulent artifact’ has the self-awareness and self-reflexivity (the same self-awareness and self-reflexivity we see in historiographic metafiction) to provide a critique of itself within the text.

In my thesis, the ‘fraudulent artifact’ is deployed through the use of two forewords that carry a truth claim about the project as a whole. The first foreword is written by the self I have constructed within this document, and the second, written by one of the characters in the novella, Sasuke. The first page of the project gives the reader the arbitrary choice of where to start reading in the form of a hyperlink. If the reader begins with the critical section, the autobiographical-I representative of me claims to have written this document as a Master’s thesis, creating the characters in the novella to address gaps in the historiography of *Tish*. If the reader begins with the novella, Sasuke claims to have created me, and *Tish*, and written a fictional autobiography of her time on a similar magazine called *Anarmag*. Both of these claims point to the narrative construction of meaning in both fiction and academic discourses. In the same way that metafiction can be self-reflexive about its own construction, so too does this gesture

allow me as a scholar to be self-reflexive about the construction of my critical writing, and the narrative of my research employed within this thesis. Furthermore, I employ the fraudulent artifact through excerpts of a fictional autobiography written by the character Clark, as well as poems written by the character Bud.

Another prominent aspect of historiographic metafiction in my novella is intertextuality. Intertextuality creates a meta-awareness within the text of the existence of other texts, and therefore contributes to a metadiscourse or a metadialogic between those texts. The conversations between the texts happen via their juxtaposition that inherently compares and contrasts the two while admitting that a text is not created in a vacuum. A work is always participating in a tradition, and quite often multiple traditions, whether the author intends it or not. The use of intertextuality then places this text in conversation with these other works, while simultaneously being self-reflexive about the construction of narrative in general.

Much of the intertextuality in *The '59 Sound* I am defining as “temporal intertextuality,” that is, intertextuality that links my novella and the works it references not only by content or formal aspects such as theme or genre, but by virtue of having been encountered by the historian and fiction writer (me) during the creation of the project. This idea was inspired somewhat by a *Tish* poetics, as well as my historiographic approach. Charles Olson, a poet who influenced the *Tish* group, conceptualized the poet existing objectively in a “field” of other objects, rather than being the central subject of a poem (Olson 148). The poet is then decentred in an antihumanist fashion, and the poem becomes a record of experience within that field. Although I will expand upon this later, the intertextual gestures of my novella acknowledge an Olsonian/*Tish* poetics,

reimagining them into the inclusion of cultural works that found themselves within my “field” of production during the creation of this project. Furthermore, this parallels Carr and Trouillot’s historical approach in terms of the historian being inseparable from their work.

The most obvious examples of ‘temporal intertextuality’ in the novella are through the fictional characters Bud Fallon (one of the story’s protagonists) and the famous poet Tim Armstrong. Both of these characters’ namesakes produce intertextuality with other artists who are real. Tim Armstrong in real life is the chief lyricist and songwriter for the Berkeley punk band Rancid. Bud Fallon’s name is a reference to Brian Fallon, the lyricist and chief songwriter for the New Jersey punk band, The Gaslight Anthem. I was listening to the Rancid record *...and Out Come the Wolves* while writing this novella for no other reason than because it was on a playlist on my iPod. As I formulated my novella, I realized that I needed a fictional poet, and that Tim Armstrong, who fancies himself a poet (his solo record is called *A Poet’s Life*), would be perfect to base that poet on as Armstrong is from Berkeley, a place *Tish* mentor Warren Tallman and his wife Ellen Tallman had literary connections to. Additionally, I borrowed the name *The ’59 Sound* from a record by The Gaslight Anthem, initially because, as a title, it seemed to fit a story such as mine, which explored sound as a way of remembering the past. However, as I was formulating my project, I realized *The ’59 Sound*, in many ways, is a neo-historical album. There is a constant stream of references to other albums and literature. For example, in the song “Old White Lincoln,” the lyric “I lit a cigarette on a parking meter” is a line taken from the Bob Dylan song “Talkin’ World War III Blues.” The imagery used throughout the album makes the band seem as though they are writing

from the 1950s or 60s. For example, the lyric “our father’s factories marked our cards” in “Meet Me by the River’s Edge” recalls how the father’s social position determined who filled up their dance cards. Both patriarchal social positioning and dance cards are antiquated notions in the western world. The first song on the record, “Great Expectations,” contains a fraudulent artifact in the form of a sound that makes it seem as though the record is skipping before it starts. All of these intertextual and anachronistic instances serve to set the album in the past, while, paradoxically, like neo-historical fiction, we as listeners are grounded in the present by virtue of the music itself being a clear product of the New Jersey punk scene in the early 2000s. Threading this record throughout my own project creates intertextuality with the project’s namesake that acknowledges other works in the tradition in which my project is working, adding additional layers of meaning for the curious reader.

Intertextuality is also present in the form of epigraphs. Most notably, I have included *Doctor Who* quotations, which entered my ‘cultural field’ as I had been rewatching the show while I began writing this thesis. Furthermore, there are references to Kurtz from *Heart of Darkness*, Mary Ruefle’s *Madness, Rack and Honey*, Neil Gaiman’s commencement speech at The University of the Arts, and an article in *The Guardian* about Kirk Douglas, all of which were happened upon, rather than sought out due to similar content, during the creation of the project. These intertextual references then point to the construction of the thesis as a whole and the biases of the historian and author, rather than pointing to other works that are related through content or form.

Moreover, in keeping with historiographic metafiction, ‘temporal intertextuality’ allows my project to participate in énonciation, a term Hutcheon has taken from French

and applied to historiographic metafiction (“Canadian Historiographic” 228). Énonciation encompasses the entire field of art production: the creator, its influences, the creative process, the artifact itself, and the critical reception after its creation. Katharine Andrews states that this device is “by no means exclusive to Canadian literature” and that énonciation allows the “reader to overtly view the construction of narrative and therefore examine all of the epistemological issues which arise in the construction of historical narratives” (4). And although neo-historical fiction is transparent in its limitations, one of those limitations is that it similarly is not transparent in its historical sources. Many works of historical fiction may employ author’s notes, but certainly these notes are not all encompassing, nor do they provide the kind of critical analysis and theoretical methodology that this thesis does. By being transparent about my historical sources, and including references to works that influenced my creative output, my project achieves énonciation.

Finally, my novella is also metafictionally aware of its own construction through the narrative of creative production, as all the characters in the novella are poets working on a literary magazine. Further, each character’s relationship to how they remember the past critiques the *Tish* movement, which has been made up largely of autobiographical accounts, and critiques historiography in general. Moreover, the narrative voice seems to be outside of time, often discussing events that will happen in the future, and also occasionally using the general “you,” which could be construed as either free indirect discourse, that is, the third-person narration taking on the interior voice of the point-of-view character, or the narrated voice being aware of an implied reader.

Aspects of historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction have been used

to both explore and address erasure and silence in the *Tish* historiography. In Part 2, which covers historiography on *Tish* as a movement, I note the nostalgia with which that history has been constructed, as well as the (disputed) marginalized position that the narrative portrays the *Tish* group as occupying, and the resulting gaps and silences within the received *Tish* narrative. My historical methodology guides both my critical and creative works. The critical portion employs a kind of narrativist historiography, which, as I have noted, situates itself somewhere between positivism and constructivism; the creative portion situates itself somewhere between the historiographic metafiction and neo-historical fiction in order to fill the gaps and silences in the *Tish* narrative outlined in my Part 2. In the next part, I will outline the limitations of the received *Tish* narrative and describe how my novella has sought to address them.

PART 2: THE TISH HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Much has been written about the Vancouver poetry magazine *Tish* since its publication by a group of University of British Columbia (UBC) students in the early 1960s. Often the focus of this writing is largely on the poetics of the group, with less critical attention given to their historical narrative. In this project, I narrow my focus to writings that contribute to *Tish*'s historical narrative, excluding those that focus solely on poetics.

Currently, there exists no major, scholarly historiographic study focused on this group of students. Rather, their received historical narrative is comprised mainly of autobiographical accounts, literary criticism, creative works, and a small amount of writing with an historical focus. Although often works with a poetic focus on *Tish* do contain short sections of historical narrative (see Gregory Betts 65; C.H. Gervais 7; La Rocque 2), they lack historical rigor and is typically it is employed contextually to foreground the unique historical importance of the literary criticism to follow.

I would like to take the time to distinguish between *Tish* the newsletter and *Tish* the greater group or literary movement. The poetry newsletter *Tish* ran forty-five issues between 1961 and 1969 with four different editorial teams (La Rocque 2). It was collaborative newsletter produced by undergraduate and graduate students at UBC. Although created by the original editorial team of Frank Davey, David Dawson, Jamie Reid, Fred Wah, and George Bowering—who ran the magazine for the first nineteen issues from 1961-63—there was also a supporting community who were important to the magazine's inception. This vital group included but was not limited to Gladys Hindmarch, Daphne Marlatt, Robert Hogg, Warren and Ellen Tallman, other members of the UBC faculty, visiting poets such as Duncan, members of the creative writing circles

at UBC and Vancouver, as well as subsequent iterations of the editorial team. Davey notes that the way that critics have compartmentalized *Tish* into the first nineteen issues is, in his view, a strategy of separating the time period into a digestible chunk that is distinct from the later careers of poets such as Bowering or Marlatt (*When Tish* 321). The restriction of *Tish* to merely the editorial board of the first nineteen issues excludes contributors and aforementioned members of the community who helped spawn the magazine. The bulk of historical material on *Tish* focuses on the initial run of *Tish*, and therefore, so will my project; however, it will do so as an historical period, which includes the years leading up to the magazine's creation. I will not limit my focus merely to the five men on the masthead, but instead, widen my scope to the greater Vancouver poetry community surrounding the publication of the magazine, while admitting that a project of greater breadth could be expanded to include the history of the entire magazine.

My project will outline the received historical narrative *Tish*, how it is defined by marginalization and a 1960s counterculture narrative, and its participation in retrospective significance. I outline the works that make up this narrative, dividing them into four categories: literary criticism, creative works, historical criticism, and autobiographical accounts. Further, I will historicize each account, as there is over forty years of writing about the group, and establish a distinction between the intent and the effect of each work. I will argue that the collective narrative these accounts produce is nostalgic, contains gaps, silences, and limitations, and it results in the exclusion of marginalized subject positions while it also paradoxically lays claim to marginalization. This is not to undermine the historical value of these writings, but rather I mention this to

justify the focus of this section. Whether the works comprising the *Tish* narrative are intended as pieces of historiography or not, they all contribute in some ways to the *Tish* historical narrative, and therefore the gaps, silences, and contradictions within it. Finally, I explore how that narrative has manifested in my novella. But what is the received *Tish* narrative?

The received narrative of what is referred to as the ‘*Tish* movement’ typically highlights the coalescence of a marginalized group of students at UBC in the late 1950s and early 1960s, who identified outside of the hegemonic centre at the time, both socially and poetically. This group, it is said, was fuelled by their outsider status, and mentored by Warren Tallman and visiting American poets such as Robert Duncan and Robert Creeley. They changed the landscape and economy of Canadian poetry by creating a newsletter publishing the kind of poetry they perceived as missing from their local cultural imaginations. As a group of delinquent outsiders, they worked from inside the institution, nobly and romantically using its resources to create a Canadian poetic revolution, embodied in the analog form as a hand printed, self-licked stamped, and mail-delivered poetry newsletter.

I worry that perhaps I will come off as overly critical of *Tish* historiography, especially the autobiographical accounts. My intent is not to attack the group or to question the validity of accounts of their own life, but rather to identify and attempt to address the limitations in the work that comprises the received historical narrative, in a way that will not negate or replace existing historiography on the group, but rather be an addition to it. I will then examine how I have attempted to address these limitations in my novella, and how I have both succeeded and failed in doing so. The novella and critical

essay will aggregate to assemble a historiographic study of the poetry community surrounding *Tish*.

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Before I turn to an analysis of the work comprising the *Tish* historical narrative, I would like to look further into what that narrative is, and specifically, why I argue it is uncritical. The received *Tish* narrative is one characterized by perceived marginalization, and benefits from a parallel 1960s counterculture narrative. Frank Davey summarizes *Tish's* feelings of marginalization:

I think we felt marginalized in a number of ways, having come from a small town, and being disadvantaged vis-à-vis, in our view, the students who had been educated in the city. Marginalized in terms of being young; marginalized also in terms of the educational or academic or intellectual interests of the faculty at UBC. We definitely felt as if our own interests somehow were met, with the exception of Warren [Tallman], unsympathetically. Which is why we abused the faculty houses. Marginalized by being Canadian in North America; marginalized by being west coast and British Columbian, in the Canadian context; marginalized by being interested in writing, and becoming more and more interested in language rather than content, which was the dominant esthetic, it seemed to us, in the magazines that were most visible in Canada. (Hunter and Niechoda 92-93)

However, this marginalized narrative has been questioned. Pauline Butling, a Canadian critic as well as a member of the *Tish* community and wife of *Tish* poet Fred Wah, has problematized *Tish's* marginalized narrative. Butling nuances her analysis of *Tish* marginalization by arguing that though *Tish* identified as marginalized poetically, and

“both in terms of geographic location and social position,” (50-51) that ultimately, the group were much closer to the “dominant pole” than they perceived themselves to be (56). Butling does not suggest that their claims to social and class marginalization were not true, but rather that their status as white men “trumps” the other two (56).

Furthermore, this narrative of marginalization serves to silence those who would have been truly marginalized at the time, and “despite the innovative nature of their poetics and their democratizing social goals...the subject they were liberating was a mainstream male subject” (56). As a result even those who would be truly marginalized, such as “women, mixed race, and bisexual writers” within the *Tish* community conformed to the poetics of *Tish*, which were gendered and founded on a “dominant male ethos” and in doing so “enacted a violence against themselves as well as a group violence against other outsider positions” (“TISH: The” 56). *Tish* poet Daphne Marlatt confirms Butling’s claim, noting her own outsider status within that marginalized group. Marlatt states: “I always felt perilously on the edge. I never felt that I was part of even the *Tish* group” (“Given this” 34).

Butling proposes that the transgressive social and poetic narrative of *Tish* does not hold, and that within ten years, most of the original *Tish* editorial team had “all published at least a couple books, had acquired significant cultural capital as the exemplars of cutting-edge, radical poetics in English Canada, and most had jobs teaching at universities or colleges” (55). The implication is the *Tish* group has benefitted from a narrative of marginalization that requires nuances and historicization to avoid in turn excluding the truly marginalized from their received the historical narrative. But why has the narrative not been questioned more frequently?

Poet Christian Bök identifies the *Tish* group's "mythic status," as partially due to the frequent reiteration of the *Tish* received narrative (97). Canadianist scholar Gregory Betts similarly notes that *Tish*'s "well-mythologized" (65) narrative ignores their actual literary-historical contribution to Canadian writing in favour of their movement often being cited as marking the "shift from the 'early' or 'modern' to the 'contemporary' phase of Canadian literature" (69). Betts's focus is once again on poetics, but we can apply his assertion to an historical account: *Tish*'s historical narrative is treated uncritically due to the way it fits in with a Canadian literary teleology. Furthermore, the *Tish* narrative is romanticized for a kind of "literary pugilism" (65). The word 'pugilism' here is apt--like watching an old boxing match and remembering only the knock-out blow, and not perhaps the violent culture surrounding the sport, or the shaky hands of the old man that boxer might become.

In my own thesis, I don't want to suggest that members of the *Tish* community weren't marginalized at all. The fact is that poetically, and, in many ways, as a group, they were, but the narrative of that marginalized position in Canadian poetics benefits from the narrative of the poets themselves being marginalized. One must allow that the *Tish* poets were marginalized in certain ways (such as poetically within their historic moment or socially as outsiders in Vancouver) and identified as such, which informed their poetics, but that ultimately to look uncritically at this narrative of marginalization, and to extend it completely to social marginalization, is both irresponsible historically and ignorant to those who would have been truly marginalized at the time, such as women and people of colour.

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I have already suggested that the *Tish* narrative is often uncritically presented, drawing on a flawed narrative of marginalization. Further, I argue that the *Tish* narrative, and their perceived marginalization, strategically benefit from the counterculture narrative of the 1960s by virtue of temporal proximity. The 1960s, as a decade, is one romanticized for its progression in social issues vis-à-vis the civil rights movement and eventually, leading to advances in feminism and other branches of identity politics within the western world. It symbolizes the ‘passing of the torch’ from an older generation’s conservative, post-war world old to a younger group whose ideals are now often essentialized as progressive, but which at the time were seen as transgressive.

In her dissertation *Borderlines of Poetry and Art: Vancouver, American Modernism, and the Formation of the West Coast Avant-Garde, 1961–1969* (2007), Lara Tomaszewska notes the usage of the term “the sixties” as synonymous with the cultural symbolism of “youth idealism, revolutionary politics, psychedelic aesthetics, and the rhetoric of freedom and peace” (4). She writes that the term has become a clichéd and “nostalgic signifier” that holds both an overly positive and naïve narrative of social change, as well as an analog of “the improbability of publics to infiltrate and bring-down state apparatuses” (4). Tomaszewska goes on to argue that the utopian dreams of the 1960s, specifically as they relates to the avant-garde arts movement—including members of the *Tish* community—in Vancouver at that time, were important in fuelling a counterculture (4). This is important when considering the counterculture narrative of the *Tish* group, and the nostalgia surrounding this for a number of reasons. First, it allows their poetry and poetics, which were transgressive in terms of the dominant mode of poetics at the time, to benefit from a narrative of change in the 1960s. Second, it allows

the historical narrative of the group, and the personages important to that narrative, to take on the cultural capital associated with this kind of counter-culture narrative without actually having to be transgressive or navigate the world in a marginalized body.

Stephen Collis investigates poetry's place in social movements in his article "On Poetry in Protest." He challenges the idea that poetry can affect real change, but allows that it has a "galvanizing" element that creates a communal sense of a movement and its "social power" (7). I am reminded of Grace Paley's statement: "When you write, you illuminate what's hidden, and that's a political act" ("The Art and Activism"). Paley implies that the very act of illumination, to an assumed readership, is a political act. That perhaps writing cannot enact "real change" as Collis suggests, but that providing an alternative to hegemony through writing is its own act of political intervention.

But whether or not writing can affect social change is another paper entirely. The point is that the *Tish* narrative, whether the group affected social change or not, benefits from its temporal proximity to a 1960s narrative of social change. For example, towards the end of *The Line Has Shattered* (2013), a documentary about the 1963 poetry conference (an historical event associated with the *Tish* narrative) filmmaker Robert McTavish frames the documentary as parallel to the civil rights movement, showing images of Vietnam, nuclear bombs, and other historical symbols synonymous with the changing U.S. American cultural landscape of the 1960s. Poet Michael Palmer then states that "artistic practice is an essential counterweight" ("The Line Has"). But a counterweight to what, exactly? The *Tish* poets certainly did not bolster the American civil rights movement, nor did they successfully stop the Vietnam War. So why include these images? I argue, whether or not *Tish* affected real social change, which may be

impossible to measure, the historical narrative of the documentary, and similarly the received narrative of *Tish* itself, serve a purpose. In the same way the images of the 1960s social change serve the narrative of a conference symbolic of radical poetics, the *Tish* narrative borrows cultural capital from the real social change occurring in the 1960s and legitimizes the parallel literary narrative: that the poetics of *Tish* were a radical force created for and by those who were marginalized.

There is also the problem of retrospective significance in the *Tish* narrative. Retrospective significance is the imbuing of significance upon early events due to the importance of later events. For example, if a mechanic were gifted a toy car as a child, retrospective significance would be then citing that toy car as the reason he or she became a mechanic. At the time, receiving the car would not have been significant, and, realistically, there are most likely other factors leading to their eventual choice of job. But it is easy to imbue an historical moment like receiving the car with significance, because it serves as an analog, and can embody the past in a way that ideas or the undocumented cannot. But one can never be certain which events were actually significant and which weren't. So why does it matter if something has been looked at differently in retrospect? Because it dictates how a narrative is recounted, and can result in the silencing of historical events and personages, causing gaps and limitations in that history.

I argue that the *Tish* magazine itself, the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference, and the Duncan lectures in Warren and Ellen Tallman's basement have all been highlighted as important moments in the *Tish* narrative, thus being charged with retrospective significance. They are credited with much of the success that should in fact be credited to the greater poetry community of the Tallman's, UBC, and Vancouver itself.

It seems to me that more important than the magazine and the conference, or even the Duncan lectures, was the continuity of the meetings at the Tallman's, the community that gathered there, and the artistic aesthetics that brought them together. However, it is much easier to point to a single, documented event as historically significant than it is to point to years of undocumented meetings. These events, the 1963 conference, or Duncan's visit, act as fixed points in the *Tish* narrative. They are events that happened, and whether they happened or not is not open for debate. However, the importance of those events, when they occurred, their lasting importance to the historical narrative, and their impact upon the lives and careers of the *Tish* group, is.

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The *Tish* narrative is not homogenously constructed. As I have noted, the *Tish* historical narrative is made up of accounts with different intent, style, and focus, and written across different historical moments in which literary theory has changed immensely. The original *Tish* editorial period and the writing done by the *Tish* poets in the early sixties must be separated from writings on *Tish* and interviews in subsequent decades, as well as from the work done much later like Davey's memoir. Additionally, this work must be separated along lines of literary criticism, creative works, work with an historical focus, and autobiographical writing.

First, I will survey the accounts that, although contributing to the *Tish* historical narrative, ultimately have a literary focus. These works focus on the poetics of *Tish* or their literary position, and although they often contain historical sections within them that serve to contextualize and foreground the historical importance of the poetics of the *Tish* group, ultimately they are uncritical of the treatment of *Tish*'s historical narrative. Such

works include Gervais's *The Writing Life: Historical & Critical Views of the Tish Movement* (1976), essays from Douglas Barbour's *Beyond Tish* (1991), Lara H. Tomaszewska's dissertation *Borderlines of Poetry and Art: Vancouver, American Modernism, and the Formation of the West Coast Avant-Garde, 1961–1969* (2007), Lance B. La Rocque's dissertation *Revolution and Retreat: The Success and Failure of "Tish" Subjectivities* (2002), Stephen Morton's dissertation *A Poetics of Place in the World-System: West Coast Modernism and the Integration of Vancouver into the Global Economy* (2016), parts of Gregory Betts's *Avant-garde Canadian Literature: The Early Manifestations* (2013), and "TISH and KOOT" by Christian Bök. These accounts are either largely uncritical in the way they present their *Tish* narrative or if they are more critical, such as Betts and Bök, still heavily focus on the poetics of the group.

Essays from Gervais's book are collected into two sections entitled "Poetics," and "Genealogy," respectively. The latter purports to have an historical focus, and will be discussed in a following section. The former, is made up of essays focussing almost exclusively on poetics, such as Gervais's own "*Tish: A Movement*," and contain little historical value. Many of the essays in this section, and Gervais's book as a whole, are written by members of *Tish* or the Vancouver poetry community of the early 1960s. The "Poetics" section of Gervais's perhaps lack a critical historical narrative due to both its admitted focus on literature instead of history of that literature, as well as the time period in which the essays were written, taking place before much of the work of historical narrativists such as Hayden White, and before theories on identity politics.

Other older critiques of *Tish*, such as that of Keith Richardson and Robin Mathews found in Richardson's *Poetry and the Colonized Mind* (1976) have attempted to

be critical of *Tish*, accusing the group of participating in some kind of anti-nationalist agenda in which they, as a movement, shirked their supposed obligations to Canadian literature. Though written in the mid 1970s, and despite being largely discounted as a “xenophobic form of Canadian cultural nationalism” (Wiens 306) by scholars such as Jason Wiens and poet/academic Peter Quartermain (see “Romantic Offensive”), such accusations, actually in many ways feed into the group’s received narrative by providing a rather fiery dissent and thus acting to emphasize *Tish* as a counterculture to Canadian literary hegemony.

Beyond Tish was written more recently than Gervais or Richardson’s books, but similarly lacks historical focus, with the exception of the interview of a large number of members of the *Tish* group entitled “*A Tishstory*,” conducted by Irene Niechoda and Tim Hunter; and Warren Tallman’s “A Brief Retro-introduction to *Tish*,” both of which I will discuss in below in the section on autobiographical accounts.

Written as recently as 2007, Tomaszewska’s book-length assessment of *Tish* devotes more space than other texts to historical context. Yet, Tomaszewska’s work has a literary focus rather than an historical one. In her writings on *Tish*, she makes a number of mistakes, for instance, referring to Tallman as a poet (30). Furthermore, she credits Tallman alone with bringing up Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, Robin Blaser, and Jack Spicer stating doing so inspired “several local vanguard activities, the earliest being the poetry group *Tish*” (30). She quickly gives credit for the poetic evolution of the scene to Tallman and his Berkeley connections (which were actually his wife Ellen’s connections) (“*Before Tish*” 101-2) and the visiting poets, before moving into a discussion of *Tish*’s place in the Canadian avant-garde. Although, it should be noted that Tomaszewska does

admit that this evolution did not occur “through one or two visits, but rather through the repeated and sustained dissemination of California poetry through teaching and poetry readings” (39), ultimately her argument shudders over the *Tish* narrative in order to favour the analysis of a larger Canadian literary historical narrative.

Tomaszewska notes the significance of Duncan’s 1961 visit—which she also credits to Warren Tallman alone, when it was the group as a whole that helped pay for Duncan’s bus ticket (*When Tish* 105)—as marking “not only the start of the poetry movement and magazine *Tish*, but also the beginning of a new tradition of poetry in Canada” (40). I argue that this is short-sighted, and comes back to retrospective significance as I have noted above. When reading accounts by members of *Tish*, one gets the sense that the movement started much earlier than Duncan’s visit with the meetings at the Tallman residence. But when does a story start? Does being born mark the beginning of a writer’s book being written or does it start when they first put pen to paper? A narrative’s beginning depends on what the goal of that narrative is. If one is telling the story of their day, they would start the story differently than if they were telling the story of their week.

Morton’s dissertation focuses very little on any kind of historical narrative, giving much of the credit for the development of *Tish* poetry to Tallman (131-32), while engaging with the poetic focus of many sources I have noted (such as Butling and Bök) in order to make his own argument about Canadian place-based poetics.

Of the more contemporary criticism with a literary focus that contains a more critical historiographic approach is Betts’s *Avant-Garde Canadian Literature*, and Bök’s “TISH and KOOT.” Betts’s book does not contain a large section on *Tish*, as it has a

larger focus on the Canadian avant-garde. The writing he does do on *Tish*, once again focuses more on the poetics of the group and their place within a Canadian literary history; however, unlike many other sources discussed in this section, Betts problematizes the received *Tish* narrative. As I have previously stated in regards to Betts's argument of the well-mythologized nature of the *Tish* narrative, Betts is arguing quite the opposite that I am. Although we agree on the uncritical treatment of the historical narrative, I argue that the *Tish* narrative suffers in order to discuss poetics, and he argues that the narrative is too often foregrounded over their actual impact on Canadian literature.

Despite the nuanced discussion of *Tish* in Betts's book, Angelo Muredda notes that it "is not without its limitations" (319). Muredda suggests that Betts's book does not respond to its own charge "that avant-gardism's efforts at unidirectional revolution have produced an overwhelmingly white and male canon" (319-20). This is not uncommon in the writings about *Tish*: to note a problem (in this case, a white, male avant-garde canon) and then not to explore or address this problem thoroughly enough; I will return to this structure specifically when discussing Davey's memoir.

Bök's "TISH and KOOT" again has a literary focus, being more interested with the poetic relations between *Tish* and the Kootenay School of Writing (KSW), and both of their relations to Canadian literary history, than solely with their historical narratives. Bök's iteration of the *Tish* historical narrative falls flat in the first couple sentences of the article. He writes that the *Tish* narrative begins "in the summer of 1963, when a cadre of Canadian poets at the University of British Columbia (UBC) organizes a conference in Vancouver, inviting, among others such Black Mountain poets as Olson, Creeley, and

Duncan, all of whom have inspired the Canadians to consolidate a variant coterie around the magazine *Tish*” (97). Although Bök’s article intends to be critical of the perceived *Tish* mythos, ultimately, in summarizing the narrative in a sentence, he is participating in the reduction and oversimplification of that narrative, as well as the placing of retrospective significance on the 1963 poetry conference. Instead of looking critically at the narratives of each group, Bök spends much of the article drawing lines between the two schools based on their relationship to capital, lyricism, and pedagogical application; and lamenting the fact that *Tish* has gained success or “canonical celebrity” (97) to go along with their poetic achievement, whereas the Kootenay School of Writing (KSW) poets, who he sees as being more radical, have not.

The closest Bök gets to a critique of the *Tish* narrative is to question the way the group has legitimized themselves through their marginal identities. He questions the ability for anything marginal to exist, instead positing that marginality is perception or semantics, and that “despite our alien views, we reveal that, beneath the latex cartilage and the weird cosmetics, we are all, in essence, nothing more than variant members of the same universal consensus” (102). However, this claim seems problematic when considering the systemic violence perpetrated upon those who occupy marginalized subject positions. To say, ‘despite our perceived differences, we can’t help but participate in the same “utopian economy” (102)’ swiftly ignores the fact that this participation, whether voluntary or not, is not equal for everyone. Ultimately, though Bök’s article purports to focus on “historical narratives,” it still finds itself categorized as focussing on poetics or a literary history not focussed on *Tish*, but rather their place in a larger Canadian literary-historical narrative.

Works on *Tish* with a literary focus do not devote much space to a critical, historical context. Although a large amount of the work comprising the *Tish* historical narrative is autobiographical, it should be noted that it is actually the literary criticism I have just discussed, and the historical criticism I am about to discuss that are at fault in perpetuating an uncritical *Tish* narrative. By glossing over the *Tish* historical narrative in order to discuss poetics, these texts participate in perpetuating the uncritical, received narrative while simultaneously legitimizing it by virtue of their own form, the gold standard for scholarship: the critical, academic essay.

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There have been works by Bowering that fictionally address, as my novella does, the poetry scene on which my thesis is focused. Bowering's recent work *Attack of the Toga Gang* (2015) draws upon aspects of the *Tish* narrative and reformulates them into a fantastical story of special powers and time travel. His collaborative novel *Piccolo Mondo: A Novel of Youth in 1961 as Seen Somewhat Later* (1998), with wife Angela Bowering and fellow Vancouver writers David Bromige and Michael Matthews deals with youth in Vancouver during the same time period as the publication of *Tish*. Poems collected in Bowering's *Curious* (1973), such as "Gladys Hindmarch," also in some ways act as character sketches of figures important to the *Tish* scene. These creative works, though tangentially situated in the tradition of autobiographical historical fiction, and do somewhat revise the period comparable to *Tish* through fiction, ultimately participate in the very limitations I have outlined and do not have the critical, historical intent of my novella. For instance, Bowering himself notes, *Piccolo Mondo* as a "nostalgic" book ("Alphabiography" 38). My work intends to be both historiography and fiction, and must

adhere to the demands of each form, where Bowering's creative works, though having a dialogue with the *Tish* historical narrative, ultimately do not intend to follow any kind of academic historical rigor.

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There are works that purport to have an historical focus on *Tish*. These works include the "Genealogy" section of Gervais's *The Writing Life*, Robert McTavish's documentary *The Line Has Shattered* (2013), Roger Davis's dissertation *A Bibliographical Index and Critical History of "Open Letter"* (2016), and arguably, Pauline Butling's essay "TISH: The Problem of Margins," which I have already discussed. Although Butling was a part of the *Tish* community, her essay has an academic rigor and focus that makes me inclined to categorize it here rather than in the autobiographical section, while also noting its autobiographical bias and lack of distance from the events themselves.

The "Genealogy" section of Gervais's book, though purporting to have more of an historical focus, mostly focuses on poetics. Gervais writes about his mandate for the *The Writing Life*: the book "I think can be viewed as a literary and historical document," due to, Gervais posits, the way it gathers both insights into the *Tish* poet's writing as well as social and philosophical elements of that time. The preface provides a narrative of the *Tish* group's influence on Canadian poetics, which he states is "undeniable and considerable," citing their influence on the later movements of concrete and sound poetry, but ultimately does not ever question the narrative of *Tish* he presents (9). An easy place to do this would have been his "Preface." In the "Preface," he notes criticism of *Tish*'s "Yankee influence" (8) from Mathews and Richardson, which could have been built upon with his own criticism of the narrative. Instead, he uses the opportunity to

discuss poetics--which is what Mathews and Richardson also critique--claiming the authentic space in Canadian letters the *Tish* poets occupy, writing: “what I am wanting to emphasize here is that *Tish*ites did in fact develop for themselves a poetry of their own kind” (8).

If Gervais himself did not question the narrative of *Tish* he presents, I would have liked to see more essays included that did. We are given “The Vancouver Report” by Carol Bergé that criticizes the group, specifically focussing on Bergé’s time at the 1963 Poetry conference. Her account borders on a personal attack rather than responsible criticism. She writes: “Lionel Kearns is perhaps the only truly original thinker in the lot; he takes after no one” (144). She also attacks the Wahs who she says are “tops on the asskissing list re visiting celebrities and first in line for out-of-town assistantships, regardless of how they get them” (146). She sees them as derivative of Williams and the Black Mountain poets, and although she enjoyed herself (147), is very critical of the conference as a whole. Bergé’s text is an antithesis to nostalgia; she is overly critical of the Vancouver poetry scene on the basis of her own personal opinions of the people involved, rather than any real evidence. But that is the intent of the article: to go to the conference and report her sense of it. Ultimately, she gives a rich description of the city and the landscape, but offer little more than slander to the *Tish* narrative, other than perhaps a counterpoint to nostalgic accounts such as *The Line Has Shattered*.

What becomes apparent is that the Genealogy section’s historical focus is in fact a literary focus. Genealogy then, refers to the line of poets and poetic traditions in which *Tish* poets find themselves; this differs from the other section of the book by focusing on the poetics that led to *Tish* as opposed to the poetics that *Tish* practiced themselves.

However, this is not true of everything in the section. The interviews in the Genealogy section, such as Gladys Hindmarch's interview with Brad Robinson, have the most historical focus of the book; however, are limited in much the same way as the other autobiographical accounts I will discuss. However, Gervais's account must be again historicized. His book came out in 1976, a decidedly different time in historical criticism.

The Line Has Shattered, though not a *Tish*-specific documentary, covers the 1963 Poetry conference, an important event in the mythology of the Vancouver poetry scene. Regardless of the actual significance of the conference, the documentary reflects on the time period in a nostalgic and uncritical way. It is concerned mostly with the poetics of the group, and uses the conference and Vancouver as a backdrop to a nostalgic narrative that parallels those poetics. During an interview in the documentary, poet Clark Coolidge states his account of the conference "probably just sounds ridiculous and romantic at this point, but it was" ("The Line Has"). He is right—it does, but the film never attempts to counteract that romanticism critically. There is very little negative commentary about the conference, or if there is, it is not as foregrounded as the importance of the conference. For example, Coolidge tells a story about Ginsberg crossing the border, and jokes about how they were probably driving under the influence. But he tells it as a joke, or a testament to the time and the attitude of the conference, when realistically driving under the influence is illegal because it's dangerous.

Much of the documentary feels very contrived and dramatized. Parts of it are recounted in the present tense, and done so using an almost comic voice-over, which presumably seeks to replicate a 1960s broadcaster's cadence. There are other such fantastic elements; for example the jazz music in the background a genre synonymous

with artistic experimentation serves as a kind of emotional rhetoric signalling radicality to the audience. Often interviewees recount the conference in majestic settings like the ocean or the UBC campus with shots of the interviewees looking out on the late in dramatic rumination. All this contributes to the historical aspects of the documentary being less nuanced, feeling more like fiction, even though the poetics are discussed seriously and at length.

At the end of the documentary, the narrator states that “Canada has a history of the unconventional going back memorably to 1963” (“The Line Has”). This quotation serves the narrative of the documentary and signals the importance of the event, but Canada’s unconventional literary history goes back farther than that. Many believe that by the time the conference happened, the poetry scene in Vancouver was in decline. Both Davey and Tallman have questioned the success of the conference. Davey positions the ’63 conference in *When Tish Happens* at the end of his *Tish* narrative, stating that “[the conference] also feels like part of the past rather than the future” (*When Tish* 179). Davey implies here that the conference is the end of a poetic period in Vancouver, not the beginning of something new. He devotes only a few paragraphs to the conference, and is sceptical of its value, calling it “less rich than people expected” (*When Tish* 179). Referring to Tallman’s unpublished letters, Davey writes that as a result of the conference, Vancouver as a place of new writing had “closed up shop” (*When Tish* 190) and that, Tallman was also dissatisfied with the conference and “how limited its achievements were” (*When Tish* 193). Although Davey, who did not participate in the conference (but did attend some of the readings) (Vidaver) and for that reason may be biased in portraying it as unimportant, it is clear, as I have previously suggested, that the

conference may have been imbued with retrospective significance. Tomaszewska refers to the conference as “[t]he culmination of a three-year frenzy of poetic activity on the west coast” (19). Tomaszewska’s description seems more apt as it notes the importance of the poetic activity that came before the conference, emplotting the conference as the climax of a poetic community rather than the inciting incident or catalyst for it, which places isolated importance singularly on the conference.

There are short sections of *The Line Has Shattered* that address some of the concerns I have outlined. For instance, the conference is addressed as a “boys club” (“The Line Has”). In the documentary, Marlatt says she is conscious of the fact that she hasn’t mentioned poets Denise Levertov and Margaret Avison. The section goes on to touch on the fact that the women were on the edge of the conference, with Wah noting that it was an Olson, Creeley, and Duncan thing (“The Line Has”). In a separate scene in the documentary, Wah notes that “male, Black Mountain” poets dominated the conference. Furthermore, the documentary addresses the conference as an easy moment to isolate that is representative of the greater poetic activity at the time (which is the exact kind of retrospective significance to which I refer). The potential nostalgia of the documentary is also pointed to by Michael Palmer, but ultimately rejected. Bowering says maybe conference participants who went on to long careers as poets and academics may have done so without the conference. This does show an awareness of some of the limitations of the documentary, but ultimately feels tacked on towards the end, and little time is devoted to exploring the implications of these limitations.

Butling, in her essay, “TISH: The Problem of Margins,” like my own project, situates her work as, not focusing solely on their poetics, but to “analyze the connections

between their poetics and their geopolitics as well as to examine their ‘position vis-à-vis the dominant pole’” (50). Butling’s account is in some ways one of the most historically responsible, and does not participate in as many of the common limitations of the historiography. Throughout the essay, Butling provides a more nuanced look at the *Tish* historical narrative, while noting that it is in fact a narrative, and problematizing the extension of these narratives to social marginalization. Butling’s article is limited then in its size and scope. In an article only spanning a few pages, and cannot address the entire *Tish* narrative, when its focus is on poetics, geopolitics, and social position. Butling’s article is very important to the formulation of my resistance to the marginalized narrative of *Tish*, as well as below when discussing how the received narrative of *Tish* has produced erasures and silences.

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The problem with there being no thorough historiographic study done on *Tish* is that the historical narrative is largely made up of autobiographical accounts. Before examining why autobiography as an historical source is problematic, I would like to distinguish between the intent and the effect of these works. Just because the autobiographical accounts produce silences or contain limitations as a historical work does not mean the work was written with this intention. Autobiography is not historiography, and cannot be held to the same standards. However, just because an autobiographical work wasn’t intended as legitimate historiography does not mean that it does not contribute to an historical narrative.

The most obvious limitation of autobiographical accounts as they comprise an historical narrative is that they rely on memory in a way that is problematic. Not unlike

the narrative process of constructing historiography, our memories are constructed, which can lead to errors and omissions. In her book, *The Limits of Autobiography*, Leigh Gilmore examines what the title infers: the limits of autobiography. Although her book focuses on autobiography the genre as opposed to different modes such as memoir or autobiographical accounts more generally, many of the limits she outlines can be applied to each. She describes how autobiography is “political,” whether intended or not, because it “offers writers the opportunity to promote themselves as representative subjects, that is, as subjects who stand for others” (4). So if a writer’s work becomes representative of a moment, it must be historicized and politicized in a way that it may not have been during the lived experience. She goes on to suggest that this is one of autobiography’s crucial limits: a “compulsory inflation of the self to stand for others,” making it “hard to clarify without falsifying what is strictly and unambiguously ‘my’ experience when ‘our’ experience is also at stake” (5). This becomes especially problematic when considering autobiography as a source for historical narrative. The subject of the autobiography become representative for the whole of a history, which potentially idealizes or essentializes that history; the autobiography stands in for the prosopography which in turn is representative of the historiography.

In regards to *Tish*, the memoir and autobiographical accounts aggregate to legitimize a narrative that is uncritical in terms of historiographic work while simultaneously standing in as representative of the history of a large group of people and events. But this limitation also takes the autobiographical as fact, which is another limit of the autobiographical account: self-representation. Gilmore notes the paradox of the objective truth-claim formally made by the genre of autobiography, and its opposition to

the self-representation it relies upon. She writes:

Thus, along with the dutiful and truthful accounting of a life one might find in autobiography, the self is not only responsible but always potentially culpable, given autobiography's rhetorical proximity to testimony and the quasi-legalistic framework for judging its authenticity and authority that is so easily mobilized. (20).

Gilmore emphasizes the way autobiography is held to an almost legalistic standard of truth, and how the self constructed in such a text is perceived as responsible for, or accountable to, that truth. Though Gilmore's book focuses on trauma narratives, she makes an important point: that in some ways, due to their reliance on memory, there are certain autobiographical narratives that "can never meet the strictest standards of evidence (involving corroboration, for example) and still come into being" (24). This is a problem of autobiography and historiography as a whole: that there are facts that are unverifiable, especially if they rely on memory, and that if autobiography has to stick to strictly verifiable fact, it may not be able to be written at all. This is why I suggest a major historiographic study on *Tish* would serve the discourses on the movement. In the same manner as my project, albeit in a larger and less creative way, a comprehensive historiographic study could provide context and analysis for the autobiographical accounts that make up the received *Tish* narrative, ultimately nuancing it in a way it currently is not.

Like much of the writing about *Tish*, the autobiographical accounts focus heavily on poetics. There are numerous interviews with *Tish* community members such as Brad Robinson's interview with Hindmarch, collected in Gervais's *Writing Life*; Marlatt's

interview with Bowering “Given This Body: An interview with Daphne Marlatt” in *Open Letter*; and Davey’s memoir *When Tish Happens: The Unlikely Story of Canada’s ‘Most Influential Literary Magazine’* (2011). Many works by Bowering, such as *Left Hook* (2005) and *A Magpie Life* (2001) contain writings that in some way touch upon the historical narrative surrounding *Tish*, but do not focus on it. The “A Tishstory” interview, conducted by Tim Hunter and Irene Niechoda gives very little historical context for the group, but collectively covers the *Tish* narrative through interviewing a number of the key members. Tallman’s writing on the group, Reid’s interview on Wordarc.com, and Wah’s 2000 interview in *Canadian Literature*, as well as Wah’s *Permissions: TISH Poetics 1963 Thereafter—* (2013), rehearse the typical *Tish* narrative. As I will discuss, many of these accounts do have certain differences, but parallel in their perpetuation of silences and gaps. In this section, I focus most heavily on Davey’s accounts as he, having written a large memoir on the time, is the ripest for historical study.

When considering how much of the historical narrative the autobiographical accounts of *Tish* make up, of which I have already noted the formal limits, the historical problem of these accounts is one of representation. The accounts by white men far outweigh accounts by women and racialized people. Due to the volume of work and accounts of the period by white men, the content of these historical accounts, and therefore the content that makes up much of the *Tish* historiography, contains the inherent bias and focus of these authors. My focus is often on the men of the group simply because the women of the *Tish* community haven’t published as much about the period. But their contributions to the *Tish* narrative, such as Hindmarch’s piece in *Open Letter*, entitled “Pauline & Fred: Friends, Poetics, Community,” are essential, and do not

participate in silence to the same degree as the men's.

Furthermore, without an academic historical focus, these autobiographical accounts become the source of nostalgia and contradiction in the *Tish* narrative, and are then used as sources for historical context in the aforementioned literary, literary-historical, and creative writing on *Tish*. While autobiography's lack of historical rigor can be justified as a lack of formal intent, the scholars of literature should hold their own work to a higher standard, and unpack the historical narrative of *Tish* further, even if their work has a focus on poetics.

Like any history, within the *Tish* narrative there appears to be fixed events that members of the group remember similarly. For instance, most of the accounts recall Wah wanting to start a magazine (Hunter and Niechoda 90; Davey 121; Fee and Gunew) and Tallman saying they did not know enough to do so. Another example is how the meetings at Tallman's arose out of reading and not understanding Olson's "Projective Verse" (Davey 103; Hindmarch 16; Fee and Gunew).

There are, however, differences in the way each member of the *Tish* group remembers the past. For instance, Wah recalls a solid group of people in an early Tallman poetry class, a group in which Davey is not mentioned (*When Tish* 123). In contrast, Davey states that he recalls the situation being reversed, and that he was there and does not remember having met Wah at this time. Davey corroborates his mistrust of Wah's account by citing an interview with Reid (*When Tish* 123); anecdotal evidence discounted by other anecdotal evidence.

When Tish Happens is certainly 'emplotted,' to borrow White's term, and even though it holds the secondary title: "*The Unlikely Story of Canada's 'Most Influential*

Literary Magazine,” it reads more like a memoir of Davey’s early writing life, with his run as editor of *Tish* as the guiding narrative, and with Davey himself, being the central figure of *Tish*. The book does not start with the narrative of *Tish*, and instead starts with Davey as a small child (1). The widened scope of the *Tish* narrative is the book’s strength and one of its weaknesses. On one hand, the reader is given a much longer, more in-depth account of the *Tish* narrative; on the other, this account while purporting to tell the narrative of the magazine, is very much centred on Davey alone. This has resulted in Davey’s account being presented as representative of the group and time period as a whole, a limitation I have explored above that Gilmour notes of the autobiographical.

Davey’s accounts are marked by his constant rewriting of the group’s narrative, and seemingly a conscious performance of a particular past he wishes to remember. In an interview with Bowering, Davey separates himself from his work during *Tish*. Bowering tells Davey he is going to ask him about his books in chronological order, to which Davey replies, “I’ll warn you right now that I’m a stranger to a lot of my older work.” In turn, Bowering asks what he means, and Davey replies, “I haven’t read it lately, I haven’t paid much attention to it—it’s written by somebody else, and you might ask me a factual question and I might answer incorrectly because I haven’t been interested” (“Starting at” 96). This could be construed as a transition of poetics throughout Davey’s life, but if we consider the way bp Nichol noted *Tish* writers having to forge their own legacy beyond *Tish* if they wanted to be of lasting literary-historical importance, Davey’s statement takes on new meaning (*When Tish* 199). Davey seems to be separating himself from his *Tish* legacy by demonstrating his unfamiliarity with the poet he was in the 1960s.

Davey constructs himself as not caring about success. About publishing with

small presses, he states:

I think that a lot of people wish to become well-known and the ones who become well-known have set out with that in view. I have only wanted to be involved with writing, to write work which I felt quite satisfied with and to encourage work from other people, work with other people, make a—create a literary climate in which serious literature and a literature involved with language, literature involved with pushing literary form into new possibilities, could be created. Uh, I've never been concerned with my reputation. (Komisar 179)

This is a nice sentiment: that Davey is in it for art's sake and never thinks about reputation or how he is perceived. However, as a writer, external perception has surely crossed Davey's mind, especially when he is part of a group that locates their poetics so specifically in difference from other popular forms of poetry. For instance Davey spends a large section towards the end of *When Tish Happens* discussing public perception of some of the group, referring the Robin Mathews's writings on them over the course of the seventies as "great for publicity and comic relief" (307). But Davey's previous statement of ambivalence to public perception plays along with the narrative of *Tish*. As I have noted, the *Tish* group constructs themselves as a 1960s counterculture, anti-materialist, anticapitalist movement. Not caring about public perception feeds into that narrative.

We see a hyper-awareness of how Davey and *Tish* have been perceived in *When Tish Happens* and other accounts by Davey. But Davey anticipates this criticism, writing: "There was this myth that there were two Frank Daveys" (Komisar 186). He cites having no interest in how he is perceived, but then often seems to expend much literary energy 'setting the record straight,' so to speak, or making sure it is known that what other *Tish*

writers think is one thing, and Davey's *Tish* is another thing. For example, Davey cites Bowering stating Davey and Wah "didn't know anything about Canadian poetry," and then corrects him: "George never asked me what I knew about Canadian poetry" (*When Tish* 183).

Davey, to his credit, includes how he has been criticized for constructing himself by Hindmarch in *When Tish Happens*. He publishes part of a letter in which Hindmarch accuses him: "You slide through on your intelligence and ability and don't distinguish any more between who you actually are and what your image of you is" (*When Tish* 259). In the letter Davey cites, Hindmarch notes that "several of the things I said three years ago still hold." (*When Tish* 259). Davey notes that it is a pretty astute letter, but that she is wrong about his "sliding through" (259). Davey feels that he has actually worked really hard, but also worked hard to seem as though he was not working hard, noting that he learned in elementary school that "other children loathed young guys who worked for grades, I've been pretending that I can't help but succeed. But I'm not going to admit it" (259).

All of this is not to throw dirt on Davey, or to undermine his authority, but to note that Davey has been identified as consciously constructing or performing a certain kind of Frank Davey. All of this is to show that Davey's accounts of *Tish* are strategic in that he anticipates and addresses criticisms of his work, but also contradictory in that even though he notes the criticisms, he does not convincingly refute them.

I wanted to be rather hard on Davey for his memoir because of how often he rejects the accounts of others, and I think at times, I have been. But I do think, if nothing else, Davey achieves a very personalized history, in the same way I am attempting to do,

albeit not autobiographically. At least he does attempt to note his own criticisms or limitations, even if it is not explored fully enough. At one point, he even notes why Wah's and Hindmarch's accounts are flawed in that they "have been limited by the circumstances of their making and the fact that all of the writers had a role in the events they recount" (*When Tish* 119), but fails to note this limitation in his own work.

Hindmarch's accounts are characterized by her sense of community and lack of romanticism. In her article "Pauline and Fred," she even gives us a definition of community (15). Granted the article is published in a 2004 issue of *Open Letter* with a focus on Wah and Butling, and not *Tish* itself, but it tells stories of community in the literary scene. She states that the reason many of them met was "to get a handle" on Olson's "Projective Verse" (16). Though she talks about poetics, it is relegated to a driving force, but not the focus.

In an interview with Brad Robinson, Hindmarch is also very candid in a way that we do not often see with the *Tish* group, and decidedly less romantic, noting aspects of the time period that do not necessarily fit the *Tish* narrative. In the interview, she says: "I was a non-reader, I didn't read for enjoyment, I still seldom do" ("Before Tish" 94). This is honest; a person who was part of a major literary scene considering themselves a nonreader? She also says she had "no sense of the city at that time, other than [that she] didn't like it" (98). When meeting Bowering she felt she had little to say, and relates her lack of socialness to being a "pretty plump girl" ("Before Tish" 98). She says that she "really liked everything in the magazine," referring the *The Raven* (a UBC publication) which seems to run contrary to the feeling that there was no west coast writing ("Before Tish" 98). She also says the writer's workshop run by Tony Friedsen ran "three pretty

solid years” (“Before Tish” 98). This seems to refute the idea of how marginalized the *Tish* group felt as writers at UBC, but in *When Tish Happens*, Davey gives us the sense that it wasn’t that there was no scene, just not one they were interested in. The existing scene was dominated by “Angry Young Man” (78) writers, who are symbolic of an antiquated, British influenced poetry that was dominant in Canada at the time.

Hindmarch’s interview gives a more clear sense than the McTavish documentary or many of the oversimplified summaries in literary criticism I have discussed that the process of *Tish* happening was a slow, community effort.

Marlatt’s largest contributions come in the form of a number of interviews (see “Given this”; “Between Continuity”; “Interview With”; and Hunter and Niechoda). But Marlatt does not seem as interested in recounting the *Tish* narrative as she does with poetics. Even when asked directly about the UBC department during the time of the first *Tish* editorial period, Marlatt turns the question around with one of her own: “Do you remember the exchange of letters Frank & I had because he refused to print some of my work in *Tish*?” (“Given this” 35). Though this is an interesting insight into disagreements, Marlatt bring her focus back to poems. She is also featured heavily in McTavish’s documentary, and notes the lack of female representation at the conference. I return to Marlatt’s focus when I discuss how women have been silenced from the narrative.

Bowering’s writing on the group is marked by constant reference to his *Tish* roots, but never a full exploration. He always writes playfully and romantically of the time period. For example: “there was this strange skinny anarcho-muse on the wrong side of the UBC English department. You could sleep on his floor and read his peculiar little

poetry books, borrow his car, stay up all night reading your lyrics to him" ("TALLMAN"). Elsewhere, Bowering rebukes work that is "self-indulgent romanticism" ("The Most" 134) which, like my previous example, he seems to participate in in his own remembering of the *Tish* period. Bowering then addresses the criticism that they have received for being "unemotional and academic" by "young romantics," who he sees as only wanting to "reconstruct the great chain of being, with themselves at the top" ("The Most" 134-35). The irony of all of this is that Bowering accuses someone else of romanticizing something—the very thing he has done in his own accounts of *Tish*. More ironically, seemingly Bowering assumes that *Tish* has reconstructed the chain of Canadian poetics, with themselves at the top after accusing others of that very thing. Davey constructs *Tish* similarly at the top of a "chain of being," saying the first time Canadian writers "take the lead" is during his generation of writers, which he characterizes as being potentially "egotistic" (Komisar 189).

But Bowering is also quick to point to the limitations of his accounts, always in a self-deprecating or comic fashion. Bowering notes the limitations of his memory in an interview: "I can't remember very much except the parts that I've been told by other people. The person who seems to have the best memory of what went on in that time, *if* it's true—that is to say it has the most *details*--is Fred Wah" (Hunter and Niechoda 87-88).

Warren Tallman's accounts of the group are very nostalgic, though, one could argue that Tallman's poetic prose has a way of aggrandizing its subject romantically and prosodically to begin with, and his accounts of *Tish* are often almost satirical, even playful. Additionally, Tallman acknowledges the fact that *Tish* was a communal effort,

where many accounts tend to be content in attributing *Tish* to the five men who served as its editors. Tallman states:

The *Tish* poets, fully supported by numerous friends of like inclination from blewointment press, Talonbooks, and *BC monthly*, were, in polite guise, thoroughgoing literary delinquents who lifted everything they could lay their hands on from their incredible naïve American visitors for the purposes of their own imaginations. (“A Brief” 115)

In the same sentence, Tallman goes from the critical historical acknowledgement of the community that surrounded the magazine, to calling them a word he often uses, “delinquents,” which participates in the counterculture narrative by portraying the group as an other to conservative power structures. The *Tish* group was in fact mostly in grad school or later years of college, so not exactly kids, and far from delinquents. I realize Tallman is writing with a certain kind of tongue-in-cheek irony or wit, but it serves the *Tish* counter-culture narrative in a way that is problematic if unchecked. Tallman also, as a part of that community, has something to gain when the praise is given not to the group, or its successful poets alone, but to the community surrounding it.

Throughout “A Brief Retro-introduction to *Tish*” Tallman debunks popular myths about the group using a structure alternating between “false propositions” and “corrections” of those propositions. In a self-deprecating bit of reflection, Tallman puts forth the false proposition that *Tish* poets were too heavily influenced by him or that he deserved much of the credit. Then in the response, he focuses on himself and his wife Ellen’s part in the meetings that spawned the magazine (116). Though Tallman’s involvement in the *Tish* scene cannot be understated, the rhetorical strategy is the same

contradictory one that Davey uses, and one that is common of works in the *Tish* narrative: saying you are not one thing that people have accused you of being, and simultaneously committing textual acts that support the contrary.

Certain accounts do nothing but rehearse the received narrative of *Tish*. The few accounts of time period we get from Reid and Dawson do not contribute anything we do not also see with any of the other *Tish* men. Reid's interview focuses heavily on poetics, and tells a similar story of *Tish* origins. Ultimately, whether they just did not write about the time period, or, due to having less success than Marlatt and Bowering as poets or Davey as both a poet and an academic they could not get what they did write published, there are not enough accounts from these two. Wah's *Permissions*, again has more of a poetic focus, and falls short as an historical account as well, especially when he praises the McTavish documentary (9). His other writings on *Tish* similarly follow the script of either focusing on poetics, or if they do contain historical material, they rarely stray from the script.

A project of this breadth could not hope to analyze all of the ways in which the works that make up the *Tish* historiography contradict one another, though Davey does some work to address these contradictions towards the end of his memoir (321). More interviews could be conducted, and the years' worth of letters between the group could be analyzed. Even then, perhaps the complete story of *Tish* could not be uncovered. As it stands, the autobiographical accounts make up a large part of the *Tish* narrative, and ultimately, like the criticism I have previously discussed, have a focus that always circles back around to poetics, rather than historical narrative. Furthermore, I realize that I have been very critical of the autobiographical accounts, and paradoxically used them heavily

as an historical base for my novella. This is because these accounts are indeed rich in historical detail; however, they produce significant gaps and silences. Now that I have discussed the works contributing to the *Tish* narrative, and that narrative's claims to marginalization and beneficial proximity to a 1960s counter-cultural narrative, I will focus on and those gaps and silences.

GAPS AND SILENCES

As I have argued, the lack of a major historical study written on *Tish* means that the autobiographical accounts, creative work, literary criticism, and scant historical criticism comprise the received narrative. As a result, the narrative lacks a critical complexity, resulting in gaps, silences, erasures, and limitations. The historical narrative has been dominated by white, male professionals like Bowering and Davey, which has led to women, racialized individuals, and the economically disenfranchised being silenced; making the narrative problematic from an anticolonial standpoint and ignoring those whose artistic intent did not match that of the dominant *Tish* members, as well as members of the greater community who did not go on to enter Canadian literary fame. Furthermore, it has led to idealization of the historical personages included in the narrative. Though, as I have noted, the community is often limited to the five men on the mast-head of *Tish*, other accounts, such as Hindmarch's, have the community as being as large as 30 people ("Before Tish" 101). In this section, I outline those gaps and silences, and explain how I have attempted to reimagine a narrative that addresses them.

In general, the *Tish* community, though large, is often distilled into just five men, who are often, but not always, mentioned alongside Marlatt, and Hindmarch, as well as

the occasional other member of the group, usually their mentor, Tallman. Butling is not always mentioned, although she seems to have also been part of the group from an early point (Hindmarch 15). One could make the argument that these five men formed the original editorial board of *Tish*, and that is why women have been excluded, but it is not that simple. If that were the case, neither Hindmarch or Marlatt (who were not on the initial editorial board) would be mentioned as frequently as they are, and David Dawson and Jamie Reid (who were on the masthead) would be mentioned more often.

Marlatt went on to a similar level of poetic success as Davey, Bowering, and Wah (having published over 30 books and being inducted into the order of Canada in 2006), which is perhaps why she is so often included in writings on the group; Hindmarch, who published much less, is not always included. The hierarchy of how *Tish* poets are mentioned, then, is seemingly a gesture to the readership, who may not know the period, as a way of legitimizing the worth of the literary criticism about to be discussed. That is, noting those who were most successful as a way of answering the “so what” question of a given work.

Marlatt discusses, in her interview with Brenda Carr, how “women have historically been defined in reference to men” (“Between Continuity” 105). Butling states: “[the] two women in the group were equally successful in getting teaching jobs and getting published, perhaps in part because of the cultural capital they acquired by association with the male-dominated group” (60). This implies that the success of the women—she is referring to Marlatt and Hindmarch with the word ‘two’—was as a result of their affiliation with men. But we do not see proof of her claim, nor would proof of such a claim be easy to obtain. One could easily make the argument that the two women

were published on the merit of their own work, or received teaching jobs due to the fact that they published. Although, Marlatt has had much more literary success than many of the men in *Tish* (for instance, publishing far more than Reid or Dawson), it seems Butling implies not that the women of *Tish* were not talented, but that they also benefit from the marginalized narrative that the men of *Tish* have built careers on. And in fact, this narrative of marginalization is perhaps more true for the women than it is for any of the men.

Davey denies the exclusion of women from the *Tish* narrative, while paradoxically excluding them from his narrative in some ways. For example, women are excluded from Davey's account even in the material object; the front cover of his book shows a few of the *Tish* men, with another man (a random hitchhiker), a few classic cars, but no *Tish* women. Having written his memoir more recently than many writings on *Tish*, and with the benefit of identity theory, Davey takes a few pages to address the accusations of the exclusion of women from *Tish* historiography, which he notes has been brought up by both Marlatt and Butling (*When Tish* 196-97). Davey states, "I can recall none of Hindmarch, Johnson or Marlatt visiting the *Tish* office to help...if such help had been routine, I know I would remember" (*When Tish* 198). Davey silences the women in the *Tish* narrative, while purporting to be after accuracy. He could have easily written: "I don't remember the women being there, but perhaps they were." Doing so, thus admitting the limitations of himself and his own memory, would critically serve his account. This is the assumption that Davey makes throughout his memoir, that his memory is correct, while he questions the memory of others. Similarly, I am reminded of the quotation I presented above in which Davey questions whether Wah was part of the scene during a

certain time in the same way that Wah questions if Davey was.

Davey continues to analyze the supposed exclusion of women from the *Tish* narrative. He writes: “However, whatever was ‘blocking’ these women from participating officially was probably as much their own internalization of the assumptions of the time, and *Tish* magazine’s declared focus on poetry, as it was any conscious attempt by the men to exclude them” (197). Davey identifies internalized sexism as a facet of the exclusion of women from the *Tish* history, claiming its equal factoring into the exclusion of women from the *Tish* narrative as a conscious or active decision. In pointing to the internalized sexism of male dominated society, a “dynamic,” he notes they were “all entangled in,” (*When Tish* 197) he is able to deflect from the real problem Butling points out: it is not whether or not the exclusion was conscious, but that it exists. He admits that Marlatt is right to say that Hindmarch “has not been a large part of *Tish* historiography,” but that “neither have David Dawson or Jamie Reid, who were on the masthead and who published, or have published, roughly the same number of books” (*When Tish* 199). Davey deflects emphasis from the claim that women have been excluded from *Tish* on the basis that so have other men, whom he implies are arguably more important to the history. He writes:

bp’s theory about *Tish* was that critics had awarded George [Bowering] the role of its representative writer, and thus ridded themselves any obligation to write about the texts of the other four editors, or of those of the later *Tish* periods—most likely, he thought, because George’s writing appeared to most closely approach Canadian literary norms. He accurately forecast that only by separating oneself from *Tish*, and becoming the representative writer for something else—

such as postmodern criticism, or Chinese-Canadian poetry—would any of the others get much literary-historical notice. (*When Tish* 199)

Davey suggests that it is not so much that the women have been silenced, but that everyone but Bowering has been, to a degree, ignored, unless they branched off and redefined themselves outside of *Tish*.

Davey does make efforts to address the silencing of women from the *Tish* historiography, and his memoir is one of the accounts that includes Marlatt and Hindmarch and Ellen Tallman the most; however, this is contradicted not only in the way he rejects how women have been silenced from *Tish* historiography, but in the way his memoir similarly participates in this silence. For example: in *When Tish Happens*, he reduces Marlatt's contribution to being his muse, which in turn made *Tish* happen. He writes:

Sometimes I wonder whether *Tish* would have happened, or at least happened in the various precise ways it is said to have happened, had Tony Friedson not urged Daphne Buckle to attend the Writers Workshop in the fall of 1960, and had I not so intemperately pursued her. (*When Tish* 124)

He seems to make a similar move when discussing his early friendship with Hindmarch, making sure to mention that she wouldn't have joined without him (*When Tish* 82).

The women of *Tish* have been more inclusive of the other women of *Tish*, and more aware of the exclusion of women from their history. Butling notes that in the *Tish* editorials there was a clear use of “gendered metaphors,” such as bombs and pistols, which “enact an unconscious male privilege” (56). She goes on to argue that the *Tish* poetics, which was viewed as marginalized, was still a white, male poetics. She writes:

“The TISH poets were committed to opening up new possibilities, but only in relation to geographic and class-based exclusions” (56). Hindmarch and Marlatt also regularly make sure that the women, including others such as Ellen Tallman and Butling are mentioned (Hunter and Niechoda 94; “Before Tish” 101). Hindmarch notes that Ellen Tallman’s father had a heart attack and she travelled to Berkeley, where she ran into Duncan. Duncan says he would like to come to Vancouver and read, and they arranged a reading in the Tallman basement. This seems a stark contrast to the way Tallman or Davey tell it, in that it seems like they were all wrestling with Olson’s poetics, and decided, as agents in their own life, to bring him up to discuss it and do a reading. Rather, it seems, that it was one of the women of the *Tish* scene, Ellen Tallman, who arranged it (“Before Tish” 101-102).

The inclusion and exclusion of women from the *Tish* narrative by men is contradictory. Often, as in Davey’s accounts, it is noted that women are excluded, but then women are still further excluded. Bowering shows an awareness of the struggles women would have had during the time period. While interviewing Marlatt, Bowering notes how it must have been true for a lot of women to have husbands who didn’t care about writing and that writing moments had to be stolen because they aren’t important (“Given this” 41). Yet Bowering’s writing on *Tish* makes no move to rewrite them back into that history. Similarly, Tallman often participates in reinforcing the uneven relations between the *Tish* women and men. He writes “Angela Bowering, a Nanaimo Girl, thought George Bowering was cute” (“A Brief Retro-introduction” 115). Unlike other accounts, however, Tallman does not always focus only on the men of *Tish*. Tallman begins that same aforementioned paragraph by writing about Marlatt and Hindmarch

first, before he turns to the men of the group, a gesture not often seen in *Tish* historiography.

Many of the other books I have mentioned on *Tish* similarly participate in the exclusion of women from the *Tish* narrative. For instance, one of the larger texts on *Tish*, the Gervais's *The Writing Life* is a male dominated text. Very little in the book is written on or by the *Tish* women, other than an interview with Gladys Hindmarch, and other references to them in interviews with or essays written by men. Furthermore, in the introduction, when the main *Tish* poets are named, it is the first editorial board of the magazine (Davey, Bowering, Wah, Reid, and Dawson) and Gladys Hindmarch named last (8).

*

In addition to silencing women, as I have mentioned, the received *Tish* narrative lacks representation of other marginalized identities. Like the unconscious sexism he notes Tallman as participating, Davey enacts an unconscious racism in his treatment of Wah's coming into his racialized identity later in his life. Davey writes about how *Tish* writers could separate their careers from a *Tish* legacy, as when "Fred became perceived as Chinese" (*When Tish* 322). He does not say that Fred is or is not Chinese, but that he became 'perceived' as such, as though Wah was previously unracialized but later launched a career on that perception. Davey writes of Wah's Chinese heritage: "in terms of actual genetic heritage he would have twice as much call to construct himself as Swedish-Canadian" (*When Tish* 120). This is kind of language reveals what I referred to as Davey and Bowering's 'unconscious racism,' as Davey doesn't seem to perceive his writing as racist or treat the concept of race in a meaningful way. The percentage of

blood a person has of a given ethnicity is a colonial measure, and comes with a history of historical violence, especially in Canada. Bowering is similarly culpable for a criticism of Wah's racialized identity. In his article "A Letter From Charles Olson," Bowering writes: "I had no idea that [Fred Wah] was part Chinese. Of course that was before he started making a big thing of his Asian heritage just in time to cash in on recent interest in multi-ethnic activities in the arts" (193-94). Additionally, Davey recalls the *Tish* group receiving a submission of poems by Earle Birney that Wah described as being "disappointed--and somewhat disgusted with" for their racist content (*When Tish* 151). Despite Wah's feelings, the poems are still printed, and Davey justifies Wah's feelings as being a result of Birney not realizing that Wah is "part Chinese" (*When Tish* 151). Davey makes no attempt to condemn the poems, but instead others Wah, making his race the problem rather than Birney's racism. This shows how even in the creation of the magazine, a magazine praised for radicalism, there exists racism.

As he did with the exclusion of women, Davey attempts to write his progressive stance towards race into his memoir, but it falls flat existing alongside a criticism of Wah's exploration of his racialized identity. He tells the story of Douglas Jung, who was the first Chinese-Canadian to be elected to parliament, and condemns the political racism towards Chinese Canadians at the time (*When Tish* 75). But this kind of contradiction is the ultimate gesture of the book: presenting a seemingly 'objective,' well-researched account of *Tish*, a magazine by and for the marginalized, which promoted social change and radical poetics, when, in fact, Davey's book, like many of the other *Tish* interviews and accounts that make up its historiography, is the account of a man (men) at a major university, who started a magazine, involving, but ultimately sidelining women, people of

colour, and those outside the institution, and in the re-telling are used as mere antagonists, muses, and community support for a tale centering working-class, white existence.

The *Tish* historiography seems especially problematic when considering certain indigenous cultures' relationship to place and land and the way the *Tish* poetic yearned for and cultivated a poetry about their place, while not acknowledging their problematic settler-colonial relationship to that place. But we must historicize the time period in which the *Tish* poets were writing. This is before civil rights movements, colonial theory, and in a time in Canada when residential schools were still open. Indigenous relations were not discussed the same way they are now (I say discussed rather than foregrounded because I do not want to imply that this is no longer an issue; it is). Arguably later in their careers, the *Tish* poets wrote works dealing with marginalized identities' relationship to place (such as Marlatt's *Steveston*).

The poetics of *Tish* from the time period are problematic moreso than any exclusion of indigenous people from the historical narrative. Tomaszewska notes there are problematic implications when considering the way European contact was romanticized in some *Tish* poets' work. Specifically, she references *tentative coastlines* by David Dawson as an "example of 'nostalgia without memory,' where a group or culture is sentimentalized through an appropriation of their history" (68). While interviewing Davey, Bowering refers to their poetic practice in the *Tish* days as "mapping the place" of the local with language ("Starting At" 96). This is problematic from a colonial perspective. Mapping as a colonial practice, and then as white men, claiming there was no poetry of their place and then creating it, when no doubt there were

indigenous works.

Davey shows an awareness of the *Tish* group's earlier misconceptions about place and culture noting how one of the driving forces behind a *Tish* poetic is that they felt as though there were "vast, empty, cultural spaces to fill," but in a moment of critical self-reflexivity recognizes that this is not necessarily true. He notes that in Nelson, Abbotsford, and Oliver (referring to the places Wah, himself, and Bowering grew up), it was hard to receive cultural information (*When Tish* 61). He also recognized that in his white, largely European descended circle in both Abbotsford and at UBC he knew very few indigenous people. He adds that in *Tish* writings, indigenous people were "seldom mentioned" and that his friends become interested in "long-ago Indians" in their writing vs. "on-the-street Indians" (*When Tish* 61).

Often, in the autobiographical accounts, members of the *Tish* community are idealized, which potentially silences smaller personal flaws they may have had (racism and sexism, for example) as perhaps they do not pertain to the narrative of a given work. But ignoring the flaws of people in a given history can idealize it. For instance, in *When Tish Happens* there is a violent scene glossed over where Bowering puts his fist through a wall when he going through a breakup (166). Though, Davey's book may be one that participates the least in this kind idealization of character flaws, as he includes details of drinking too much sake and writing bad poems, what becomes clear is that this is a moment of problematic masculinity for Bowering, dealing with his emotions through violence. But the book's not showing an awareness of why dealing with something in this way is problematic can in turn normalize it. Hindmarch seems more willing to allow her view of the past to be less lionized. For instance, she admits the limitations of the group

as poets, recalling when Frank would bring a poem to the Tallman place, and that she and Frank did not yet have the literary tools or language to discuss the poem further than noting that the “perception is good, [and] the images are strong” (“Before Tish” 100). In many of the autobiographical accounts comprising the *Tish* narrative there are often little details of people’s flaws included; however, these details are never the focus and those implicated in such flaws always seem to ultimately be represented as mostly infallible. As I will show in the next section, in addition to addressing the gaps and silences I have outlined, some of the best historical work that the novella can do is imagine a less idealized narrative, without doing undue violence or slander towards historical personages.

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Before turning to how my novella has attempted to address the gaps and silences in the *Tish* narrative, I would like to address the potential of my work to participate in cultural appropriation, as well as its potential to reproduce the gaps and silences I seek to disrupt. As a white, Western writer writing an Asian character (Sasuke), cultural appropriation is a definite concern. In the introduction to the book, *The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation* (2009), James Young outlines the ways in which he sees cultural appropriation as harmful. He sees it being harmful in relation to the definition of the word “appropriation,” in which something is literally taken (2). This could be land, art, customs, human remains, cultural knowledge, religion or “voice appropriation,” which he considers the taking of ideas or “artistic subject matter” (2). In all of these cases, what Young sees as being the problem is a lack of respect and thought in the usage of cultural property. It is especially problematic when appropriation occurs across barriers of race,

class, or oppression in which something is appropriated for aesthetic reasons without any acknowledgement or thought about the conditions in which the artifact originated, or when it occurs across unequal, context-based power dynamics. We need only to look to Twitter or Facebook near Halloween to see examples of this (white people dressing in indigenous apparel such as headdresses), which are contextually problematic in North America where the appropriation is being perpetrated against indigenous peoples who were the victims of a cultural genocide by white, colonial oppressors.

In terms of cultural appropriation in this project, I want to outline that I am not attempting to appropriate the experience of post-war Japanese Canadians. But keeping in mind the ways that my paper and novella needs to address historical silences, I acknowledge that it is a problem for me as a white writer to write an Asian, female character, while conversely, it might be far more problematic to exclude this kind of character in favour of an all white cast. The focus of this paper is not to make any racial, class, or cultural claims, but to take a history that has been idealized, analyze the way it has been presented as a narrative of marginalization, and relate the way it functions to the functionality of other systems of oppression, specifically the language that constitutes oppression against the marginalized.

This subject has recently come to light in Can-Lit again after an editorial by Hal Niedzviecki encouraged cultural appropriation in writing. In a response article, Claudia Rankine and Beth Loffreda write that the question of cultural appropriation in writing is “not: can I write from another’s point of view? But instead: to ask why and what for, not just if and how” (“On Whiteness”). That is to say that the question should not be about if I am able to write from another view point as a white male, but why? The why is that the

Tish history, of which I am trying to critically address using fiction, is decidedly white and male and it is important that a creative reimagining not reproduce that. This book exists in the present and I can only access it as a subject shaped by that present, but I think it is important to first address my own potential in participating in a white cultural appropriation or problematic settler-colonial silences. In doing so, I acknowledge that perhaps the best thing to combat a white, male, heteronormative history, as a white, hetero male, would be to step aside and not do this project at all to open up the space I am taking up to those folks.

ADDRESSING TISH HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE NOVELLA

In this section, I outline how my novella, *The '59 Sound*, has attempted to address the gaps, silences, and other limitations of the *Tish* historical narrative. The main limitations I have focused on, as discussed in previous chapters, are the silencing of those who have been marginalized, the limitations of historiography by engaging in nostalgia and idealizing historical figures by minimizing “character flaws,” and finally by addressing the retrospective significance of the received *Tish* narrative.

The novella addresses the silencing of marginalized figures mostly through character. I will note that *The '59 Sound* does not directly fictionalize *Tish*. It is not a *roman à clef*; there are no one-to-one correlations between people and characters. Rather, is an original story that, while borrowing extensively from the *Tish* narrative, is ultimately distinct from it. Sasuke becomes representative of both how women and racialized poets have been silenced in the *Tish* narrative. She faces frequent, casual racism and sexism from her peers throughout the novella. Her narrative presents how, as

a racialized woman in the historical moment of the late 1950s and early 60s, it was more difficult for her than her white, male peers to move through the everyday in terms of having her voice heard and respected during meetings or in class. Sasuke is also the hardest worker of the group, and has to fight harder for the same respect or professional achievements as white men in the scene.

However, not wanting to pigeonhole a racialized character into only a narrative of race, and accepting my own subject position and my relationship to writing about the experiences of racialized and gendered characters, I felt it was important me that Sasuke's narrative not be focused *solely* on race or gender. Through her main narrative, Sasuke combats the nostalgia of the *Tish* narrative by exploring the negatives of writing and academic life: what one has to give up for writing, how much work existing in the institution is, and how isolating both can be. These types of negatives are rarely explored in the *Tish* narrative, and in fact, forging a life in writing or a life in the institution is portrayed as easily achievable (perhaps as Butling notes, resulting from of the ease with which white males move into positions of power and influence).

Bud's character works against both nostalgia and marginalization. He is representative of a different kind person who has been silenced from the *Tish* narrative: those who did not continue in a life of poetics or the institution. Thematically, his arc asks questions about the value of life when one does not have art, or perhaps, how a life that finds success in writing seems more important to a legacy than those who did not. We see this with the lack of critical focus on Dawson, Reid, or Hindmarch. In Bud's case, he became a mechanic instead of a poet, and he is working through feelings of failure as a writer, but ultimately finds value outside of writing.

The novella does work that traditional historiography could only speculate about. It works against nostalgia in that the characters themselves are much more flawed and less certain of themselves as people and writers than we see in historical accounts of *Tish*. A completely fictional version of *Tish* has allowed me to explore a historical narrative with flawed characters without implying that the real-life members of *Tish* had any of these flaws, which has never been my intention.

All of my characters have flaws. Bud is unreliable at times and has no self-confidence. Sasuke is always too hard on herself and impatient. She works all the time and feels like she is letting people down. Clark is racist, sexist, and loud-mouthed, and provides a fresh take on the often romanticized ‘drunk poet’ figure in a negative way. Sam is similar, and a liar and childish, but in a naïve/charming way. Jenny is stubborn. Through the two professor characters, I explore the masculine power relationships that are problematic in the institution. These kinds of character flaws allow the reader to imagine a less clean-cut past, without slandering any of the members of *Tish*.

In her essay, “Ethics and Aesthetics: The Goodness of Arts-Informed Research” Maura McNytre thinks through using artifice to write about real people in a responsible way. She writes about her experiences in a dementia care unit and ethical writing practices, and her refusal to write graphically about the bodies of the people with which she works as it “does not enhance the personal dignity” of the subject, and therefore is immoral or unethical (257). However, she cites a body of photographic work that presents aging bodies in a different context. She writes: “Provocative and compelling, harsh social realities are creatively presented with a tenderness of touch that preserves, and even advances the dignity of the subjects portrayed” (258). She sees these

photographs as exploring the real-lived experience of the aging process, while allowing the subjects of the pictures to retain their dignity. Similarly, I am not writing about the historical bodies of specific *Tish* members, but instead, like the staged pictures of which McIntyre writes, by reimagining the *Tish* narrative through fictional characters it has allowed me to reimagine flawed people into the narrative, without speculating about the flaws of actual *Tish* members.

The novella also combats the retrospective significance by not over-narrativizing or romanticizing the actual making of the magazine. I wrote the magazine creation narrative as being a very sloppy process, and taking a lot of time to actually formulate. The story purports to be a plot about making a magazine, but in fact it is an antiplot, secondary to the characters. I allowed the actual magazine creation take a back seat to the narratives of Sasuke, Bud, and Clark, which result from their own personal struggles. For example, Bud's narrative, although guided by his recollection of the creation of *Anarmag*, focuses on Bud's concern with art, what good art is, what one's relation to writing is and if life is valuable if a person is not talented—in short, what happens when it (writing) goes away?

While navigating the complicated the relationship between the demands of fiction and the demands of historiography, the novella also does work that is critical not of the *Tish* narrative, but of literary tropes. Part of my own artistic practice is to write fiction I feel is 'fresh' in that it does not participate in the clichés of the type story it is. In the case of *The '59 Sound*, it is an historical narrative, a campus narrative, a narrative about an artist, and a 1960s narrative. I was working against certain stereotypical white, older male teacher characters, with Dr. Jones and Professor Williams. Instead of them wearing tweed

jackets and providing brilliant insights that help the white protagonist reach their epiphanic art moment (like Robin Williams's character in *Dead Poet's Society*), I think they are, at times, more sinister than that. Williams has a drinking problem, and well as problematic sexual relationships with students. When he does help Bud, and gives him advice, he seems to not really know what he is giving advice on. Additionally, I wanted to avoid some of the clichés that happen often when writing about artists. I wanted to avoid the story of a brilliant artist who struggles with writing, only to overcome their obstacles to create a masterpiece. In order to work against the 1960s counterculture narrative, I avoided the use of cultural events synonymous with the 1960s, such as the Bay of Pigs. The only cultural events that appear in the novella are either hockey related, or reference the Second World War (which as Davey notes was important to all the *Tish* poets (*When Tish* 52-53). At times, as an historical novella, this may make the story seem ahistorical, resulting in another example of friction between fiction and historiography.

In Sasuke's narrative, there is a further example of the results of negotiating between the demands of the story and the demands of the historical narrative I was addressing. I arrived, with Sasuke's character, to a point where she seems the driving force of the magazine; however, at times she often comes off as the "nagging woman" or the "hard-working Asian." These are not tropes I wanted to place on the character, but this is where I was led by the story.

The novella does fail in many ways to address the gaps and silences in the *Tish* narrative. It is still a male dominated narrative, both in terms of characters in the novel, and in terms of how many chapters Sasuke gets vs Bud and Clark (the three of whom are the point-of-view characters). My novella is perhaps most problematic as a fictional

reimagining of the *Tish* narrative from a colonial perspective. It was a problem I identified in the *Tish* narrative very late, and I did not want to shoehorn an indigenous narrative, character, or moment into a story that was mostly complete. It fails to combat retrospective significance because certain events (a reading the characters attend or their reading the copy of *Pyramid*) spark them to write. But a story demands motivation and plot, and the way to do that is through events or action. Furthermore, the novella participates in excluding people outside the masthead, as the main characters are only those working on the magazine. When I revise the novella for publication, I will have to rethink its relationship to this critical section, and address some of these flaws. Many of the ways the novella fails have emerged from the organic process of writing a story, the constraints of a small novella, the time limit I have to work on this project, and the demands of fiction I have previously outlined. I have noted it here as part of my attempt to be transparent about the limitations of the project.

Despite criticizing the autobiographical accounts, I have used them as a basis for historical material. For example, when writing about the students at UBC in the 1960s, Davey writes: “I don’t believe one can overstate the impact of [World War II], and its Cold War aftermath, on the writers who would become the *Tish* group” (*When Tish* 53). This appears in my novella as every character has a relationship to that war, most notably, Sasuke’s family’s imprisonment in a WWII internment camp. Ultimately, as a result of the demands of the craft of fiction and the demands of academic historiography, my novella has not escaped the kind of contradictory structure I have noted of the *Tish* autobiographical accounts: to claim an intention, and then not see that intention through completely. But, like neo-historical fiction, it admits those limitations and still tries to

address them through a coherent narrative

CONCLUSION

When I was younger, and I was first learning to lie, I would not so much make things up as I would withhold the truth. When my mother found out, she would say, “Why did you lie?” and I would reply, “I didn’t lie, I just didn’t tell the whole truth.” Of course, I do not really even remember if this happened, or if it was a specific instance or a combination of instances, but I remember learning the difference between the two, or, rather, the sameness. This is the relationship of history and fiction. One is made completely up. One is selected “facts” arranged into the form of a narrative. Both of them, according to an idealist logic, are lies. In all the minor and occasionally deficient historical accounts of *Tish* we see that the problem is that they are simply not focused on the historiography of the group; historical rigor is not the intention of autobiographical accounts. We see what Betts means when he calls the writing about the group “mythology.” He does not mean that it is made up, but rather, when coupled with the dogmatic gospel of early *Tish*, and the movements and disciples they would inspire, *Tish* members are often romanticized, often by their own accounts.

At times, I have criticized the historiography of the group for a lack of historical responsibility, and in certain instances I have outlined this criticism may be said of my own project. It is not the critical historical study that the group needs. A project like that could be a whole PhD, or two depending on the focus, and definitely a large book. But my project, then, with what space and time it has, takes the most glaring gaps and silences, and tries to fill those with fiction. My work could be used as a starting point for

future scholarship that might seek to construct a more nuanced historical narrative.

The failures of my manuscript to address the limitations of the received *Tish* narrative open it up to questions about what else could be done in terms of *Tish* historiography. I would argue, as I have already, that *Tish* requires an extensive historiographic study. Furthermore, other writers of historical fiction could build their own fictional historiographies of the time period. But even in the potential writings of these new *Tish* histories, we may never get the ‘true’ one. My novella is a construction, that knows it is a construction, embraces that, and then asks what then—what can history do then? *The ‘59 Sound* answers this question by contributing a unique work to the discourses of *Tish* that complicates and complements, rather than supplements, existing discourses. My project allows the fact that a perfect historiography is impossible. Instead, responsible historiography means admitting the limitations of the written discipline, and allowing that the best history is dialogic and polyvocal. And, in the historiography of *Tish*, my thesis and accompanying novella are only one part of that. It is clear that a fictional-historical account is in many ways just as flawed as traditional historiography, but that succeeds in other ways. This is precisely its strength; it fills gaps and does imaginative work that cannot be done by empirical historiography both during the process of writing and as a finished work of historiography.

Bowering remembers Creeley saying “everything in the world is a verb” (“Given this” 51). The image of a tree for example. A tree is not a tree, it is a verb--it is a living thing that is “treeing.” It is something that is constantly moving and evolving. Therefore to describe anything requires that you freeze it. The paradox of my own work is that it is the same kind of lie I note in the *Tish* narrative. An arrangement of my version of the

truth; a truth I have constructed out of a constantly moving and changing history. But even the meaning of the word “truth” has changed multiple times. “True” is of Germanic origin meaning faithful or reliable (“The True”). But according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word is thought to date back even further to an Indo-European word for tree. This means “truth” or “true” in the sense of a tree’s uprightness, the robust nature of it, or the way that season after season trees can be relied on to simply be there (“True”). Think about that. The word truth came from the word tree. Not the dead, static word “wood,” but rather the alive, the growing, changing tree. If a person plants a tree when they are a child and then returns to that tree years later, the tree is not the same as in their memory; that is to say, it does not look the same, but it is the same tree. Ultimately, as a history changes, and the context in which that history is view changes, the historian must also change the narrative they use to describe the past. The horticulturalist-historian must decide which branches and leaves need to be kept in the process of pruning, so that when we return in a million years, we might still recognize the tree.

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APPENDIX A

The following is a fictionalization of the inception of the *Tish* poetry newsletter in the late 1950s and 60s in Vancouver. It is not a direct one. A poor one, maybe. I borrowed from the scene, but none of these characters are direct representations. You may see flashes of similarities, or actions, and definitely story beats, but do not mistake them for reality.

The thesis that follows will clarify the ways in which the novella addresses the group, and the ways in which it fails to do so. That thesis contains a foreword claiming that I am the fictional character, created by sasuke Oshie in order to write a fictional biography of her time on the fictional magazine *Anarmag*, in the form of a fictional MA thesis. This is false. sasuke will make the same claim to being real, and, perhaps even do so convincingly. Same authoritative font and everything. But I promise you, I am the real one. I have all of these memories that I couldn't possibly have made up.

- CA

**APPENDIX B - PART 3:
THE 59 SOUND**

There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams -- not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

“Vancouver in the 60s? What was it like? What was it like. It was open. Wide open as though you were born in a barn, minus the cliché. The invention of the telekinetic. Text-e-kinetic. It was new. It was probably nothing like I remember. Maybe, maybe, maybe. Maybe I’m not the right person to ask, eh. I guess you didn’t ask, as this is my memoir, but you bought it, or picked it up to avoid small talk at your mother’s, and in doing so you entered into the ask/tell contract of reader/writer. Or the reader/text, at least. But maybe I’m not the right person to write it. Maybe I only imagined being there. But, if you were in fact asking me, I’d say it was the single most formative moment Canadian poetry in last century. No doubt. I’d say it was the closest I ever came to moving things with my mind. And it went exactly like this:

- Cl. (That was actually my name. But now, it went like this):”

- Clark Miller, *Anarmag Hates the UK*

-1-

*The words, several, and for each, several
senses.*

*“It is very difficult to sum up
briefly ...”*

It always was.

—Robert Creeley, *“Hart Crane”*

-August 1986-

Bud’s body heard vibrating. No, not vibrating. And no, not hear, exactly. It felt that way, or tasted that way, maybe. Taste and touch are kinds of hearing. So yes, he heard it. Up through the bones in his ankle, and into his brain. Rattling into the muffler that dream-him was convinced he had to change that day at work. A strange sort-of vibrating. Sleeping on his left side, Bud’s bad ear couldn’t quite make it out. The phone was ringing. The subconscious part of his brain was about realize what it was, and when it did, he was going to spring to his feet, awake all at once.

Heading to the kitchen, Bud bashed his leg on the side table. Wincing, he grabbed the phone from of the wall.

“Bud? Sorry, is this a bad time?” The name crackled on the other end of the

phone. He didn't really recognize the voice. Maybe not, though. Maybe he did.

He looked at the clock. There was still time before he had to head into the shop. The coffee pot was on the counter, so Bud grabbed the body of the phone with his left hand, put the handset under his ear, then stretched the cord so he could reach his 'hideous-yellow'—as Sue called it—stove.

"Yeah. Sorry, I mean, no—it's a fine a time as any. May I ask who's calling?" He filled a pot and put it on the element.

"It's John. John Foles."

"Yes, sorry." Foles. Of course it was—how did he not recognize that voice? "What can I do for you, John?" Bud noticed his guitar had fallen out of its rack onto its side, so he picked it up and kicked his work clothes out of the kitchen. Sue told him to pick them up last night. She must be at the café already.

"I have a small favour to ask of you."

He was still waking up, and could hear his version of the sound of the North Vancouver street out of his bad ear. It was a clear day, but it sounded muddled. Like someone yelling at you after you dive underwater—right before you crash through the underside of the surface, you hear their echo.

"Bud?"

"Yeah." He cleared the sleep from his throat. "Yes."

John took a short moment, and launched into something that sounded prepared.

"Just a favour, that's all. Um, say, Bud—would you be interested in coming in?" He stopped. "Well, I mean—there is this grad student of mine who is doing some work on Radical poetry in the 60s, right. Allison. She wants to do a section for the class she is

TAing on you guys. Twenty-five-year sorta thing on the first issue of the magazine.” The tone of his voice changed. It became less assertive, but more charming. “Well, I suggested you would be a great speaker. Bring in a few other classes and do a talk. So, what do you think?”

He was flattered, but it seemed strange that Bud would be the go-to guy on this.

“I dunno if I’m your guy, John.” Been awhile since he thought about the magazine. Plus, why would he be such a great speaker? He’d quit not that long after the first issue. “Why don’t you call sasuke?”

“Oh. Well, we, uh...did—I did.”

“Right.” Now it comes out. “Who else did you ask before me?”

“Pardon?” John sounded caught off guard, but not surprised. He had known he might have to answer that question.

“Who else did you ask.”

John said nothing. He didn’t want it to be like this. He had always liked Bud. When they were at UBC together, he thought Bud was a fine poet, too. But Allison wanted sasuke. Then Clark.

The water was ready and Bud poured it slowly into French press, shaking his head.

“Did you ask Clark?”

“Yes.”

Bud sighed the work ‘fuck’ and it turned into a laugh. Classic.

“I mean it—”

“Jenny?”

“No.”

Not Jenny? She was an editor for like almost the whole run. He guessed they would have asked Sam too, if he was still alive. He read about it in the paper. Some sort of gas leak in his place in West Van. Didn't hear the hiss of the leak and didn't hear the fire truck. Went to bed and never woke up. Bud didn't get an invite to the funeral.

A silence sat over the phone for a few moments. Bud was interested. Or his pride was, anyway, but he waited.

“But it's not like we don't want you, Bud. You would be great. It would be great to have you.” He paused. “Hell, even I haven't really heard your take on the whole thing.”

Still Bud was silent. He poured the coffee into a mug that said Granville Island, but it was too hot to drink. He just held it and blew on it. Looked at it and blew on it. Then, nodding, he said, “I'll do it,” and instantly regretted it.

“Oh. Well, that's fine to hear. Very fine.” John said this like he was both surprised and relieved. “We wanted to familiarize the class with your work. Do you have any poems you could send over? I couldn't find anything in *Anarmag*, but I figured you must have some newer stuff. Maybe you'd want them to read that, and could send it beforehand so they will be prepared.”

“Right.” Did he have any?

“We thought if the students could read something before, it would improve discussion. The reading. Like I said, I just don't have any—”

Bud looked at the clock. “Sorry, John. Gotta run to work. I'll mail something over.” Bud didn't know if he had any poems—new or old. John asked him to call when

he could for more details and Bud agreed that he would.

He was in the office doing paper work most of that day—no dream-muffler to fix. He had a couple mechanics on and it was slow so, quite literally, he did not have to get his hands dirty. He still couldn't focus enough to get much done, despite the advantage of being able to hear less metal on metal than the average employee.

When he was in his twenties the world started to spin one day. Vertigo didn't begin to describe it. Ménière's disease. Doctors said he could hope for twenty-percent hearing in that ear for the rest of his life, if it didn't continue to deteriorate, which, there was a good chance that it would. And a good chance his other ear would end up the same. Which it did. He got surgery and then hearing aids, but late in his life, he would have to blare Doctor Who to hear it, and even then, with the accents, it was tough. Luckily, in addition to the accents, Doctor Who also had a winning formula. Something, something, aliens. Or someone they thought was an alien, but turned out not to be, then—Run! The Doctor spouts some science fiction such and such in his charming, tumbling words, and then something about still hoping, even in the dark, quiet nooks of the universe. *Sound was off, but you get the gist*, his son Bart would've always said, and then laugh at his reference. He wondered (not worried, usually, but wondered) about Bart every day.

Still. Here in his forties, twenty percent, compared to his good ear, felt like almost nothing. It didn't matter, he supposed. He could still fix a car deaf. And from a lifetime worth of an amp beside him, and banging on fenders with a hammer, he supposed time would have turned the volume down eventually. He would miss music, though. And notwithstanding the fact that he could probably learn sign language or that maybe they

would invent robot ears soon, he would still miss how words sounded when his favourite voices said them.

The rest of the day dragged on, and his lack of concentration gave way to frustration. He caught his shirt on the doorway, was swearing all day, and he dropped a handful of coins paying for a coffee. It started to rain in the afternoon. The kind of rain that seemed to hold you inside, a vale around doorways, not pouring, but enough that it made even driving a little worse on account of visibility. The Inuit are said to have over a hundred words for snow, if Vancouverites lived here long enough, but for now, ‘fucking rain’ seemed to suffice in describing it.

Maybe he was being dramatic, but suddenly owning a business felt less free—less open, they might have said, in those days at UBC. Or maybe it felt less accomplished. He kept replaying that phone call in his head. Not wishing he had said no, or glad that he said yes, just wishing he hadn’t answered. Why can’t people just leave you alone sometimes?

Despite this, he reluctantly called John after lunch and asked for more info. John told him they hoped he could talk about how the magazine came together. When had the magazine all started, really? He wasn’t sure. Williams’s first-year poetry course was probably important, despite making him feel as stupid as it made him feel energized. Jenny was the only one of them not in that class as she was a year ahead of the others, and had already taken it.

John was relieved Bud called back.

Bud thought a big part of it was more about the way the other students, most of the students, made them feel as a group. Clark and Sasuke had been in the English Literature course they all took, and the composition class that was required of them. But

so were all the rich Vancouver kids with their fake British accents. Sam was sort of one of them, though he would deny that vehemently throughout his life, or at least as long as they kept in touch, and in whatever hack interview Bud would read about him throughout their lives.

Sam had been the one who invited Bud into their workshop, saying a lot of them were colonial even if they were from Ontario, but that it would be nice to have someone who was just like him in the workshop. Bud didn't really know what he meant by that. Like him, how? Sam was his opposite in many ways. A city kid from an affluent Protestant family from Vancouver, though he claimed that even though his family was an institution, he had only been there a few years. Sure, they had similar musical interests, and mostly got along, but Bud didn't think he was anything like Sam. The rest of their lives were now proof of that intuition.

There hadn't been any cataclysmic moment in his and Sam's friendship. Not really. They had bonded on the blues, and sometimes, people mistake similar interests for friendship, or even love for that matter. But friendships require work, depending on the friend, and he and Sam slowly drifted apart. When Sam kicked him out of the band that was it for them.

In the grand narrative of his life, they really weren't that close. If he weren't so self-effacing, and were the type for a memoir, he might not include Sam at all—just wasn't what mattered to him all in all. But there is something about friendships in your teens and early twenties that your memory seems to always keep fresh. Nostalgia maybe. Or maybe just the product of a brain with less in it, or less alcohol and Tylenol having passed through it. Remnants of a time when the grooves in the grey of your brain could

be cut deeper, still malleable enough to believe each relationship forged would last a lifetime.

For a long time Bud only thought about Sam with contempt, especially after he won a GG. But since Sam had died, Bud felt guilty. Differences aside, they had been good friends in those days. Best friends, maybe. First year was a constant state of excitement. An excitement that kept Bud silent so as not to reveal himself—the well-meaning imposter he couldn't help but feel like he was, and is.

-January 1959-

“So what makes it a poem?” Dr. Williams looked around. “Come now, yell it out. That’s quite alright.” He packed a Players against the table and closed his cigarette case. Bud wanted to get out of class—he and Sam were going to jam. Bud had written this little 3/4 part in it to break up the 4/4 in “50 Crows.”

It was nice to have Sam in this class with him. He didn't know many people yet; having just moved there from Peace River in the summer and working every chance he got, he didn't have the luxury of days off like many of the Vancouverites did who would barely talk to him. He was lucky to have any friends at all.

No one answered Professor Williams.

“I assure you this is not a trick question.”

Different people yelled different things out.

“Words!” yelled the boy with hair full of pomade Bud would come to know as Clark.

“Stanzas.” A student in the back.

“Rhymes.” People booed at that answer. Give examples of these things, the teacher asked. Bud couldn’t remember if he answered or not.

Bud liked Professor Williams so far, mostly, but he was still feeling the class out. There was something off about the way he smiled when pretty students gave mediocre answers, but he enjoyed the way the man taught poetry. They were already into the second week of the class, and they had only talked about one poem: “Hart Crane” by Robert Creeley. Bud didn’t know of Creeley, then. It was soon after that they would move onto a poem by Tim Armstrong: *My hand went blind. You were in the veins clairvoyant*. He could hear that poem in his head the rest of his life. The way Armstrong would read it in ’63 (though Bud was basically out of the poetry scene by then). But for now, they talked Creeley.

“So you don’t like the poem, then?” Williams asked.

“I think it’s rather bad. Not a poem at all. Not for me. Maybe I’m alone in it, but I like a little metre, and a little rhyme. And what does it mean? Nothing. I could write this.”

Bud never knew where Sam’s confidence came from. He was the only member of the group whose parents had gone to university. It all seemed old hat to him.

“Could you now? I would like to see that indeed, Mr. Patterson. Perhaps then I could join you in laughter, or at the very least, achieve my childhood dream of seeing a boar take flight.”

Now the class laughed, charity maybe. and Sam was mad. Not the funniest joke, but Williams supplemented with the charisma of a proper British accent, and the position at the front of the room—these things go a long way with humour.

“But you bring up a few qualities that we typically associate with a poem, Sam. Rhyming. Meaning. We touched on a few of these already, but we can go deeper. What else do we see as making a poem a poem?”

No one attempted to answer this.

“What makes up its parts? How do we know it is a poem?” He added, trying to rephrase his original question and buy the students time to answer. He looked around. “No one?”

The class was silent. Bud tried not to make eye contact for fear he would be called on.

Then Williams took a piece of chalk and slowly ran it down the board so that it made a horrible squeaking noise. When he finished, he turned around, laughing at all of the cringing.

“Awful, is it not?” The class agreed. “Now the question becomes, was that a poem?”

This time everyone was silent. Looking at one another.

This was something Bud felt confident he could answer. “No,” Bud said. The room became attentive. He didn’t know what had possessed him to answer. He loved poetry, and he may not have been able to tell you what poetry was at all, but he knew it was not that. Certainly it couldn’t have been that.

“No?” Williams repeated. “Okay. Why not?”

Bud went to reply, but had nothing. Of course it wasn’t poetry. It was nails scraping on a chalkboard. Poetry was Dickinson’s paper hidden in sock drawers and the ramblings of Dylan Thomas he would come to love. Whitman. That dusty blue copy of

Spring and All he'd found at a used bookstore. No one could tell him what poetry meant, he thought. But this was not it.

"Because." He made inaudible sounds, hoping an answer would come. It didn't.

"Because, why?"

Bud hoped that this would be his moment where he would channel the universe or the muses, and come up with some brilliant answer that would distinguish him from other students, but still nothing came. "I don't know," Bud finally answered, embarrassed.

Sasuke, who Bud didn't know yet, started to speak, "What about—"

"Because that was annoying as hell." Clark cut her off. The class laughed.

Professor Williams didn't seem convinced or amused.

"There are no words. No language. Poetry is language, right?" This time Bud felt like he had something. Poetry was not just sound. It definitely had words.

"Does it?" asked Williams in response.

This stumped Bud, so after that he kept quiet. Sasuke began to speak again, and again Clark talked over her.

"So I can just skin a cat and call the sound it makes poetry? I could win a Nobel Prize." The whole class laughed again. Clark sat up straighter. He loved to control a room.

"Perhaps you could, Mr. Miller."

Bud looked over at Sasuke. They didn't know each other yet, but he remembered thinking how beautiful she was and if she would ever go for a fella like him. He would later find out she wouldn't, but that she would be the kind of life-long friend you barely talk to, but always wonder where they are.

Sam spoke up, “So what does calling it a poem do, then?”

“Now you are asking the right questions, Mr. Patterson.”

The discussion went on from there, and Bud didn’t contribute a whole lot. Sasuke got a few comments in, but it was largely Sam and Clark thinking they knew more than Williams.

At the end of the class, Bud wanted to go up to Professor Williams and thank him and formally introduce himself. He did this with all his teachers. Not because he wanted good grades, but he had been raised that way. Though none of his family had ever gone to school, it seemed like the respectable thing to do. He would look Professor Williams in the eye and shake his hand like his father had taught him, and then maybe Williams would thank him for speaking up. Bud could tell him that he knew why it wasn’t poetry. It does not sound like it. Or feel like it. To him, anyway. Then Professor Williams would smile and say something cool like, ‘See you next week, Bud.’

While Professor Williams collected his things, Bud stopped in front of him and tried not to stare, but to also seem like he wanted to talk. Williams didn’t look up.

Bud cleared his throat. “Professor Williams, sir? I jus—“

“Nope.” Professor Williams put his smokes in his front pocket and grabbed a bottle out of his desk. “Gotta run--good job today, kid.” Bud wanted to believe that he meant it, but Williams said it on the way out the door, and didn’t actually look at him at all. Bud packed up his things and when he exited the classroom, there was Williams, standing over a young girl on the stairs, leaned in, and pointing to a line in her book.

-2-

Mary, this station is playing every sad song

I remember like we were alive

I heard it Sunday morn' from inside of these walls

In a prison cell, where we spent those nights

—The Gaslight Anthem, “*Great Expectations*”

-August 1986-

When he got home, Bud cracked a beer. Sue told him about her day, but he had trouble listening. He never liked to be the guy that didn't care enough to listen to his wife, but the whole thing made him anxious. She realized he wasn't listening and asked him what he was thinking about. He explained. John wanted him to read poems? What the fuck was he supposed to read? He hadn't written a poem in ten years, and hadn't had anything published since the 60s.

“I'm sure you've got something to read—you always seem to find something that none of us wanna hear after a few beers.” She thought this one was pretty funny, but Bud didn't have his mind wired to think about jokes at the moment.

“You really are stressed about this, eh? Well if you aren't going to laugh at my jokes, go see what's up in the boxes in the attic, then? And remember you're barbecuing

tonight.”

The attic was not so much an attic as the place above the living room. It was small like a crawl space, and only had the joists to walk on, not a floor. It would later remind Bud of Christmas Vacation when Chevy Chase gets caught up there when his family goes shopping. Or rather, that movie would remind him of living here. Nostalgically, he would romanticize even the creaking of the old radiators. But that movie wasn't quite out. Maybe it was being filmed.

There were a lot of boxes up there. Their place was a one-bedroom rancher. Got it for a song, but there wasn't a ton of space for all the taped boxes, ripped bags, things you plug in that a life inevitably seems to accumulate. He loved that saying: got it for a song, as though a song was a good thing, or rather a cheap thing, and he got the house for it. Personally, as someone who still wrote the odd folk song, he thought a song was too expensive for anything to be worth it—even, and especially, a house—but he loved the idiom.

They had moved into this place after Bart left. He had tried to call Bart not long ago, but his number had been disconnected. Maybe he had moved and not told them. That was typical Bart. The kid never seemed to want a family. Bud knew he was doing fine wherever Bart was, but he missed him. He used to write science fiction stories for Bart in which his son was the protagonist, and read them to him before bed.

Bud found one, though. A poem. At first he didn't even want to look at it. It made him feel sick inside just thinking about it. He took a drink of his beer and flipped it over. It read:

Come Back in A Million [Commutes] and Tell Me if This Was

Real

If you, like me, would take the time
after blowing a dead-strait spine yellow light
then watching the car behind you
as intently as you watched Viva Las Vegas
break the law, in red,
slightly more than you did,
to smile

then you might be,
or rather, always am, surprised
arriving alive
at how much luck and momentum you can build
in just one drive.

He hated that poem. And he loved it. Or he loved it when he wrote it, or parts of it, the nostalgic chunks of sinew in his arm, when he read it now. But he knew, no matter how he felt ripping off Creeley, and his rhythmic, subordinating clauses, he had certainly loved it then. Or now, maybe. If time isn't linear, if it is simultaneous, then this poem was still happening, still being written, and he was still loving it without apprehension. That made him feel better.

He took another drink and felt warm wash over his former ulcer. It was too sentimental, maybe. But maybe ripping off is a strong word. Influenced—the critics would say that the *Anarmag* folks were “lackeys” or “agents” of the infiltration of

American poetry. He and the rest of the *Anarmag* crew had been accused of being anti-Canadian over the years, but truthfully, that was almost impossible. Their poetics, though influenced by the Black Mountain folks and Olson, and American Modernism, was their own. It had to be by virtue of the tradition. It was the Olson poetics—even if they were working in a tradition, the poems had to come from each poet. Their body, their surroundings, their diction, their voice. He guessed that also made it impossible to truly ‘rip something off’ if you really followed the mandate—inevitably, whatever you wrote would be so much you, and the unique combination of tired, unoriginal things that make you up, which make you completely original.

But even his peers said they didn’t like it. They had told him then that it wasn’t ‘open’ enough. Bud had been in that class when they all learned what that meant too: open field poetics. But still, closed off to what? Bud didn’t know. He didn’t get that part of it. They seemed to resent the lyric. His ‘I’ in the poem. But they used the ‘I’, and so did others, but apparently not in a traditional way. Apparently, they were being open, and letting the language guide their meaning, not what they meant guide the language. Sounded like a lot of hogwash to Bud at first, but he wanted to be a part of it, and he could see what they meant about the constructed kind of romantic, lyric poems the angry young man crowd wrote, but he never did figure out how his weren’t.

It can be a fine line between homage and unoriginality, but good writers contribute as much as they take from a tradition they love. Or maybe it’s unconscious, and maybe they just get lucky to find magic with a combination of words, which might appear to be the same kind of lucky someone else once got. And if they are really lucky, no one notices.

He knew there were more poems somewhere. That poem wasn't the one. He rifled through a few more boxes and bags. Christmas lights. Dishes he hadn't seen since they lived in Ladner. Then he saw a box that looked like it once had files in it. A label on the front with nothing written on it. Inside this one was a bunch of reel-to-reel tapes. In another box, he had found a player. It was the one that Sam had given him—something he was both thankful for, and resentful about. Sam could just afford to give away a fucking reel-to-reel when he got a new one. Or he guessed, his parents could.

He fumbled for a few moments, like the clumsiness he'd experienced at work, while getting it going. It seemed smaller in his memory, but the Concertone, compared to 8-track or cassette players, was gargantuan. He fed the tape carefully from the supply reel into the take up reel. His muscles remembered what to do. He pressed play. It had been a while.

Through the reel-to-reel tape, he could hear 1959 in his face. He always felt the sound from ear to ear: under his skin, over the meat of his cheeks, into his nose, leaking out his eyes, and then into his other ear. Bass was heard in his molars, though this player had little of that.

The music, when it started, was a version of him and Sam's song '50 Crows'. The song still made him smile—Sam used to take girls into the other room and play it for them alone. Hearing him fumble through those chords was as good as a tie on the door. They had recorded it during the summer he bought the single for "Summertime Blues" by Eddie Cochran. Bud was a year late, and he hadn't loved the song at first. But hearing it on the radio enough times made him love it. Guess that's what the radio does.

He felt the sound from the past in waves as they rattled across his bones and into

his stomach and lungs. The sound made the memories more full. Richer. Same thing happens with a good record. It becomes more than just a record in a personal sense. It sounds fuller than Mp3 would, not because of compressed sound, but because of the layers the years accumulate. It's warmer and has more depth. Some listens you feel nothing, but some listens, you know you existed.

Bud, like anyone, has a certain history. His memories have changed. Or something has. The song hasn't changed, you can be sure of that. Every time Bud heard "Desolation Row" he felt like a different man—too old to believe anyone was out to get him like he did when he first heard it, but not old enough that Dylan's version of the cultural, historical, and literary canon didn't still make his imagination crackle.

Sometimes he listened to it and thought of the time he showed Sue and she hated it, and sometimes he thought of when he realized the lyric was actually 'painting the passports brown' and that he had been singing it wrong all those years. Maybe the song isn't different, but a person's perception of it is—a sound can never be reheard for the first time, even though it's the exact same.

But this sound was February 1959 in Vancouver. Bud thought now, in his attic, that it wasn't raining the day he walked from work at the garage to bus to Sam's to record that song. All the stores used to be closed Wednesday, but the busses were still running, filled with smoker's coughs and closed umbrellas.

-February 1959-

He got off the bus a long ways from Sam. Boss-man had let him leave the garage early. Bud had stopped by the pier for a cigarette before he went to Sam's. They were going to

play some tunes, head to that workshop Sam had invited him to. What kind? He started writing the Creelyesque poem on a pad while he listened to two old men talk, long before he let anyone read it. He had gone to see a fella about buying his car that day and it got him writing about driving.

The old men were the same age as Bud is now, but then, they were old to him.

“You know Elvis is in pictures now, eh?”

“Really? What kinds?”

“What do ya call it...romance I guess.” The man opened the switchblade in his pocket and cut a piece off his apple, and began chewing loudly as he spoke, “And it's just him, singing, dating women, and being sorta depressing.”

“All of em'?” replied the other man, removing his hat and rubbing a porcelain-smooth bald patch.

“All of what? Dames or movies?”

“Movies.” The man stopped, and bit into another slice of apple. “Both, I guess.”

“Huh.” The man in the hat beckoned with his hand for a slice of apple, but was swatted away with the now closed blade.

“So that's all he does—mope around and sing and date dames? No story?”

Nearby, Bud had been splitting his time between listening to the two men, leaning on the pier, and smoking his cigarette. He watched them with his ear, and listened with his eyes on the waves.

“I mean sure, there's a story. He's got some job, eh. Like a farmer, or construction worker; in one of 'em, he sort of delivers stuff. An' he always sorta sings part time, but it's all the same.” He finished the apple slices, nibbled at the core, and threw it off the

pier. “Yup, it’s all the same. It’s Elvis, he’s sad, he gets the dames, and he sings.”

“Huh.” The man removed his hat and began to play with the hair circling the smooth spot. The other man nodded.

Bud only listened to the waves now.

The ocean fascinated Bud. He had never seen it in person before he moved to the coast, so it still made him excited. He grew up five hundred miles away, and lived that close all his life, but never saw it. His dad was in the navy in WWII. Got a mortgage for a house and a piece of land in Peace River on a VRA, and drank gin until it killed him, though his mom said he had veteran’s disease. Used to wake up in the middle of the night yelling about submarines. Nightmares are louder on forty acres.

His dad never had a drop in his marrow that wanted to go back to the shore, so Bud never saw it. Every time he walked by it he stopped, and in the summer, he would go home to Peace River where there was no salt except for the horses licks, but puffing on his cigarette then, he wasn't sure he'd be done watching the waves by summer.

When Bud got to his place, Sam had something to show him. His parents had bought him the Concertone. It must have cost them a year wages from the garage. Bud was amazed—and thankful to have Sam as a friend.

“Wanna record something?”

“Right now?”

“Yeah, why not?”

“Fifty Crows?”

Sam nodded. “Fifty Crows.” Like the poem, this was influenced by something else—Ball n’ Chain. But it was the blues, it was all dun-duh dun-duh dun-duh dun-duh.

Every blues song was basically the same, which to Bud, was comfort in a time in his life where he couldn't seem to grasp everything his peers did. But he knew a good tune, and song structure, and story structure for that matter. But he'd fallen in love with poetry, something he hadn't yet learned to regret.

At the workshop, Sasuke sat beside him.

“You are in Williams's first year course, right?”

“Yes.” Bud was surprised she started talking to him. It was rare that girls Bud thought were beautiful simply came up to talk to him. He realized how rude he was being and stuck his hand out. “Bud Fallon.”

She shook his hand. “Sasuke Oshie. What a fine course so far, isn't it?”

“Certainly.”

“Have you taken anything with Dr. Jones yet? He is a marvellous teacher as well. Today, we read poems out of a local magazine called *The Tamarack*. Do you know it? Some very radical writings in there. Though, I wish we looked at writings by women.”

Bud nodded through all of it. He did a lot of nodding and keeping silent in general at that time in his life. Better to keep silent and be thought a fool (a personal favourite idiom of his father) and all that.

Sasuke seemed to pick up on Bud's silence. “Sorry, I don't have the time to come to these often. I don't mean to go on.”

“Oh, no sorry. It is very nice to talk to you, Sasuke. I have just made it my goal to not embarrass myself today. So I thought the best way to do that was keeping my mouth shut and do a lot of nodding and smiling. My smile,” he showed his teeth, “though not

exactly a ship-sinker, has gotten me through most things—got me a job at the feed store in my home town.”

“I see.” She touched her nose and winked. “Mine got me a seat on the bus one time, but it also may have just been that old lady’s stop.”

Sasuke made her face look serious, and Bud laughed, then she broke a smile. Friends at first sight.

The workshop was filled with upper year students with their fake British accents and their love of Angry Young Man novels and poems driven by the romantic, lyric-I that his peers hated so much. But then, Bud really didn’t quite know the difference. But he knew he didn’t like their poems. He knew he liked something different. Or maybe it’s not that he didn’t like them, he sort of liked everything, but that he also liked other kinds of work. Work that there seemed to be no room for in the workshop.

They would set up this workshop as their antithesis, in the years to come. *Anarmag* was born, at first, not out of what they wanted or loved, but what they knew they didn’t want and didn’t love. The group would be homogenized in historical accounts, but perhaps they were stranger bedfellows than the banner *Anarmag* would make them seem; however, they did have a common enemy. The trust fund boys. Maybe the only thing Clark’s autobiography was truthful about was their poetics. They felt like they were alone in Canada, alone in BC, alone in Vancouver, and alone at UBC. This aspect would be focussed on heavily in the essays and accounts of *Anarmag* that were to come, but the truth was, regardless of the other ways they may or may not have been marginalized, they liked a kind of poem that other people didn’t. And that was a start.

The woman he would come to know as Jenny submitted a poem that made no

sense to Bud. He liked how it sounded, it was ineffable the way he liked it, but that wasn't good enough for the others in that workshop. That would always be good enough for Bud. It was submitted blind, but Jenny would later tell him it was hers.

The group was negative about it. What did it mean? What was it about? They didn't get it, and unlike Bud they didn't like it and didn't care to try. Sam tried to stay with it, but Chuck David, a rising star at UBC, said:

“No one seems to be connecting with this. Maybe we should move on.” All the others agreed with colonial words: indeed! Here, here and the like.

The next day, Bud went and bought the car. A four passenger 1942 Dodge Coupe. They only made a few thousand. Bud had loved cars since he was a kid. His uncle had a broken down '42 in the driveway in Peace River, and Bud would sit in the front seat and pretend to steer or play with the silent radio knobs. He even haggled the guy down a bit, which made him feel good. That night, he took it for a drive with the radio up loud, parked it by the pier and finished that poem, with the waves guiding each pen stroke. He looked at the tires and wished that while driving it, he could also watch its wheels spin.

-August 1986-

The reel had finished about thirty seconds ago. Stuck spinning in ruminations, Bud hadn't realized it. Listening to it now, he couldn't be certain of much that had happened in his life. He had a terrible long-term memory. He could tell you make, model, and year of the vehicles of all his regulars. Remember that? People often said. Bud would say no. When he thought back far enough, it all seemed to get muddled. He was one of those guys who

couldn't remember how long he had been married, and Sue would jump in to correct him when he said the wrong number.

It wasn't that he didn't remember anything, but that what he thought he remembered was often proved wrong. He could have sworn he was listening to Bob Dylan's first record when he was writing the stuff for the first issue, but that record wasn't out yet. He remembered talking with Sasuke about the gender of the character in "House of the Rising Sun." But that album wasn't out she had reminded him the last time they spoke about it—must have been someone else. Listening to him and Sam, he knew what that moment in Vancouver in 1959 sounded like. Fumbling through the blues scales made him cringe, and smile. He drank the last of his beer, and kept looking through the files for a poem that made him not feel embarrassed.

He didn't find it, but it was dark so he left the attic. Sue had barbequed dinner, made him a plate and everything. He felt like an idiot, and apologized. She just laughed.

"I could see you were misty-eyed as hell and all lost the moment you got home. Started cooking the second you went up there." She hit him with the book. He looked at the terrible cover of the James Patterson novel, and thought about how loudly he loved her.

-3-

Well of course, everything looks bad if you remember it. Now where are my chili boots?

—Homer Simpson

-August 1986-

When sasuke was tenured, she thought her mother would be proud, which she sounded like she was, but instead of vocalizing it, she made some quip about grandchildren. sasuke ignored it. It had been two years since she broke it off with. This was her mother's way of encouraging her to get back on the horse. She really wanted was time off. Or a full night's sleep. And she would have it: she had just found out her application for sabbatical had been successful—a year to write her book, and hopefully, get the manuscript of poems she had been working on finished as well. But a year she wouldn't get for a year.

It was only August and she already felt burnt out. Prepping for the fall semester, and getting ready to move into a new place in a week or two, she was thankful for a day off, which she might not get again for months, even if it was to go to her least favourite social imperative, the dentist.

Mostly, she loved her job. But both the work and the people could be draining. The amount of work that went into teaching was invisible. Some days she got asked if

she taught Japanese, or if she was a grad student. When she said no, she might be told how good she looked for her age. The institution liked to pretend that progress had vindicated them into some sort of post-racism, post-sexism Utopia of love and multiculturalism, but on a day-to-day, individual basis, in her experience, it hadn't. One time, in her early days teaching sessional at Emily Carr a lady fixing her makeup in the bathroom told her not to worry—she didn't look that Japanese.

Today, she had to get a molar pulled. She brushed every day, but sometimes, over time, a tooth just rots. Talking to her mother, she had placed the phone softly against her cheek.

“You coming back for the fair?” Her mother asked.

sasuke already told her she wasn't. Or at least, sasuke had told her months ago that she probably wouldn't be, and that probably was the same probably she often gave her family for any event that sasuke couldn't make it for. Which seemed like a lot the last few years. But her mother loved the fair. She loved seeing the kids smile on the rides, the rodeo, and most of all she loved the chili cook-off. She loved everything but the animal barns, which reminded her of the camps. She refused to go near them. Every year sasuke's mother asked her if she was coming, and every year sasuke entertained it a little more than she did other things.

She had thought about it already today. Bud had called her for the first time in years. Told her John called him about the twenty-fifth anniversary thing for *Anarmag*. Said it wasn't right that he was doing it—that he was a mechanic now for God's sake. He said it in a way that was more like a question than a statement. She told him it was fine and that, as she told him before, he deserved to be there as much as any of them. He

asked her if she would come out, and she said she might. She wouldn't be able to make that either, and it might be strange if she showed up on account of already turning it down anyway. Then he asked her about what she remembered.

Not much off hand, but she had journaled almost every day, kept posters and old chapbooks. She didn't exactly have her mother's near eidetic memory. Aiko Oshie was a walking encyclopaedia of trinkets and vases, who could tell you the exact year of a clock or some other knick-knack they had at the store. Although they didn't see eye-to-eye on many things she and Sasuke had always loved to read together and quote passages they loved.

Sasuke always had so much going on that she had to write things down. She often forgot her clutch on the counter of the bathroom, and later, if she would live that long, she might forget her cellphone places. Perhaps by then she will be so old that she can blame it on that, but she would know in her heart, she had always been that way.

She had good long-term memory for places, not necessarily dates. She could still walk her mother through their childhood home, for instance. Every room and the color of the walls. But she couldn't tell you when that was in her life. This was why the book she would eventually write about *Anarmag*, the book you are now reading, was autobiographical fiction and not autobiography.

Working in the institution was still better now than it had been when she was a student. She had found the people she liked to be around, like Penny in medieval studies. Plus, these days it seemed like Sasuke was in a position where, short of being on committees and faculty meetings, she didn't have to deal with anyone that didn't show her respect, conscious or unconscious.

Her mother started in about her sister. sasuke zoned out and looked at the boxes she had stacked in a shape so as not to block her couches view of the window.

She was going to miss this place—so would her cat Pan, though right now she was enjoying the boxes everywhere. sasuke didn't love the actual home, in fact, she kind of hated it. It had been a fixer upper when she bought it, and she had never gotten around to fixing it up, other than the bookshelves she built. But it had been the first place she lived in that really felt like home after leaving Greenwood. It had a yard, and it had stairs up to her bedroom like the house she grew up in had. And she had been there for 10 years now—time spent can sometimes trump the actually quality of the thing it's spent with. But most of all, she loved the view. She could see the fog roll in on Burnaby Mountain, and the trees. And just enough movement in the distant clouds to know it was raining. She loved to read—for pleasure not work, which wasn't as frequent a happening as she would like—and look up and out the window while she took in a poem or a moment in a novel. Now some high-rises were soon going up, and would block it. Before they did, and the property lost its value, she had sold the place. Thankfully, unlike when she moved in, this time she hired movers—a piano wasn't something a few friends would move for beer.

“I just don't know what to do, sasuke. I never thought one of my daughters would live with a man who wasn't her husband...never mind a married man.” Her sister had recently moved in with her boyfriend, who was newly divorced. “Shacked up,” her mom said. sasuke had already been through this, telling her mother it wasn't a big deal. So this morning, she just repeated it, and listened.

“it will be fine, mom.”

Her mom wasn't usually such a stickler about this sort of thing. Must be afraid of what the women at WI are saying. She remembered when she had first told her mom that she was going to go to UBC for writing and not nursing.

-October 1958-

"Writing? What writing?"

"Journalism. Well English, actually. There is no journalism program." She steadied her face and tried to be stern, "I've learned a lot here with *The Times*, and I really believe I could pursue a career in it."

"Nurse would be better. Nurses always have jobs." Her mom didn't look up from the coffee she poured.

"Aiko? Do you have the keys?" Her father came into the room, bent over to tie his boots, and looked at her mother awaiting a response.

"Not hanging up?"

He shook his head.

Her mother touched Sasuke's shoulder. "Talk later." Her mother walked into the other room, chastising her father for losing his keys in Japanese.

"What's that?" Her dad pointed to the papers in front of her.

"Application for school."

"A nurse in the family! That will be good. You can fix me when I'm old." He laughed with his lungs like always, and patted her on the shoulder.

She wanted to just tell him, and get it over with right there, but she knew that it wouldn't end well. Her father was not a mean man, or a controlling one, but he wanted

what was best for his kids. His father had been a painter, and he had grown up poor. He was a logger until they bought the store, and he was a very practical man. He may not have helped her pay for school if he knew it was for writing.

She nodded, and looked away. Her mother supported her decision, and allowed that they shouldn't tell her father just yet. They would tell him when Sasuke first go published.

"Keys are on your dresser!" Her mother yelled from the bedroom, and her father grabbed them and left.

-August 1986-

"sasuke?"

"we'll see. i uh..." She didn't have anything really that she knew of that weekend. But it was the beginning of the semester and that meant that she was busy. Now forty-two and in the institution for over twenty years, she had learned a long time ago that September was not a time to make plans. Not to go home to Greenwood and go to the Boundary fair, and not to go support old friends. "...i will be in faculty meetings all that weekend—start of the year and all. but i'll try, mom." It wasn't completely a lie—it could happen.

Linda was supposed to pick her up from the dentist today, but cancelled. Said she felt run down, maybe getting sick. Could have been an excuse, which would be fine if it was. sasuke assured her she was capable of cabbng. People make too big of a deal about excuses to cancel. sasuke always thought that if someone cancelled on you, and they were otherwise a reliable person, that they must have a good reason for it, even if that reason is

just being tired or feeling a little depressed. That's as good an excuse as any, even if it's not as tangible.

Already tired in August—the thought made her shake head. It was the same kind of burnt out she felt in those early days at UBC. She remembered juggling multiple jobs while trying to write papers. How little any of them listened to her until her book sold enough copies that even Toronto noticed her. After that, the men in the group thought back about how brilliant she always was and what their place in that brilliance was. She was lionized, and it lent to their mane—they never spoke ill of her again, but she remembers her early classes at UBC, the snickers and how casually the way the word “Jap” had been thrown around. She remembers the way they would joke about committing “Harry-Carry” or the ones about people being named Chicken Teriyaki.

It didn't bother her now like it had then. They were being perfectly harmless they would say. But there is a way that hearing that got to you. Day in and day out, working with the strategy of a pop song, getting into your ear and snaking down to your brain so you wake up with the words on your tongue. You hate it, deep down in your stomach, but you can still hear it in your head.

“Shubun no hi? Visit your father's grave?”

She exhaled deeply. “probably.” This made her mother happy, but sasuke knew it was the same kind of probably.

She breathed deeply, and it tasted sweet. Reminded her of the dark chocolate she used to get with her coffee from that little shop out in Point Grey.

“Deep breaths, Mrs. Oshie.” She didn't correct him. But she started to feel it. The

dark chocolate spread to the parts of her body touching the chair and her lungs melted into her stomach like menthol.

There isn't much to say, really. It rains. The rain comes down with focus. Lasers sitting down on the grass, collecting, washing. The dirt cannot be washed away—only moved. Only moved. Only more feel that way than less. Back-breaking cracks in the pavement steal glances of light through the fish-aired walk of being twenty in a trillion-year-old universe. A universe that a western God used to have created, then, well, he admitted that he had lied. Admitted that he was dead. She was tired of this. She was tired of the talking. The haired lips flapping in the grey rain that get tired until the blue rain comes. She will fold back into the couch she had in the 60s and wash her clothes with a hose attached to the sink and tell her father that she is enjoying her nursing school and this will tire her more than the rain ever could. Her family's god was not dead, but she had no time for Shinto. For the ritual. For the past. She wanted to document the now. The 60s. She wanted her own future where she could make soup from the rainwater and no one would care whether she was good at looking after anyone. No one would look at her at all. She wanted to read books, and be alone, and she was okay with that and then type up the news in a way that people would want to read it. She did not have much to say, and for her, that was not analogous to the value of her involvement or the concentration of the pen strokes in her brain. She had a precipitation that was hers alone.

“That’s it Mrs. Oshie.” He took his gloves off. “No eating for a few hours and no smoking for twenty-four.” He started to leave the room then stopped and turned back. “Is there anyone coming to get you?”

“no.”

“Take it easy today.”

sasuke wouldn't be doing that either. She had work to do. Lessons to build for the year, and another draft of her paper on Kiyooka was due.

By the time she got home, her jaw was aching. She made some tea and sat down on the couch. Her head cleared up and she couldn't help but think about what she had thought about while she was under. The rain. Other than the sheer amount of people, she felt the biggest change when she went from Greenwood to UBC was the weather. The rain usually didn't remind her of anything, because it was always there, but sometimes, it reminded her of first adjusting to it all.

“What was it like? I mean. Yeah, no, what was it like?” Bud had repeated rather rapidly. To her, a classroom talk was pretty standard stuff. For Bud it must be rather a stressful sort of thing, she supposed.

She knew she should be working on her paper, but her face was pounding too much to create, and too much to sleep, so she went to the boxes by the window, and pulled out her black leather journals. *1959*. She imagined this was supposed to be the sort of thing that had dust on it. That she would blow the dust off and it would cover the camera lens hovering over her with the warmth of nostalgia. But there wasn't. She kept them on the green bookshelf she had made the summer she went home before she started teaching at SFU.

The magazine had been her idea, though history would remember it as being Sam's. Clark would call Jones *Anarmag*'s 'catalyst and mentor' in his best-selling autobiography *Anarmag Hates the UK*. A book that was more on the fiction side. Clark never liked Jones. He thought, despite being married, that Dr. Jones was gay. He never

said it so explicitly, but that was why. But he had no problem with him in that book. Clark had always been Canada's golden boy, even if Sam had been touted the representative poet of *Anarmag*. He attributed it to one of the parties at Williams's houseboat.

That's the last time he saw them all. Williams's funeral. sasuke hadn't talked to Williams since he took a drunken pass at Jenny during the '63 reading series when they brought Armstrong and those guys in, but if Jenny was going, she thought she should too. Williams had apologized—said he was seeing snakes, but Jenny was basically done with the man after that. Smokes had got him and he died looking much older than sixty-two. No one had bothered to say anything when the mic was an open invite. Bud didn't either, but because he was scared of standing in front of people after all these years. Bud told her he wondered if Williams had thought about them near the end. Said he remembered reading that L. Frank Baum's last words were "Now we can cross the shifting sands." But with his lungs full of fluid he couldn't imagine Williams's words were so poetic. Rain maybe. Probably just a cough for help.

She opened her diary to November. Before diving into the words, she looked at the garden. The small, rectangle box was overgrown. The only plants that really made it, with her lack of time, were the zucchini. She really did love how being out there, and how calm gardening felt, but the new place didn't have a yard so it felt pointless being out there. Her father would be disappointed to see it—the garden was his domain, and he was adamant about weeding. sasuke always felt as though weeds were part of an ecosystem, and felt bad pulling them out. But now, she felt bad letting the zucchini choke on the quicker grass. She began to read her old handwriting. She hadn't written down

exact dialogue or anything, but the basic plot points were there, and memory, as it does, had a way of filling in the rest.

-November 1959-

“Why do you always have so many novels and poems? Aren’t you a nurse?” Sasuke’s younger cousin Ren asked. He was sharp, but as the youngest of many older siblings, most of whom had now moved out, was a troublemaker in the sort of way younger siblings often are. A symptom of trying to be noticed when your siblings are finding success outside of your home.

“I’m not a nurse. I’m in school to be a nurse.” Truthfully, she wasn’t. That’s just what she had told her dad, and therefore, her uncle with whom she was staying. But she and her mom knew the truth—she wanted to be a journalist, so she had enrolled in UBC’s English program. Not exactly journalism school, but it was the closest thing to at UBC, and she had a place to live with family there. Although, that came with helping out for long hours at her uncle’s restaurant. If she was found out, she would get sent back to Greenwood to work at her parents’ store. Writing was her ticket out of that small town—and maybe, one day, to see the world through a typewriter.

“Why does she have to sleep in my room? I thought once Toshi moved out I got my own room?”

“That’s enough, Ren. You are fine in that room with your sister. Plus, Sasuke actually works—all you do is eat.” Her uncle laughed at his joke, and looked back down at his work. He always started by looking over the books for the restaurant in the morning, even if there wasn’t much to do. “Now get ready for school.”

Ren looked at Sasuke and made deer horns at her—she stuck her tongue out at him.

“Hey!” He pointed. “She stuck her tongue out at me.”

“Ren! School. *Now.*” Sasuke’s aunt from the other room. This time he complied.

Her cousin really was a good kid despite his shit disturbing ways. Smart enough that he always had time to get in trouble at school. He frustrated Sasuke, but it made the move to UBC easier having a sort of sibling around.

Sasuke and her sister were never close. Her sister was older, and in that way that a smart young person and someone who is older sometimes develop a rivalry. A rivalry for no other reason than they both have something the other wants—freedom and experience on one hand and talent or intelligence on the other. Not fierce rivals. Not friends ever either. But her brother, who was only two years her junior, was one of her best friends. He later became a logger like their father had been before her parents owned the store. Skidders instead of Clydesdales, mind you. He fell off one into a swamp trying to loose the choker from a log. Never left Greenwood and the surrounding woods more than a handful of times.

“See you after class at the restaurant, Sasuke?”

“Sure thing, uncle.”

Her uncle nodded, and looked back to his book. He enjoyed having Sasuke around. She made things a little easier both around the house and as an employee—very smart girl. When the restaurant picked up next summer, he would double-down on that thought.

Sasuke stopped by *The Ubysey* that day with a CV and a writing sample, but the

person who did the hiring wasn't there. They told her to stop by in a few days once he had time to get to it, or to leave her number and they would get back to her.

In class that day, they talked about submitting to magazines. She and Bud had discussed making their own magazine, but when they brought it up to Professor Jones after class one day, he told them they didn't know enough yet, but invited them to a party at Williams's house later that week. Said that they needed to live in this world a little more.

A few days later, she stopped by *The Ubysey* office and she had been hired. Her first gig was reporting on the cafeteria food, but it was something. It was journalism, which was why she was there in the first place. A good thing, no doubt, that the magazine idea hadn't panned out. Between school, her job at the restaurant, and now *The Ubysey*, there wouldn't have been time to run a magazine. She didn't know then what that might entail, but she assumed it would be a lot of work.

A lot of writers at UBC had been going to gatherings at Williams for a while, but it was the first one Sasuke attended, though she did go to the creative writing workshop that had many of the same people, just without the 'angry young men novelists' as Clark called them, or very few of them anyways. She had been offered a ride from her friend Christie who lived near her. She initially said no, but Christie assured her that she had to be home early, and her boyfriend didn't mind giving them a ride so Sasuke figured it was time to come out.

Williams and Jones were pariahs in the English department. The antithesis to the staunch, eastern conservatism of those who followed the dogmatic rule of James Borthwick and his congregation. They embodied a certain kind of west coast ideal, which

was strange as Williams was a Brit and Jones was an American from Berkeley. Williams only had a Master's degree, but got the job when the department needed people to teach intro writing courses, and would even teach a graduate course the next year. But despite perhaps a technical lack of qualifications, he was a wonderful professor, and most importantly, he and Jones taught a kind of poetry this group seemed to want—simply put, it was different. It jumped off the margins and made more sense the first time you read it than the second. It tasted good out-loud. It was something they were all hungry for in those days. Sasuke had just gotten the new issue of *Pyramid*, UBC's newest literary magazine, run by Dr. Borthwick himself, and she was underwhelmed.

Williams was infamous amongst students, not the least because he ordered molasses and served homemade rum; they labelled the latter with tape and puns related to sailing and pirates, things like Ruminson Carosoe and Sir Francrum Drake. He wasn't married and sometimes invited a female student to go look at his private collection of poetry upstairs. Most of the girls knew what that meant—sometimes they went with him and sometimes they didn't. The girls naïve enough to think that was all he was up to sometimes gave a little squeal and a giggle and some of them promptly came back downstairs. They all said it was harmless, but in the 70s he was forced into an early retirement for undisclosed reasons. Sasuke heard whispers that didn't seem so harmless.

“Sasuke, right?” A boy stood before her, overdressed in a suit. She recognized him as Sam Patterson from her class.

Sasuke nodded.

“I'm gonna go find Phillip.” Her friend Christie looked at Sam and gave Sasuke a squeeze on the arm, and got up.

“Oh. Good.” Sasuke replied. She thought about going home. She had an essay to start researching, though it was early in the term, even for her. But she hadn’t done anything last semester, hadn’t gone to anything social. She wasn’t a social person—she enjoyed her alone time. Always had. When family would visit, she used to go to her room to read, but she had heard university was only as good as the events you attend, or the relationships you make. She was already bored, though.

“Sam Patterson.” He reached his hand out as though he were making a business deal. He would later publish as Sam Winchester.

“I know.” She shook it quickly. They had been in a few classes together now, though they hadn’t spoken much.

“I like what you have to say. Looking forward to the rest of this class.”

She nodded and smiled routinely. She hadn’t really talked much in this class, or the other two she’d taken with Sam, so she knew that was a fabrication. It was in those first few eager months of the year. She knew this from her first year. Everyone was nervous. The loud ones were loud, and that’s how they dealt with it—getting people to learn their names. The quiet ones would keep extra silent. Not move even. Those in the middle, like her, had their own form of life. They weren’t manipulating any perception. They weren’t trying to get the desk they sat on noticed as a place to look at by the lecturer. Or she wasn’t. She wasn’t speaking for anyone, but she wanted to engage. She wanted to say her piece when she had something that was every bit as important as a quip from Clark Miller or the way his friends laughed every time he made a sound like he was hotter than a bricklayer in Albuquerque. But every class was a new dynamic that required a little sinking in.

She thought about not replying, but couldn't help herself. "Oh? What specifically did you like?"

He wasn't expecting it. He expected to tell her she's pretty and then build on that next week, and maybe bag himself a Japanese girl or, at very least, an ally.

"Um, I uh." He laughed to buy himself time. Looked around. "We were talking about a poem—can't quite remember. Nope, can't quite." That was just vague enough to work. But not on Sasuke. She felt like she had sufficiently tortured him.

"Mhmm." Maybe people were right—this party was fun.

To his credit, Sam stuck around.

"You like Williams?"

"So far."

"Yeah, yeah. Me too, me too." Sam was a repeater. Rather than not speak at all, he would repeat himself, sometimes in different combinations of words, to buy time. He wasn't classically charming, but the man had a way with words—just not an efficient one.

"Do you submit much to magazines?" Sasuke had been thinking about it all day since class. Usually she just tried to get gigs at newspapers, like when she wrote for *The Times* in Greenwood, but every so often she sent out a poem or a story. She recently submitted to the new publication called *Canadian Literature*, and had submitted to a few other magazines that she admittedly did not read. But she had never received so much as a rejection letter, which had discouraged her from submitting anything in awhile.

"I've been really busy. So busy—you know? But I will. I will. I have at least thirty poems that are ready for publication I think. You?"

She would come to learn that was writer talk for ‘no’. But at the time she believed it.

“I submitted to *Canadian Literature*, which is practically a newborn, and I’d like to send something to *The Fiddlehead*. A few others additionally, but I never received a reply.”

“Oh yeah—*The Fiddlehead* is great. Really great.” Sam had never read it. He made a mental note to pick up a copy.

“Sometimes I think I should just start my own magazine. One that at least extends a courteous ‘thank you’ even as it rejects its applicants.”

Sam laughed.

“Yeah, right. You’re a riot, you know that?” He moved a bit closer to her. She moved farther away. She pulled out her copy of the new *Pyramid* to move on from the awkwardness of the moves.

“Have you read this yet?”

Sam shook his head.

“It’s UBC’s new publication. There are some technically sound poems in it,” she shrugged, “but nothing all that exciting. Nothing like what we have been talking about with *The New American Poetry*.”

“Who is featured?”

“A few UBC students. That tall guy that is always chewing on his pipe from the writer’s workshop.”

“Joe?”

“That’s him.” She pointed.

“What a bore. That fella is a real germ.”

Sasuke flipped to the page with his poem. Sam read it quickly. “Yuck. Is that iambic pentameter? Dreadful.”

“Yeah. The rest aren’t much better. A few poets from Toronto, and no women.”

Sam doesn’t answer this. He looked quickly over the magazine, not taking much in, but hating it all the same. He was at least this good, he thought. “This really jazzes me up. What kinda fuckin’ Mickey Mouse operation are they running?”

“Yeah.”

Williams entered the room with Dr. Jones. Sasuke would develop a great relationship with Jones, who never moved closer to her on a bench. A trusting relationship. He would write her reference letters until she got tenured and he died of a heart attack. A busty man, if ever there was such a thing. Small legs and c-cups—every girl’s dream, but with more hair and midsection.

“Let’s go talk to them.”

“What?”

“Come on. At least say thanks for the invite. They are good people to know, and someone as pretty as you beside me will only help my cause.”

“Ready to go, Sas?” Christie was waving from the door with her boyfriend. Sasuke waved back, nodding.

“I’m good.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, I’m fine, thank you. I was just leaving.”

“Right—sure. Well, have a swell night.” He turned away and then back again.

“Hey, your magazine.”

“Keep it. I already read it. If nothing else, use it for a beer coaster--or a party joke.”

He laughs. “Real cool. Alright, Sasuke.”

When she got home, she wrote in her journal. It was a leather one that her mother had got her as a secret present, to show support for her choice to pursue writing. Sometimes while she was thinking, she would rub the ridges of the leather, and it helped her focus. She thought about how in a few weeks she would get together all of her poems that she had ready and submit them. She just ended up sending one out to *The Fiddlehead*—about how the rain can feel new if you aren’t from here, and how quickly it gets to feeling old.

When she got to class next week, she would hear about how Sam and Williams came up with this idea to make their own magazine. Sam had shown her the copy of *Pyramid* she had brought, and he hated what was in it. Sam had joked that maybe they should start the magazine after all, and warm with rum, this time, Williams was in full support. This would not be the last time she wouldn’t receive credit on an idea, but she didn’t dwell on it—it was nonetheless exciting to be a part of. Despite the fact that, after her hiring at *The Ubysey*, she was certain she didn’t have the time, they were going to make a magazine. Whatever the cost, it would be something of their own.

-4-

Even sound seemed to fail in this air, like the air was worn out with carrying sounds so long.

—Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*

-February 1960-

“You know where that comes from, eh?”

“Which?” Bud looked around. People seemed like they wanted the meeting to start. Bud among them. His chair was green and uncomfortable, and he didn’t want to scratch his behind in public, but Sam didn’t pick up the social cue (or he didn’t care) that folks were ready, and so he started in on a brand-new story.

“The expression. Its etymology. Well, not etymology I guess, but its origins. ‘Saved by the bell’, I mean. Do you know where it comes from?”

“Sam, I think folks are keen to start.” Sam had been starting to wear on Bud, lately. It could be so tiring, listening.

“Let the man speak,” Clark piped in, then lowered his voice slightly and tapped Sam on the elbow. “If we miss anything, Friday’ll take notes.” He motioned to Sasuke and failed at holding back a howl. Clark’s laugh was always loud, and like a variety of canines, from wolf to hyena, but somehow, with its smoky rasp, still charming in its own

angular jawbone sort of way. Clark's cigarette ash fell to the carpet and he rubbed it in with his foot. Bud and Sam both chuckled along.

Whether she heard it or not, Sasuke didn't show it. She kept her head down and writing.

Of course after a night of drinking and deciding to make their own magazine months ago at Williams's, naturally what happened was no one had done a thing. The semester had ended, and summer came. More nights of drinking ensued with the windows open to let the cool outside rain drop the temperature of the hot inside, which was hot on account of the humidity. Each time someone would bring up a poem in *The Dalhousie Review*, or how much they hated the Leafs, people would get all fired up about the idea again. Everyone would get enthusiastic as though they were going to run out and start setting type that very second, but their rum soaked aspirations would dry up in the morning, and pound in their heads, and nothing would happen.

-September 1960-

The following semester, Bud and a few of the others took a third year contemporary poetry course with John Jones. He had a very interesting class structure. So much different than Bud was used to in his other classes. Everyone arranged their desks into a circle. And he only had them look at one main text and a few other poems all year. They spent the year looking at two poems by Tim Armstrong, and Olson's essay "Projective Verse" which, even though had been talked about in their cohort for a while now, Bud still didn't fully understand. Sasuke complained that there were no female poets on the syllabus, and Jones allowed that she was right, and asked if she had a poem to suggest?

“Yes. I do.”

And she did. Sasuke did. And so they had spent a week or two looking at an early Phyllis Webb poem but Bud couldn't remember which one.

Williams and Jones made them all feel like they were poets. They would use the word to describe the students whom they knew wrote. My poet friend [name], here. [name] is a wonderful young poet, and so on. In the minds of Bud and Sasuke and the others, Williams's and Jones's foregrounding of poetry was new, and it made them believe it was more than a hobby, and slowly the other things, journalism or cars, took a backseat to poetry. From that class, more gatherings at Williams's house ensued, and it seemed Bud was not alone in not understanding Olson's essay.

Bud would go meet with Williams in his office sometimes, which usually led to them going to the pub. Williams always called him Kid, like he was just one of a bunch, but Bud had grown to idolize Williams. Sometimes Sam was critical of the man, and Bud felt like it was because Sam could tell they were closer. Sam always destroyed what he couldn't have.

At the meeting—after some rum, of course—Clark brought up the magazine idea again, and this time, Williams and Jones both backed the idea. A proper meeting was set for the next week. Sasuke wasn't there as she had been starting to go between all her various duties of writing or working or volunteering. She was always doing something. Bud had a French lit course with her and invited her.

And so the first *Anarmag* meeting began (or rather, would when Sam finished his story).

Clark had now leaned in to listen so Sam switched into a more poetic register.

“It comes from the black plague. The shovels were tired. They ran out of grass space for graves so they started digging them up. They found that something like one in five of the coffins had scratch marks on the inside.” He shook his head. “Scratch marks, imagine that.” He looked over at Bud, who gave a little snort, but actually felt a little sick inside when he thought about it.

Sam had a way of shape shifting to the moment. He could go from crude and crass to genuine and polite, poetic, sophisticated and even brilliant—depending on what note the context demanded he hit. And, whether consciously or not, (Bud thought unconsciously for sure) he always knew which group of people demanded which register.

“I guess when they went around with the cart picking up bodies in the streets like fucking sacks of flower. They picked up a few drunks tossed them on the cart, and buried them. Alive.” He looked at Bud and then Clark. “Scratch marks. Imagine that.” He pulled his hands down through the air like he was scratching a coffin.

Sam always had little facts like this, though who knew if they were true. Bud didn’t want to engage as he thought Sam was joshing with him. Sam often had a deadpan way of asking questions as a way of setting up a joke. Some silly pun or the like.

“No shit.” Clark said. Clark had dropped his elevated, faux English accent since the group moved away from association with that subculture of Point Grey. Turned out, to Bud’s knowledge, Clark was from a dairy farm in Chilliwack, but would never speak of it to any of them. Heard it from the friend of a friend, a woman, who had gotten friendly with Clark, enough for him to open up.

Bud snorted again.

“Yes sir. I kid you fucking not. Wouldn’t lie ‘bout something like this. So they

started burying fellas with a string tied around their wrist to the surface, eh. A lifeline to the moonlight and a bell at the end of it and a person to wait and watch the bell to see if it rang. Hence, saved by the bell.” Then he thought of something else. “And, actually, hence ‘the graveyard shift’. The original graveyard shift was watching bells, and waiting for them to ring.”

Bud mustered one last sound that was meant as a reaction, but really carried no meaning except what the context provided which was sort of ‘I sincerely understand you—fantastic story, can we shut up and proceed with this meeting?’

He was nervous. Bud still knew little about poetry or literary magazines, but he wanted so badly to be a part of this. Everyone else was Creeley this and other-poet-guy that and Bud, who seemed to be stuck with knowledge of all too well-known poets like Whitman or Dickinson, tried to pick up the language when he could. He could make his voice sound confident when he said a poet’s name. He assumed they all must do it. Once you hear something it is yours, so why act like it’s something you just learned? Like no one had ever heard of William Carlos Williams and then a few hours later they would shorten his name to WCW. Bud would read not long before he died that there was a time when even Shakespeare didn’t know how to speak.

Bud had not learned about submitting his work yet. He had mailed in a story to *Reader’s Digest* about an outbreak of a four dimensional disease that was contagious across centuries, and turned people into robots. It mixed science fiction and detective stories, but he also felt it had a certain charm in the lyric line that separated him from other members of the genre. It was barely edited, which seemed so silly to him now, but then he thought it was great the way it was. He had just read *The Sound and the Fury* and

thought his style would be construed as working in that stream-of-consciousness mode. He had only mentioned to this group he wrote science fiction once, and Clark laughed like he was kidding and Bud allowed that he was. It would get rejected from *Reader's Digest*.

Bud did submit another poem to the group after being told the last one wasn't 'open' enough. Just like the acronym WCW, it seemed like a word they all just learned, but like they all already knew better than him, somehow. Truthfully, at times, they were being rather reductive with Olson when criticizing each other, but with Jones and Williams's guidance, they all understood a little more each week.

-January 1961-

Bud tried to work through it. Wrote a poem every day all of December. The next poem he started on when he heard about a man that got stabbed in Stanley Park. He wrote it in one draft, and tried to let 'one perception lead to the next'.

I Hope I'm Never in a Knife fight

The proximity alone
of sharp things
on the list of items
that are both functional
cheap and silent
that made me into
thinking I was knife

a man, I mean, a man
because I got a buck
knife. To win
arguments about
which one of us
gets to die
in their sleep.

“It’s very lyrical still isn’t it? Your language seems so structured. A lovely poem, but still like you are using the language to talk to us, not letting the language do the work. Does that make sense?” Jones was very gracious when he said it, but it still hurt Bud. But a productive hurt. Motivation in deflation.

“Right, yeah. I mean it was just a try. Like all poems.” Are you fucking kidding? How was this still closed off? It was no different than that piece of trash Clark wrote about Narcissus.

Bud had heard profs talk like that—calling poems ‘a try’--and decided he also believed it. He thought that felt like something Olson and those fellas would appreciate. Though, he kind of hated the way they told him that poetry was individual, and of the body of each poet, and non-prescribed, but somehow if you didn’t do it their way, it wasn’t right. Could something be both un-prescribed and wrong? Maybe it both could and couldn’t. Maybe that was stupid and pretentious. University had made it hard to decide absolutely about anything, anymore.

Either way, he couldn’t see the difference between his work and theirs. He liked it all. He was with everyone in wishing there was somewhere that his work could get seen,

or the type of work he really loved could, but that didn't necessarily mean that he was against the lyric, the I, or whatever. He hoped they would start a magazine eventually.

"Doesn't use the page much either, does it?" Sasuke said. That hurt, too. He expected it from the others, but not her. He looked at her, but could see it wasn't out of malice. That's something you can see in someone. Sasuke was always up front.

All of their poetics were evolving, though. Jenny wrote about the water. Clark, for someone who made jokes all the time, had a critical eye for words, and wrote poetry that was very grim and beautiful. Sam was the joker, and wrote things that were a bit risqué. He would write a poem about Sasuke's hair being close to her waist, keeping her nameless, voiceless, but recognizable by her body, which Sasuke told him was garbage and not to do it again.. Sasuke wrote about her own experience. Tried to find a language that felt like the sounds from her own lungs. Clark wrote about sound, and clues, and time. And memory. He wrote about that more than he remembered.

Bud was starting to get sweet on her right around then. Such a smart girl. And so darn pretty. When he read her poetry, which was very fine, he would imagine her reading it in his head—it's a funny thing being friends with writers whose writing you like. When you can hear them in speaking or thinking in something they wrote--or at least, your version of them.

"So, maybe we should start soon?" Sasuke said.

"One sec," said Sam.

Dr. Jones then spoke up, "So." He clapped his hands together. Murmurs quieted down much the way they do in a classroom, but not fully.

"In a moment, I--"

“Shut the fuck up!” Williams yelled, steadying his drink with one hand, and the room went silent. He laughed.

Bud remembered them like good cop and bad cop in his detective novels. Jon Jones always going to get a cup of coffee.

Williams saw a few semi-horrified looks and leaned against the table. “Jesus, I was kidding. We just want to get started.” He was always leaning as though the floor was slanted. Walked like it, too.

“Yes, thank you Rob.” Jon moved into a central position near a window. He was the type of man that never looked at people when he talked. Always playing with something in his hand, or looking out of a window. Seemingly not for a lack of confidence, for he was stoic and calm in his confidence, but more so that he had to be doing something else. Always he was present, and moving forward, but his thought somewhere else. Bud didn’t know how anyone could pay attention to so many things at once.

The disagreements, the chemistry, arguments over content or typeset, or how they were going to get their hands on a mimeograph, the collective talking over each other that went into even seemingly individual arts like writing. But making a magazine was a collaboration. It wasn’t like working at the shop, Bud remembered thinking. At a job, there was a plan, tasks, and bosses. The idea came from the top and was filtered through bosses right down to workers. The workers were paid to do a job; it was not a collaboration, except maybe in the sense of different kinds of labour coming together to be one. But working on the magazine early on was difficult. People got so excited about creating. Some people yelled their ideas out, even ones that weren’t very good. But

eventually many got busy, and stopped showing up, and they stopped telling them about the meetings. Within a few weeks, it would just be Bud, Sasuke, Sam, Clark, Jenny and Professors Williams and Jones. Occasionally Jones's wife Sally, who had been hired sessionally to fill spots in the English department teaching 100 level composition courses that everyone was required to take at UBC, would join them.

There were actually over ten people there for that first meeting. People forgot that. In fact, Bud figured that people sometimes forgot that in general: about the community of writing. There was a nostalgia and fetishization of art that narrativized creation as resulting from individual talent or inspiration, that, through hindsight, seems like genius. Sometimes it is. But more often than not, artists had help. They had editors and unconscious influences, overhead conversations or had moms who let them raid their pantry.

“We are all here because interest has been expressed in starting a magazine. Rob and I are not here to tell you how to do that, but facilitate discussions like we have had.” He looked over at Sam. “Sam, this whole thing was your idea.” Bud looked at Sasuke. Her face did not change. “Would you like to walk us through your vision as starting point from which to depart into a discussion?”

It might not be as important now, Bud thought, but print journals just didn't have the power they did then. Talking about creating your own magazine felt like a big thing. It was a big thing.

Sam looked over at Sasuke and quickly down, then back to Dr. Jones.

“Um, yeah—yes sure. I mean, I don't know. I don't want to control this or anything.” Sam cleared his throat and stood up straighter. “I mean, thank you, Dr. Jones.

I suppose what has motivated this meeting, as you all may or may not know, has been our own work and discussions regarding contemporary poetics. We have read Armstrong, and “Projective Verse”, and other contemporary, mostly American poets. However, when we read literary magazines they are either some Toronto poet or another whom none of us have heard of or share any sort of textual comradery with, or they are from here, and they are a dreadful, dreadful bore.” He looked around the room for assurance that he was adequately summarizing their collective position on the state of literary magazines at the time. “The thought has been to create our own magazine or literature and poetics. Something we would want to read, and a venue to publish our own thoughts and ideas.” He nodded at this. This was the important part. “I suppose the question, then, is how to proceed?”

He looked to Professor Williams, who was not expecting to be brought into the conversation. Then everyone looked to Williams, who looked at Jones. Jones gestured towards Williams, insinuating that it was time to speak up and inspire. Williams looked down at his empty glass.

“Well, if we are going to do this, I’m going to need another drink.” He smiled, red-faced, and walked into the other room. Everyone laughed and agreed they would need another drink as well.

But the night went on, and they all drank more, and once again, very little was done on the magazine.

Bud saw Sasuke getting ready to go. The rum in his stomach made him feel warm, and he thought it was as good a time as any to ask her out.

“Hey, Sasuke.” He realized then he didn’t know what to say after that. “How has

it been—going? How’s, I mean, how is, it going?”

Sasuke looked at him oddly.

“It’s going good. Just going to get going.”

“That’s funny,” Bud laughed at her saying going so many times, but then realizing it wasn’t a joke, he stopped.

She smiled quick and politely. “Yes, well okay. It was nice to see you, Bud. Perhaps we will get more done at the next meeting, I hope.”

“Me as well, me as well.” He tried to look serious and nod. But he had come this far. “Actually. I was thinking. Uh, wondering. Wondering if you would care to accompany me to dinner. With me sometime.” He looked for her to respond, but before she could, he added. “You know, to talk more about the magazine or what have you.”

“I don’t think so, Bud. No. Sorry.” She put her purse over her arm. Then seeing how crushed Bud looked added, “Perhaps coffee or tea would be better. Are you on campus tomorrow? We could take tea if you like.”

Bud nodded. ‘Take tea’ always reminded him of Prufrock.

“Great, okay. Well shall we say in the Student Union building at noon?”

Again Bud nodded, and bid her goodnight. He knew what a changing dinner to coffee meant, but he was still eager to hang out.

At coffee he would try to ask her out again and again she would decline. But every time she declined, she usually offered some kind of day replacement. Even doing homework together. And eventually they would hang out a few times a week. Bud became one of Sasuke’s closer friends, even though she initially made time for him just so she wouldn’t break his heart.

Bud would be over it quickly and happy to have a friend in Sasuke. She was so knowledgeable, but humble and generous about it. Bud would ask Jenny out a few weeks after that and she would shut him down, too. Sam said Jenny was probably a dyke or a prude and not to worry, he would find a sweetheart. Which he would.

That's part of what gets ignored looking back at a group history—the fact that the reason for their becoming synonymous is only a small part of their lives. Even husbands and wives have different hobbies and groups of friends. The *Anarmag* group all hung out with their own little sub groups. Sasuke with the folks working on *The Ubysey*. Sam seemed to hang out with anyone. He often hung out with poets who publish in *The Raven* and occasionally could be heard with his own fake British accent, but he said he only did it to get published. That it was a victimless crime—like punching someone in the dark. Clark planned on going the academic route and he hung out with the other English majors, delivering papers and the like. Jenny hung out with the folks Sam called, “Quakers,” and volunteered around town. Jenny would have two children after university before divorcing her husband Jack in the 70s and becoming an active member of Vancouver's feminist, as well as lesbian and gay liberation movements. Sasuke would read about her arrest in Toronto in 1980, after an altercation while protesting the movie *Cruising*.

Those different backgrounds and circles were what made for both the diversity of ideas in the magazine, and the arguments that led to nothing getting done at times. Bud figured that was the problem with having to get close to other people, or coexist, at worst, is that we are only capable of understanding each other on our own terms. Those terms come with egos. Language, combination of chemicals and hormones. Seeing light as

colour will be another one if our species makes the future. The problem is, we never fully understand. We ultimately speak a different language than everyone, and spend our lives translating so we don't have to be alone.

Thinking about all of them, Bud didn't really remember Jenny as well. They worked together on the magazine, and took courses, went on a few road trips to see readings, and met almost weekly for almost two years. But he didn't know much about her. He knew she was from Seattle, and found out asking her out that she had a husband that didn't mind her going to school or having a job. And Bud knew what types of poems she liked and could anticipate the things she would say in her critique of his poems. Some people you can work with every day and never get close to. Never really click with, but for a few moments, here and there, maybe when you agree on something or hold a door. Or maybe just a respectful good morning, which not everyone appreciates.

Sasuke had gone and Sam pulled out his pocket watch. "Ding ding ding!"

Bud shook his head.

"Time to go. 8:30 class tomorrow, eh?"

"You bet." Bud nodded and looked at the two triangular openings of his beer. He didn't know why, he wasn't looking at anything. Just a physical action as arbitrary as adjusting an elbow on a knee. He thought that sometimes sounds from another person's mouth make a man react. Perhaps to show he's listening even though he ain't. He said he just had to grab his coat.

Sam and Bud always headed home together back then. Bud parked at Sam's and walked over to these things because there was never good parking near Professor Williams's place. They took their beers for the road, threw them on the ground in a park

they cut through with a few other cans that were there. Someone else must have had the idea first. They stopped off to smoke some marijuana in a graveyard on the way home. The trees and vines and bushes all around it had a secluded inlet that no one could see too. The fence was small.

Sam pulled a joint out of his cigarette case and lit it up, sparks popped when a seed burst inside it.

“You think you could hear it?” Sam points with the joint towards the tombstones.

“What?” Bud replies, half laughing.

“The sound of those guys waking up. Six feet under, you think buddy workin’ nightshift could fuckin’ hear them cunts? Screaming or rolling or banging on the wood. Or you think they just heard the bells?”

“Oh.” Bud thought for a moment, imagined it until he didn’t want to. People by themselves down there in the dark, just yelling for anyone.

The weed settled in and made him scared thinking about it—he wished he had another beer in him before he drove home, just in case he was pulled over. Bud raised his shoulders and mumbled that he didn’t know.

Sam quietly shut his door, and Bud started the Studebaker. On the way home, “Are You Lonesome, Tonight?” came on the radio, and Bud turned it up as loud as it would go.

The next few meetings were more productive. One meeting they all brought in work they wanted to feature in the magazine, another they brought literary magazines they wanted to emulate. Sometimes they just talked about ideas, or returned to poetics. Often this meant going around in circles, which is it’s own kind of learning.

They talked about *Pyramid* and what they all did and didn't like about it. It was the centre to which they hoped to be the other. Then, it looked like the fucking *New Yorker*. Margaret Laurence had been in there. They decided on making theirs look more do-it-yourself. Hand typed, maybe. And would get their own juggernauts in there, eventually. Williams said he would use his contacts to get some writing as well. After Bud left, Armstrong would publish his now famous "...and Out Come the Wolves" essay in it.

Bud looked over at Sasuke's journal. He noticed some of the sentences weren't capitalized. He motioned his head toward it to not interrupt.

"What?" She whispered.

"Why not capitalized?" He pointed to the book.

"Oh." She looked like she might say more, but waved her head back and forth as though she was deciding. "It's nothing. Just something I've been tinkering with. Feels more like me, you know?"

Bud didn't really know, but he nodded just the same. He looked back at the page for a moment, and thought about how much more advanced Sasuke seemed than him in such a short time since they'd all been meeting. It was as though she carried poetry with her all day, to steal a line break or a sound in the small moments in between. Bud was happy to just relax in those moments. That worried him, somehow, in his throat and stomach.

Many names came up when discussing whom to include in the magazine. Sasuke was pushing for some local poets she had seen at a café on Main St, and thought they should get in touch with Phyllis Webb or Margaret Avison.

“Yeah, we’ll get right on that. I’m sure they will fly off the shelves if a bunch of Quaker women write about ripening fruit as code for their vaginas.” Clark roared in laughter at his own joke. Most of this stuff was in jest he felt—he assured them that the actually did like Webb. Bud looked at Sasuke, and though he gave a half-hearted chuckle, he saw her face. She wasn’t sad or mad or emotional, she just looked tired of it. But Bud still chuckled.

One week, Williams said that he could get in touch with some people to submit, if they wanted. That he knew just the poets. He also said he could probably get them access to the department’s mimeograph as well. Jenny was sceptical of this, and for once Clark was right behind her. She felt that if they had too much control than maybe it wasn’t theirs anymore. In another rare departure, Sam disagreed with Clark. Bud didn’t know how he felt about it. This led to the first real fight as a group. Bud wasn’t sure he remembers exactly what was said in these times like he seemingly has been, but his interpretation goes something like this:

“I suppose I just don’t like the idea of taking handouts in order to achieve success. If we are doing it for ourselves we should do it that way.” Jenny said.

Bud figured she was right. But before she even finished what she was saying Sam shook his head.

“So you think I take handouts, Jenny? That’s how I find success is it?”

Bud figured Sam could afford a mimeograph if he really wanted. Or his parents could, anyway.

“I’m not referring to you, Sam. I never meant it to sound as such.”

Bud thought he’d never seen Sam so fired up.

“You just don’t trust Williams because you slept with him or something.”

Sasuke and Bud looked at each other.

“Well you seem pretty eager to do the same if it will get you published.”

Sam stood up, but it was Clark who spoke up.

“Oh come on there, Sammy. Simmer down. She ain't speakin' ill of you—she just doesn't want our inevitable success to be disingenuous, or perceived that way, and I must say that I'm inclined to agree. We don't want it to seem that way.” Clark spoke as if the group's place in the canon was a forgone conclusion. In his writings about this time period, especially his autobiography, Clark would distance the *Anarmag* narrative from Williams and Jones, and the institution for that matter. Some would argue this would be one of the few things he would downplay in a hyperbolic and nostalgic account.

Sam never apologized, but Monday morning, he brought in a beat up mimeograph, and no one asked where he got it.

It was hard to think about cutting out Williams or Jones. Williams's charisma, that at times was pushy, made it hard to say no to him. Talking to Mr. Williams back then made Bud feel like they would all know his name someday. That his talent was unique and he was just waiting to be discovered, and that he was capable because poetry was a skillset that could be learned, and made unique by virtue of the body using them. He figured the fact that he liked different things than the others was what made him unique. He compared Bud to Frank O'Hara, saying that he seemed a-political, like he was just trying to enjoy it, and gave him a copy of *Meditations in an Emergency*. Bud would turn to “Mayakovsky” every time he felt a bit lost, or “In Autumn” after a few beers. Bud loved O'Hara for how he drew inspiration from jazz—though Bud was more of a folk or

blues guy, he felt camaraderie through the musical inspiration—and the way he wasn't trying to change him or teach him, just show him, or make him feel.

Bud never felt like he valued the same things as this group. He wanted to write poems that referenced Bugs Bunny or told his own stories. But his peers didn't seem as excited. Sasuke was interested in the body and wanted to use language as an extension of that. She rebuked narrative as constructed. Constructed? Of course it's constructed—it's a narrative, Bud thought. But secretly, he was jealous of the way she didn't seem to need narrative or syntax to make perfect sense in her poems. She was a fine poet, though. Maybe he was jealous of that.

Sometimes all he wanted to do was quit and try to play hockey and chew Redman his buddies had bought in Bellingham. Spit and never talk about words as though they were something that could be written down in a book at all. Just something used to break the silence as little as possible. Just something to be thought about. But then on some days he would think about saying "it's the coldest day of the year. What did he think of that?" because he liked how it sounded when he said it out-loud, and maybe they would too. But none of the boys would get that. And he felt like a fraud because it was October, and he knew that it had been much colder back in January.

Jenny seemed unfazed by the whole argument. The look on her face said that this wasn't going to happen this way. And she was right. Sam agreed to cut it back, and allowed that they would get addresses and contact people themselves, though it didn't hurt to say they were students of his and Jones. They also agreed that only a few people would be contacted, and that they would solicit submissions from the group, people from the city and the lower mainland. In the end, everyone allowed that Jenny was probably

right, and that the magazine would be more local and focused in a way he hadn't envisioned.

The argument would extend to the other questions of authenticity. It seemed that everyone but Bud was okay with publishing their own work. Bud didn't want to.

"Why not?"

"I don't know. I just..." He did know. "Nothing, I guess. I'm just not going to."

"Is there nothing you want to put in at all?"

Bud thought about his story about the disease. He wanted somewhere for that. But they would probably hate it. Though he did want somewhere for the types of writing they loved, he couldn't help but feel in his gut like he was skipping a step somehow.

A few days later while they worked together in the library, Sasuke asked him about it. She said she decided not to either, but because she didn't want to publish her own work—that it felt like cheating. Bud thought she seemed distracted.

"You okay?" He asked.

"Hmm? Oh, I'm fine." She would later tell him she was just having a hard time balancing everything. Poetry had come to mean so much to her, and even though, at times she too worried that there was no place in poetry for her, journalism was starting to take a back seat. "Now, don't change the subject."

"Sorry. I mean, it's partially true that I would feel like a fraud, too. But I just don't think my stuff is ready. I don't want to be a joke. It's just not ready." That's why he'd never sent any poetry out. All his fiction was science fiction or detective fiction, and he worried they might laugh at that, too. He thought of his own version of the old idiom: better to keep your pen still and be thought illiterate, than to let it move and remove all

doubt.

Sasuke thought he was being silly. And a bit of a martyr. That he was just afraid, though Bud said that wasn't it.

"Doesn't matter who they are." She stopped for a second, and Bud thought she looked angry. But it wasn't that, more the output energy of an internal struggle coming to an end. Or certain. "perhaps it's 'unladylike,'" she exaggerated the air quotes with her fingers, laughing a little, "of me to *assert*, but the truth is, after they spew this bullshit about what theorist they read by candlelight, swirling cognac and puffing on cigars yet somehow ideologically existing outside capitalism, at some point," she lowered her voice and looked around, "every one of them takes a shit. every one of them the same as you. same bathroom, too. at some point today, clark or jenny or even dr. williams are going to stand bent or sit forward, reach back awkwardly to wipe, worried and conscious of their own cracks showing through the slits in the stall."

Bud's mouth fell open. He couldn't believe what sasuke had just said, and sitting up so straight, and not completely whispering. He allowed that maybe she was right and that he would put something in, but the way she spoke seemed to prove his point. She seemed so confident, and he knew he wasn't. But maybe she was right, and that everyone must be afraid in the same way.

Even as sasuke spoke it she knew it was something she had convinced herself of many times. That she was worthy to be here. She knew it, but the important things have to re-upped every day. Knowledge doesn't stop—it is gained, but then must be put into practice every day for it to work—like flossing. Something about vocalizing it reminded her that she knew in a way she didn't feel when she thought it alone. Vocalizing it made it

more real. I speak therefore I am.

After that lunch with Bud, she tapped into something in her writing. With looming deadlines for classes and *Ubysey* articles, all she could do was write poems—she even failed a paper, which, on account of her being a strong student, her prof let her rewrite. But the writing became a daily practice. It was as if the writing she did was the result of something that was always happening, not just a conscious act. When she wrote, it was because she had to, before the feeling was gone. Just a line she would say, but one line would lead to the next, and she would have a whole poem. None of the poems perfect. In fact, many she would care not to look back on. But she knew the poems were true and open, and it made the bad ones easier to face. And, as happens with practice, which always compounds subtly, like a curtain slowly bleached by the sun, she found herself confident in what she knew with her writing. With each one, she could feel herself get closer to the writer she felt like in her hands and daydreams.

All her writing life, there was an ideal piece of writing in her head she knew she was capable of. She thought then that it must be the same for all writers. That they must know the kind of writing they want to be doing. And they must believe that one day they could do it—even if that believe must be reminded daily, conquering the doubt—which is always solitary—sometimes daily. Like a violin player with broken hands, they can hear the music in their head, but their body cannot keep up. Until one day, with crooked fingers, they finally hear the song out loud that they had been waiting their whole life for.

At the next meeting, a question came up no one had thought of yet.

“Who gets to be editor?” Sam asked.

It was a good question. What were their positions? It was like being newly

stranded on an island and someone was about to call dibs on president. Prime minister, whatever. Bud didn't know what he wanted, but knew he didn't want Clark to be anything with power, though, as they hadn't discussed it yet, he wasn't sure what that power might've been, but he knew, whatever it was, he didn't want Clark to have it. So he acted on an impulse.

"I nominate sasuke," Bud said quickly. Jenny seconded it, and Clark and Sam, visibly thwarted, agreed that sasuke was a fine choice, though adding that no one should be editor-in-chief so the magazine remained a collaboration. Translation: protects their egos from not having control. Everyone was equally an editor, but sasuke would act as lead editor for this issue. Next time they would switch.

Bud remembers that being?? when it hit him. *Each issue*. They were going to make more. They were going to have their own magazine. They were officially part of a world he had always wanted to be a part of. The world that you could see on the faces of Jones and Williams when they mentioned a poet and their eyes didn't light up with romance, they lit up with memories, because it was their friend.

Or maybe it was like when you have worked a job for years, and you become numb to it, but someone new asks you about it and your eyes light up. It's a job you hate. Night shift maybe. But when you talk about it, you are nostalgic, reframing your own story in that moment, speaking the fib and making it so true that you feel better, even if you remember how it really was. Talking truthfully about something you hate, but something that is also a part of you, to someone who hasn't seen how tired you are at the end of the day or how it wears you down enough that you avoid eye contact sometimes just to get out of the grocery store as fast as you can, isn't easy. So you smile. But you

can't fake familiarity.

Bud couldn't imagine a world where being a writer all seemed old hat. Then, all he really loved was the writing. Writing that made him beaming proud, and want to just repeat the lines out loud over and over, and revel in the fact that he came up with 'em. The kind of work there would never be enough time for.

He gave Sasuke a ride home that day.

“Didn't mean to make more work for you—I know you're pretty busy already.”

“it's fine, bud.”

“Hey, at least you aren't in nursing, right?”

sasuke laughed, but shushed him. When she went inside, Bud could see the curtain move, and sasuke's cousin staring at him out the window.

-5-

Most everything you think you know about me is nothing more than memories.

—Haruki Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*

-July 2020-

"Did you think you would live to one hundred, Grandpa Clark?"

"He's only seventy-nine, dear," said Silvia.

Clark was hunched over a wooden table, the grandkids on the carpet around him. He smiled and nodded confidently, shutting his eyes.

"Practically a hundred. But, I knew I would." He laughed. "I'll live one hundred more, too. Only the good die young, kiddo," he winked at his grandson Jonny.

"Stop playing with that lamp, Jamie." Silvia used her mom-voice, the paralinguistics of which can never be understated, and the kid heard.

Silvia relocated to the kitchen where her husband and her brother Ron were.

"I didn't think he'd live to fifty the way he drank and smoked." Ron leaned into his sister and whispered. He had gotten his father's ability to never be able to keep his mouth shut. He was the kind of person that enjoyed movies very much, but couldn't get through one without tapping his leg and insulting the character's hair or something.

"Maybe he made a deal with, well, himself?"

They laughed. His sister shared Ron's, and their father's dark sense of humour,

which their mother had not. With her gone a few years now it was more common at the scarce family gatherings. No one to put the show on for anymore. Darnelle chuckled, but kept to himself as usual in these family situations. He loved Silvia, but was not fond of her family.

"James didn't come, eh?"

"I called him, but he said he'd 'rather drink acid' and to 'to tell the old cunt to go fuck himself,'" Silvia used air quotes and did her impression of her brother. Then she laughed like she felt guilty about repeating it.

"Can't blame him, I guess." He looked at his dad. "Still, it's funny to see him like this. I always picture him so miserable, but his smile still can shine. The man always could put on a show."

Back in the living room, Clark was working the room. "Do you wanna hear the story or not?"

"Yeah!" All the children said.

"I can't hear you?" He cupped his hand to his ear.

"Yeah!" They all repeated, louder. Jonny raised his small arms in the air.

"I'd rather have a tooth removed," said Silvia, laughing. Truthfully, there was a part of her that had missed her father a little. A fact she couldn't always reconcile with the type of father he had been, but she missed him nonetheless.

Darnelle did want to hear the story. He'd done a Canadian Literature PhD, and *Anarmag* published some of his favourite poets early in their careers. He used to think it was so cool he was dating Clark Miller's daughter, until he met him. Clark once called him 'Toby' as a joke, and Darnelle took a swing at him. Still, the man was old, and

despite what he told the children, would not be living another century. Darnelle didn't like encouraging the old man, but he couldn't resist hearing the story. He had been married to Silvia-Mae for almost thirty years now, and her dad didn't often talk about it in any detail. Or at least any that didn't somehow seem exaggerated. He didn't like it, but Pound was basically a Nazi. Same with Phil Anselmo. But he still teaches the Cantos, and still listened to *The Great Southern Trendkill* when he's out jogging.

“So I had just come back from taking a riverboat down deep into the heart of Africa to break up corrupt officials in the ivory trade.”

“Isn't that the plot of *Heart of Darkness*, Clark?” Darnelle asked. He would listen, but he didn't have to make it easy.

“No, no I don't think so.” Clark knew he was right. Lying used to be easier when everything he loved wasn't a canonized part of history. He could act like he had read a book, or co-opt an idea easily as his own. It's not that he didn't have ideas of his own, he did, enough for fifteen books of poetry, a couple novels, enough essays to get a good pension from U of Ottawa, but sometimes anything a man could say, another man has said it first and better. If you have heard it said already, there was no harm in repeating it verbatim, and it didn't hurt anyone to not tell which page or book it came from. People borrowed from other people without knowing it all the time. Was it his fault he was well read enough to know when he thought of something unoriginal? To an extent, even using English was unoriginal, he supposed.

“Dad?” Silvia asked.

“What's that, honey?”

“I said if you are anyone, you would probably be Kurtz.”

“Ahh,” he didn’t hear her at first, but when his brain caught up with his ears, he laughed to show he was a good sport. “Yes, yes. Well anyways, this is the story of the first podcast.”

Sounds of boredom rang out from all the kids but Jonny. He was at the age where he liked hearing adults who weren’t his parents speak about the world. But Clark wasn’t telling it for the kids or the family. He loved how stories about his own life tasted on his tongue.

“Where was I?” He had honestly forgotten. “Ah yes, I had just *gotten back from Kilimanjaro*.”

“I thought you were down a river?” Silvia piped in from the kitchen, putting a kettle onto the stove.

“I hiked Kilimanjaro on the way back,” he looked at Darnelle and then to his daughter when he said this, and smiled. Silvia couldn’t help but smile back.

Clark hadn’t done anything for his birthday in years, but Ron had insisted. They were getting older and drank less and since having kids felt that they should get to know their grandfather. Clark had to admit, it felt good seeing everyone—it had been a while. Usually they were trying to get him to move to an apartment closer to the hospital or complaining about traffic and schedules in order to not see him, which he understood. He wasn’t oblivious to the man he’d been.

“1961 was cold in Vancouver.”

“What was Vancouver like, Grandpa Clark?” Ron’s youngest, Jonny, was a curious one. Always asking questions and then nodding. He kept a diary and he was only seven. It was an old, paper one—not an app or a screen—that his grandfather had gotten

for him. He loved it.

“Gorgeous. I used to love driving around just to look at it. Going to UBC, I had to get out to Point Grey every day. I had a ’56 Corvette, and lemme tell you—that baby hummed.” He made a vroom sound, and tickled his grandson who laughed.

“He is good with the kids—I’ll give him that. A story about the Can-lit eighty years ago would put a room full of scholars to sleep, but he’s gonna keep three children on their toes, no doubt.” Ron gave Darnelle his trademark tap on the leg, something he would never admit he got from his father.

“He was never that good with us. Where did he learn it?” Silvia crossed her arms.

“Well, he had a lot more of his liver then, too. Early retirement brings out the parent in people I guess.” Ron harrumphed at his own comment.

In the living room, Clark was getting into the story now. “There were five of us. Me, Sam, Bud, Jenny, and sasuke-san.” Clark laughed at his own joke. No one else did.

“And there we go—just when his charm was starting to work on me.” Silvia shook her head.

“Good-fucking-Christ,” Ron said.

“Shhh. The children might hear you,” Darnelle whisper-yelled. “But seriously.” Then he mouthed *what the fuck*.

They all laughed.

“We invented the podcast. Sammy had an original iPod that his father got killing some Krauts in the second World War II.” He waited for a laugh at this joke. Nothing.

“We knew the internet was going to be a big deal, and we loved radio—so we started up an internet radio show about poetry. We had all taken this creative writing class with

professor Williams. He used to let us drink and smoke in his house and talk about poems. Really great guy. We had started a little creative writing group—but we were tired of those losers in Toronto dictating what was Canadian and what wasn't."

"Wait—wasn't it a magazine?" Silvia looked at Darnelle, who nodded.

"Dad, wasn't it a magazine?"

"What? Oh, no. No. Podcast I think for sure. Will you let me tell the fuckin' story?"

All the kids laughed.

"Jesu—okay, okay, Dad. Just keep the swearing and casual racism to a minimum, please."

He allowed that he would and went on.

"*The Province* eventually got wind of it and did an article on us. That was after we brought Allen Ginsberg up and interviewed him for the twelfth episode. Bud boxed him on the show, and we got 8 billion hits on YouTube. I knew we were gonna be big, so I kept everything. Everything. I've even got a few Kleenexes that Bud used to put his cigarettes out in. That was back before smoking was so frowned upon, so we weren't that bad. But yeah, I knew we were gonna be big," He looked around, and could see the kids were starting to fidget and stare. A face or two were leaning onto hands. All except Jonny, who was hanging on his grandfather's every word.

"I thought this story was about when you crashed your car?" Jonny said.

"I'm getting to that. Don't you know anything about story structure you six-year-old? What are they teaching you kids in school? Math, probably, eh? Pfft. You gotta set things up—paint a picture, so people can imagine it. So they know what matters." He sat

up straighter. “Anyway. The five of us were at the height of production of *Anarmag*. They had asked us to come to California because they had optioned the rights to our story for a movie. James Dean was gonna play me. They asked us to come down and talk to the scriptwriter. They offered to fly us, but uh, Jenny,” he looked around for something, but couldn’t figure out what. But he thought about Jenny.

He thought about her blonde hair and how she used to go to bat for him when Bud and sasuke would team up against him for things they didn’t want to put in the magazine. His memory was vague sometimes. It bored him; sometimes he figured there was no point telling anyone about his memories. People talked about how smell evoked memory, or taste. Or maybe a song. His memory was phenomenal. When he touched wood. When he smelled the smell of ink, or later in his life, all the smells that went into the typeset. That fine press stuff, that was his favourite. The shitty Xeroxes were fun, but that indented paper was what he really loved. Suddenly he was aware of the fact he was smiling off into the distance and rubbing the table. The two oldest were now playing rock paper scissors and he could smell the pot of tea in the kitchen. Jonny had moved to sit right beside his grandfather.

“Jenny, was uh. She wanted to drive the Oregon coast—so we all piled into Bud’s car.”

“Why didn’t you take the corvette?” Jonny almost yelled it. He was disappointed, and the only one still listening. Even Darnelle had mostly tuned out when he realized what kind of story it was.

“It couldn’t fit all five of us.” A lie. “Would have gotten us there in half the time, though.” Clark winked again. “Anyway, we were heading down there. I was writing in

the back on some napkins I took from a diner—the poems that would win me my first Governor General’s. A few were written in Jenny’s lipstick.”

From the kitchen, Clark heard Silvia say, “Ridiculous. Have you ever tried writing in lipstick?”

He ignored her and continued:

“It was raining hard, but it always feels like it’s raining soft on the inside of a car. It mediates the sound. Anyway, at about three am we were coming along a lake on the way into northern California. I remember the feeling when the tires left the ground—that’s something you never forget, especially when that’s what wakes you up.” He looked around, and suddenly, everyone was listening. Even Ron wasn’t tapping knees. Bud let that line sit. Something he had learned from reading poems aloud—sometimes you have to let a line sit. Let people catch up. Let the way your voice sounds land, and mix with the words that went along with it. “I guess Bud had fallen asleep at the wheel and there was a corner. The road turned, and we didn’t. Those old cars weren’t as well sealed so it filled up pretty quickly with water.”

“Did someone die?” This time, Jonny did yell.

“No. No one died—that would come later in the story for all of us.” He let out a tired laugh. “Luckily it wasn’t too deep, but deep enough for us to be submerged. I kicked the window out with my two feet. I grabbed Jenny on one arm, and sasuke on the other and swam to shore. Bud and Sam manned up and made their own way to shore. Then,” he made a rumbling motion with his fingers that boiled up into a wide gesture of explosion, “boom!” All the kids jumped—Silvia too.

“The car exploded. Shot a piece of glass into my arm, right here.” He pointed to a

large scar. “Lost enough blood to do a heart transplant by the time I got to the hospital. Walked five miles with my arms up in the air drying the poems out.”

All the children gasped with wow’s and oos and awes. Clark smiled.

“That’s bullshit, right?” Darnelle asked. “He didn’t pull those people out of the car. I mean, a car can’t even explode underwater.”

“Well, I had heard it was a river in Abbotsford or Bellingham or something. But no, the rest is some grade-A, Clark Miller fucking bovine excrement. They were drinking on the way back from a party. Apparently, he pulled Jenny out of the car. She hit her head and was knocked out cold. Cut his arm pretty badly doing it. See the scar?” Ron replied.

“He told me he got that scar when he jumped in a tiger pen at the zoo to save one of the tigers that was getting bullied.” Silvia scoffed. “Bullshit or not, how come I never heard that story? How could a man spin so much goddamn yarn, but never tell that story to his own kids?”

Ron shook his head. “I’ve heard it different ways. He once told me the scar was from a sword fight at a Samurai Museum when he was stationed in Japan. He wasn’t in the military so I knew it was bullshit.”

“Who knows.” Silvia looked at her father, who was touching the scar as though however it happened, it was important. She wondered what else she didn’t know about him. Wondered why he drank like he did when they were kids—maybe there were more reasons than she had thought.

“Do you ever see them anymore, Grandpa Clark?”

He petted his grandson’s hair. “No, kiddo. They’re gone, now. Passed away. I’m

the only one left. I don't think they'd wanna see me if I was alive anyway."

"Even Jenny?"

He looked at the kid and took a deep breath to consider it.

"Especially Jenny." He thought of what he had told that interviewer, and that poem he wrote about her getting her period on the Greyhound. How when she got married a second time he used to get drunk and call, and how her husband broke his nose outside parliament. He touched his own nose.

Jonny took him by the hand. Held his wrinkled, pale white-dashed and blue-veined skin with his own two, brown hands, without even a scratch.

"Maybe you'll see them in Heaven."

He gave his great-grandson's hand a squeeze, and chuckled with moist eyes.

"I don't think poets go to heaven, son. Nothing to belly-ache about up there so they don't need us." From the kitchen, he heard Ron say *wrong direction, kid*. He tapped his grandson's leg a few times, and pulled his lips into as big a smile as he could muster.

-6-

You know how it is; you put things off for a day and next thing you know, it's a hundred years later.

—Doctor Who

We all change, when you think about it. We're all different people all through our lives. And that's okay, that's good, you've got to keep moving, so long as you remember all the people that you used to be.

—Doctor Who

-May 1961-

There was a group of poets that sasuke had heard about from someone at *The Ubysey* that were doing regular readings of poems at the Railway Club, so they all went down to check them out. Clark complained the whole time about how it smelled, though Bud felt that he couldn't smell anything, and sasuke agreed. sasuke said that if she knew she was missing out on a day of work to have it ruined by “the smell”—she exaggerated this, pointed her head toward Clark, and laughed—she would have stayed home. Said she brought her journal with her today because she wanted to go straight to bed when she got home. Bud could see how tired the laugh seemed, and eyes that told the same story.

There was a single mic on the stage with a stool behind it. The acoustics were not great. It wasn't full in there by any stretch of the imagination, but there was a table of

men in air force uniforms, with a few girls in dresses with birthday hats on, and they were all loud—especially when the sparklers came out.

Since Bud lost his hearing, sounds were so distinct. He listened less to the din, and paid more attention to the things that would directly affect him. But when he thought back, he couldn't hear everything in the memories. He couldn't know for sure when it changed, but he did remember the first dream he had where he couldn't hear. A gunshot went off beside him in the basement of an old farmhouse in one of his detective dreams. He didn't even flinch. Barely heard it in fact, and didn't worry about tinnitus.

There would be an article in *The Guardian* that his son would read after Bud died. An interview with Kirk Douglas about turning 100. They just interview him about that: his age. Like, so you made it to one hundred, eh? The interview turned into a reflection. Of course it did.

A moment that struck Bart. Kirk Douglas was friends with John Wayne. A Republican and Democrat. But they were unlikely friends that became life long friends. John was mad at Kirk for taking a role that he thought was for “queers.” But Kirk never saw himself as a tough guy. He said to him something like, we aren't them, you know? You aren't John Wayne. Or something like this. John didn't get it, or didn't show it. But what Bud's son thought he meant was that he isn't the persona of John Wayne. It's a construction. John didn't know himself. And after one hundred years, Kirk knew what he wasn't.

Reading this, Bart would think of his father's own seventy-two years, what he knew of them, and how little he kept in touch with his father. What he knew of those years was rather surface level, in fact, though he couldn't know this. He knew little of his

father as a poet, or writer, as his father had spoken little of it. He could see his dad had loved it, when something would remind him of a poem and he would find it, and read it. And he could see the shine in his eyes when he read them something that didn't remind him of anything after a few drinks. But he didn't know the failure Bud carried with him about it, or the sense of relief that came sometimes with never having to talk at work if he didn't want to.

He loved his father and his father loved him, but in the end, they knew very little of each other except maybe the sound of one another's voice. So much time spent with some voices and some ears. But Bart allowed that over the course of his life he probably hadn't called his father enough to fully recognize his voice, in the end, either.

And in this moment, that moment, the moment or moments after he read the article that, because he knew so little about how little he knew of his father, it didn't strike him how little a person has to give to someone else to be considered loved, or known. It was a small price and a small cost, but truly, we really know so little about each other. A world filled with strangers, those happy touching shoulders with a stranger as the bus sways, and the clichéd lone wolves—but there are each other's sounds. Howls at the moon and stubbed toes and answering machine messages. Perhaps humans know each other most perfectly through each other's noises.

Waiting for the next poet, Sam was yelling in Bud's ear. He had been referring to himself as "dreadfully tight" as he had read *The Sun Also Rises* over the weekend and thought it comical. "Dreadfully tight, awfully dreadfully tight," he repeated like a good expatriate, and laughed in his ear. The two of them had gotten into some of Williams's homemade rum. And, despite how annoying it was, he *was* rather tight—Clark too. Bud

supposed that much was true.

Bud liked every single reader.

There was a man who had a cajon. He sat on it and his poetry followed the beats. A very slender man, who had soft and delicate hand motions, read something with long lines that sounded to Bud like a Ginsberg rip off, but was also its own somehow. sasuke told him to stop saying “rip off,” that he had it all wrong. That it essentialized art in a way that wasn’t productive. Maybe he was just projecting qualities he felt synonymous with Ginsberg. Clark mocked his hand motions, and then put his pinky up in the air, and laughed so loud the man looked over. Jenny leaned in and whispered something with a stern face, and Clark was silent the rest of the night, and actually fell asleep at one point. She wouldn’t tell Bud what she said.

But the last one, was this woman with a large, grey, men’s raincoat. Her voice commanded Bud like the doctor when he broke his arm at fourteen, just telling him to breath. Clark was already drunk, and now asleep, but the others would all agree there was something about her.

She had a maraca, and she started to sing. No words, or if there was, they were nonsense or a language none of them recognized. And yet, it was poetry and not singing. Something about it made that clear. They would all agree on that, too.

Bud looked over at Jenny and she held her breath, hands on her own thighs. sasuke thought she was the most wonderful poet she had ever seen, and yet she never spoke a comprehensible word. She suddenly found herself with her journal in her lap, which she had brought to save time, rubbing the leather on the outside. Even Clark, who had recently woken up, and Sam were transfixed, though they wouldn’t admit it.

As a group, they experienced something they experienced a number of times, a poetry reading, but it all seemed new. They had learned so much, spending their nights reading and discussing. They had earned it. They had earned poetry. That's the power of learning—makes you look back and see it all differently, continually providing a new way of looking back at the same past.

They would discuss it for a number of meetings in a fleeting way, and they felt they understood more what Olson meant about field, and why Williams would stress that they be read aloud. Putting their bodies in that space they become part of the field of reception of the poem. The performance is mediated through the performer's body and voice, and it a transfer of kinetic energy from the poet to the audience. There is a paralinguistics at play to the performed word, the words and sound change places, break down and become something else in that moment. The privileging of one perception leading to the next becomes about following the transfers of energy and allowing yourself to live in the moment enough to allow that to happen. Bud allowed this was easier said than done in life and poetry alike.

On the way home, sasuke said that she got some of the addresses and telephone numbers of a few poets. She thought we should consider including a few in the issue.

"Fuck that," Clark said. His face was redder from the light mist of rain. He had been sore since he woke up. Like a child who hates a picture that his parents wouldn't let him watch.

"Why not?" Bud said.

"*Why not?* Those freaks?"

"oh, which freaks were you awake for, clark?" sasuke said sarcastically.

“Fuck you.”

Bud said, “Come on, Clark.”

“No, I’m serious. I don’t have to take that from,” he looked her up and down in disgust. “Someone like you. Some girl. Some fucking girl.” He stumbled backwards a step, but caught himself. He steadied himself a moment. “You know—“ He stopped, and bent over, putting his hand over his mouth. And then he puked.

“He’s just a little tight, sasuke. He doesn’t mean it.” Sam, who had sobered up a little, always had platitudes ready.

“sure.”

They put Clark in a cab, and he ended up sleeping on his front lawn. His neighbours talked about it for years.

The rest went for a drink. They all talked about the poets of the night. A hot topic was the person who did a poem with the metaphor likening capitalism to flat Cherry Coke. Bud didn’t necessarily know much about capitalism, or consumerism. He had heard the words and he understood them so much as it meant he needed a job if he wanted to buy things. He would be the kind of person that later in life, would buy Halloween candy November first, and then freeze it until the next year. He knew to take the current when it served and what it was like to have nothing, well, farm-nothing, growing up farm-poor.

There is a scarcity of an older generation that would serve folks well, now. This is not meant as old-white-guy nostalgia for a time that had it’s own truly awful things that are too many to name, but there was a part of the world where people just didn’t fucking use as much shit. Flat out. People could fix broken things because they knew how, and

manufacturers didn't care so much about quantity so much as quality. Clothes were sewn when they ripped. People ate apples, cores and all. As a parent, Bud told his kids to change out of their good clothes as soon as they got home because he believed there might be a time when he couldn't afford new ones. That he couldn't afford to waste anything and that time might be right around the corner. It's an ethos that might help reach emission standards now, to make up for all the gas that that same generation took out of the ground, while driving around with the radio on, let it all out slowly.

On his way to that meeting, Bud was still enjoying the fact he now had a car, and he could listen to whatever he wanted on the radio. And now he had a car, he thought that he was sure to fall in love.

He offered to give Sam a ride home and he said he had some marijuana, so they headed to their spot.

It wasn't that cool to listen to Country and Western music, but Bud didn't mind it. He liked the instruments, and he liked the heartbreak songs better than the love songs of Rock n' Roll. They seemed to speak to him a little more. He switched it over to the Country and Western Station, and Johnny Horton was on. He liked this song.

"Big Sam left Seattle in the year of '92," he sang. Bud smiled to himself—he sang this song to Sam after a few beers the other day. Bud tapped along on the steering wheel and looked over coyly at Sam and they both laughed.

Bud would have a cassette tape in his car and his son would sing "Sink the Bismark". One night when his mom was out of town his son pushed his bed out from the wall and he pretended to play a game his son called 'Ships,' where they pretended to shoot at each other from furniture standing in as beds. Johnny Cash came on next and he

switched it. He thought Cash was overrated and would never amount to anything, at the time. He was not a strong songwriter, Bud felt, and didn't have the vocals to be that bad of a lyricist. His biggest song was about going to prison, which he never did. At least when Bud writes fiction he doesn't pretend it's true. Back on the rock n' roll station was Roy Orbison, who Bud had only just heard, and was undecided. Right now, all he wanted to listen to was *King of the Delta Blue Singers* even though technically the songs were twenty-five years old.

While they smoked marijuana, Bud was still glowing from the reading. Sam handed him the bag while he rolled and Bud put it in his pocket so he could light a regular cigarette. Same feeling he had when he saw Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran at Georgia Auditorium. It was life changing and it was warm and safe because of the sound. The gallons of sound floating all around make a concert one of the ultimate public private spaces. Poetry too. Bud realized that the reading they went to was ephemeral, but it was of Vancouver. Unique to Vancouver. He realized that sasuke was right about not soliciting so much. Less using connections and more making connections.

Sam had been complaining about Williams.

"Plus, I get kind of a nasty vibe from him sometimes, you know." He realized that came out as though he was really bashing Professor Williams. "I mean, I really like the guy, I do. But he's always," he swayed his head looking for the right words, "rather intimate, with the gals, and he's a bit of a lush. Maybe it is for the best not to include him."

"You sure you don't just wish that those girls were intimate with you?"

Sam smirked.

“But seriously, I think we gotta at least include something,” Sam said.

“Sometimes you gotta dance a little with the gal you came with, eh.” He threw the joint on the ground and rubbed with his foot.

Bud was heading out to his aunt and uncle’s in Langley. They needed help with haying in the morning, and Bud could use the extra cash. He wanted to hit the Patullo Bridge and would smoke enough cigarettes before then so he didn’t smell like pot. They got in the car and pulled out, and then, there was a sound Bud would never forget—sirens.

They pulled over and the cop walked up. Bud was freaking out inside. He was stoned and talking to a cop. He had a few drinks so maybe the cop would just think he was drunk and tell him to get home safe.

“Officer.” Bud nodded respectfully.

“License and registration, please.”

Bud pointed to the glove box and Sam didn’t move.

“Sam.” He pointed again.

“Oh, sorry.” Sam sat up quickly, opened the glove box, and gave the papers to Bud.

The cops leaned in and took them, then sniffed the air. Sam and Bud freeze.

“Smoke any marijuana tonight, Mr. Fallon?”

Bud didn’t know what to say. Did he lie?

“Excuse me?” That might buy him some time.

“Step out of the car please, sir.”

The officer patted him down, and found the bud (bud, not Bud) that Sam had

given him (Bud) to hold earlier. Sam had nothing on him so he was let go, and Bud was taken to the station. On the way, he thought the cop didn't seem interesting like his detectives. Though, he guessed, the guy wasn't a detective. Just a beat cop who looked like he was too tired to be there but too stressed to go home. By the time they got to the station, it was pouring.

Not wanting to call his mom, he stayed there overnight. He was to be charged with possession. The next morning, he called the only person he could think would help, and was capable of helping, without ruining his life or screaming at him.

"I drink with some people down at city hall, I'll make a few calls." Professor Williams lit a cigarette.

"I can't thank you enough." Williams had even gone to the bank, and put a mortgage on his houseboat to post bail.

"It's fine."

Bud looked at Williams, and something came over him. He wanted to know. He felt the energy of his fear that was conquered, but put off to be dealt with later.

"I don't know. I mean." Bud took a breath, and nodded, "I don't know if I'm cut out for this."

Williams thought about it for a moment, as though he knew enough to know what they were talking about. Bud was never sure if he really did. Realistically, how could he? This came out of nowhere. In fact, he was certain Williams didn't, but Williams also didn't ask for clarity.

"Maybe you aren't. But the real questions are, 'what does that mean?', and 'is it okay?', you know what I mean, kid?"

Bud thought he did, but once again, he would never be certain, and once again didn't ask. It was enough for Bud to just look another person in the eye asking that, though he didn't know why it was so difficult. He felt a sting in his nose like he might cry, but didn't. He took from it what he needed to.

"I really would like to emphasize the immensity of my gratitude. I w—"

"It's—It's okay. It's fine. I mean it. This," he gestured to the jail around them, "*this*, I understand." Williams laughed in the thinking about and remembering of what that meant. He called a lawyer friend of his who knew the cop on the case, who made a couple calls and it got knocked down to some community service. No possession charge. He didn't ask for thanks, and never mentioned it again. And Bud never felt like he owed him a thing.

-September 1986-

He didn't hear his wife come in, or when she said,

"Bud?"

"In here still, Sue."

She talked on her way in, but he didn't hear her.

"Bud?" She folded clothes as she walked.

"Hmm?" He turned his head to her.

"I just said, listen, I get it. You're a man, and you aren't afraid and blah blah, but I'm telling you Bud, it really doesn't matter which poem you read, honey. Just pick one."

"You're right."

She knew the dejected sound in his voice.

"No, I didn't mean it like that. I just." She stopped to collect her thoughts. "You

want me to tell you how brilliant you are? Fine. Always.” She touched his hair. “You are a brilliant man, and a handsome one,” he blushed a little, “and more importantly, a good one.” Her tone changed. “You want me to tell you it was a DIY lit-mag with less reach than an Overwaitea (she was from the Kootenays) flyer? Let’s skip the coddling—just go enjoy yourself, hon. Enjoy the fact that someone cares about your past enough to get in a room and talk about it. That’s something. Most everyone else’s past only matters up here,” she tapped her temple, “and nobody wants to hear about it ‘cause they got their own memories they wish they could forget.”

Bud knew she was right. And it made him both sad and happy. He needed to enjoy this, but enjoying it meant not feeling embarrassed or insecure about it. Which he knew wasn’t going to happen. But maybe something like that was bigger than what you do or write. It came from somewhere else that wouldn’t be solved by the right box in the attic.

His wife could see he still wasn’t satisfied. She picked up one of his poems and looked at it, though not reading, to support him.

“Which one do you like best?”

“I don’t know,” he said like he was ten and his mom asked him where his church shoes were. He apologized and said the problem is that he hates them all. Doesn’t know why he agreed to it in the first place. It was stupid, and didn’t matter, and he was missing a day of work, anyway.

“Who am I kidding? I’m a fucking mechanic. I got no place in a classroom as though my poems meant anything anyways. They probably know more about the whole thing than I do.”

"You belong there. You made that magazine same as anyone."

"Yeah."

"You did. And they've heard the other stories, but not yours. They've heard the sound of air when Clark pumps his tires up. They heard Sam's GG acceptance. But they haven't heard from the one person who has no stake in it at all but memories. Tell 'em what really happened. Or tell 'em you wrote a bunch of poems you hated so you married a babe and lived happily ever after." She winked.

He smiled from the heart, but resisted. "I don't know," he said, not looking her in the eyes out of a combination of love and embarrassment. He didn't even want to talk. His wife was a talker and he didn't have the stress of talking to prove himself so it's less stress. He liked to listen. Sometimes he would listen to her so intently, he didn't hear the words, just the music.

She went back to folding clothes. "I just mean, like I say, you won't get many chances to talk about a part of your life that was important. Not often a room full of people ask you to get nostalgic and regale them with tales. You're going. Now I don't wanna hear anymore about it—*Murder She Wrote* is just about on, and I taped *Doctor Who* for you. You can recap the episode to those students for all I care." Then she kissed his cheek to say she was kidding, rubbed his back, and took the laundry basket to the bedroom.

She was right. And maybe right in a way she didn't mean. It was true that he didn't hate all of the things he ever wrote.

-7-

“Life turns into simple tasks / When you’re not looking”

– *Fionncara MacEoine*

-September 1986-

sasuke was parked by the water, reading. Her earplugs blocked the sound of the street. She stole moments like this when she could. Though it was the same as taking an actual day off, when grading or committee work gets thrown on top of, sometimes literally on top of the pile of paper on her desk, it was as close as she got. She wished she was home with her mountain view, but it was too far to make it back before her meeting at Point Grey. When she would get her first cellphone, she would learn to romanticize regretting the way it invades this space.

She shouldn’t be taking a break like this if she wants to make it to see Bud. There was also a part of her that felt like she should go to the fair—it would make her mom so happy. Plus, there was still packing to do.

Her mom had called her this morning to tell her a story. The day before, while their clerk Janey Francis was working at the thrift store, a tour bus had shown up, full of Japanese tourists. Their translator asked Janey if they had any ‘Made in Occupied Japan’ teacups. During the American Occupation of Japan, everything that was produced in Japan had to have the stamp “made in occupied Japan” and not just “made in Japan”. The

china made in this era had large flowers with strange, bright coloring. The Japanese thought it looked ugly so they made all of their china this way during the occupation as a way of sticking it to the US. Therefore, the teacups produced in this time are rare as there is a limited amount of them.

Janey said yes, they had a few. Then an older couple that was part of the group bought all of them, took them out to the street and smashed them. Then they had the interpreter politely ask for a broom and dustpan, who promptly swept it up, bowed, then got on their bus and left. sasuke started working on a poem in her head about it. The teacups and the shattered glass on the ground. The respect for the present but disdain of the past, something like that. How heavy having existed before the moment you are currently in can weigh on a person.

sasuke didn't know they had hired a girl to work at the store, but apparently her dad's heart wasn't good. She didn't know that either, and it made her feel guilty. Then her mom asked about the fair, again. She told her she was still working, but would see.

"Take the day off. Go put your feet in the garden. There will always be work to do. It will wait."

She could picture her mom nodding like she does on the other side of the phone. sasuke knew her mom was right, but it was also easy for someone to say who wasn't staring at a stack of grading from summer courses, getting her fall courses ready, and going back into application season. But, at that moment, her garden did sound great.

Reading *Winter Sun* by Margaret Avison, a book she had pulled out that morning ruminating on those formative years working on the magazine. She had always found the shifts and tumbles and words so challenging, yet they couldn't have been written any

other way. Her favourite was a poem called “Not the Sweet Cicely of Gerardes”.

With the maps lost, the voyages

Cancelled by legislation years ago,

This is become a territory without name.

She looked up from the book and shook her head. In those days leading up to that first issue, sasuke was writing more poems than ever. After that reading at the Railway something clicked, and she finally understood what people meant when they talked about a muse. It wasn't some gross cliché where the small of a woman's back inspired passion, it was a state of mind that came and allowed perception to be distilled into words.

Cracked like sap escaping the wood in the fireplace. Words that aren't recognized as part of your own body. Poetry became an extension of herself. A way of thinking that she hadn't known before. And it opened up so much possibility to rethink that which was already shards of ash.

-June 1961-

Yet somehow, in those days, not unlike now, she felt worked all day and never seemed to get anything done. She just went from one thing to another, slowly burning out, and not doing a perfect job at any of it. Or at least perfect for her own standards. Working all day every day at 40%, knowing that maybe a day off and 6 days a week at 60% would be better. No one complained about her work, in fact they often praised her for it, but she wasn't winning any awards either. She worked harder than anyone else she knew to feel mediocre at a lot of things. It had gotten to the point then that she barely read for fun. Something she never pictured being forsaken by.

One of the things that drew her to poetry more and more was that she always had

time. A novel or short story or newspaper demanded time, for long reading or journalistic research, but poetry. A poem. Writing one or reading one. Could be done in minutes, and then stay with her in the small moments the rest of the day on the bus or in the case of that morning in June of 1961, waiting for the meeting to start.

“So, what are we going to call it?” Sam asked.

Unlike when they picked the editor, this topic had come up numerous times. They were going to start printing it in a few weeks and they still didn’t have a name.

“I still think that we should go with *Anarmag*.” Jenny said.

sasuke had always wished it was a better story. Like it came to them in a dream, or moments before publication they had seen a movie, and it just came to them. Or the whole concept was indebted to the name! But it wasn’t. Not any of those things. In fact, after “Vancouver Poetry,” suggested by Sam, it was the first thing we thought of. Clark suggested a play on words, which led to the suggestion of an anagram, and Bud came up with *Anarmag*—first shot.

Jenny thought it was the best. She liked the relation to anarchy, and she liked that it was making an anagram of the word anagram. Clark was the most vocal, wanting to call it something to do with the word shit. But Jenny wouldn’t budge. She was so quiet and agreeable so much of the time, but when she put her foot down, that was it. *I will not be moved!* Clark would say to mock her, doing a Baptist preacher kind of voice. She was actually Irish catholic, but Clark didn’t care. They laughed, and Clark retained some of his dignity in losing the argument by getting the laughs. *Anarmag* it was.

Jenny was one of the most talented writers sasuke had met. She seemed to never be trying to write. Like it came natural and she wasn’t learning anything like the rest of

them, but always somehow got better, and knew more, each time they met.

sasuke was happy to have that stuff done with. As lead editor, she was already writing the editorial, and putting together a suite of poems about the body and if it is the same body in a different setting. Not to mention working on *The Ubysey* (which she loved), general meetings for the magazine, and going to school full time, and she had her job at the restaurant (the smell of which she often carried with her, only noticing when she smelled clothes the next day to see if they were clean enough to wear without pulling the washing machine into the kitchen).

But it was beginning to wear on her. She kept telling herself once she finished this paper, or this article, or whatever, that it would get easier, but it didn't. It never would, but she would get more used to it, and learn to say no and realize, that summer she took two weeks off and went home and ended up reorganizing her parent's store, which she liked better than having nothing to do. Neil Gaiman would make a commencement speech that she would not see on YouTube, but she would come to her own independent conclusions about that very topic.

She tried to remember to write to her family every few days as long distance calls are extremely expensive. She also tried to write to her friend Sakura. They had become friends when they were young. Both their parents had been relocated to Greenwood in internment camps. They had stayed in Greenwood after the war ended. People would always confuse their names in school—something that made her mom so angry that she still talks about it—so they sort of became a duo. They made plans of being a journalist and a photographer and having their own magazine like *Life* or *Time*. When she first moved to Vancouver, they had written to one another every other day. Now it was down

to about once a month. She was trying to get a letter sent, but had been carrying it around with her.

“Oh, I almost forgot! I ran into Professor Williams. He told me that Armstrong is reading in Olympia tonight. Who wants to go?” Clark looked around. Pointing to Bud, he said, “We could take your new wheels?”

Bud smiled. “Why not?”

“Yeah! It could be a swell sort of team building trip. Peaches and cream. We might try to chat with him after the reading.”

“we haven’t finished these proofs yet, and i have an article due for *the ubyssey*. i’m not sure i could find the time.”

“Oh come on. The magazine ain't going anywhere, and you can work on the article in the car. We *must* go.”

“Won’t be the same without you.” Bud said. “Don’t leave me alone with this guy.” He points to Clark with his thumb, who takes it as a joke.

“fine. i’ll come. but i don’t want to end up finishing this fucking magazine by myself.”

“Sure, sure. We shall work for a *foooooortnight*,” he bowed a courtly gesture, “until it’s hot in the hands of everyone on that list. Scout’s honour.” He crossed his heart and smiled wide.

Bud honked from outside. On her way out the door, sasuke checked the mailbox. She had been hoping to hear back from *The Fiddlehead*, but still nothing. She thought that maybe no news was good news? That feeling always quickly turned into self-doubt.

They saw Armstrong and were all impressed. He left rather quickly after the

show, saying he had a long drive ahead as they were going to Berkeley next to read at some place on Gilman street. They allowed that they had a long drive home tonight as well, but that it was nice to meet him and they enjoyed his talk. sasuke hadn't gotten any work done in the car on the way, but she had a lot of fun so she didn't feel guilty.

It was a summer-dark, and raining just enough to make the headlights of the other cars blurry—Bud's misty rain that ruined driving for him. He had the window cracked a little and the tunes way up to stay awake. The rain hit the window until it went silent, mixing with the engine and the static and the other white noises. sasuke slept with her finger between the pages in a book, an older one of Armstrong's she bought at the reading called *Energy*. The others are fading in and out with the corners and hills.

When it comes, the waking thump, retrospectively, didn't lift the tires as much as sasuke thought something big enough to be alive would lift the tires. Bud never forgets the sound of waking up so quickly. His heart was thumping in the blood vessels near his ears.

“What was that? A cat?” Sam asked as he opened the door.

It turned out, they had hit a possum. They all got out. Sam lit a smoke, and looked at the front bumper.

“Car's fine.” He walked back and leaned against the car. Bud and sasuke went over to the possum. They could hear it breathing. It was just going to get a drink, and now its lungs were full of blood. It was struggling. Slowly dying was stressful. After a few more gurgled breaths, it went silent, and suddenly, it looked like nothing. Like a prop or a skin that had been shed and left behind.

After they left, everyone fell back asleep but Bud and sasuke, who were mostly

still and silent but for a rocking and creaking of the car as it went around corners. They barely spoke the rest of the way. sasuke got to sleep late, and didn't dream at all.

The next morning, her uncle was waiting at the breakfast table. No books from the restaurant as per his usual routine. He was just sitting.

“Ren says that you aren't in nursing? You are in writing or something? Is that true?”

Ren stood beside him with a smug look on his face.

“well, yes. i'm sorry, i didn't mean to disrespect you—i'm grateful for all you've done.”

Her uncle put his hand up. “Sasuke, it's not my business. You have been a good employee, and you have been welcome in my home.”

sasuke sighed. That was a relief.

“But I did send your father a letter about it.”

Her heart sunk.

“Wasn't going to call with the price of long distance. But you understand that it was my duty to do so.”

She nods, disheartened.

“Good. See you at the restaurant, tonight?”

“yes, uncle.” She looks over at Ren. He sticks his tongue out at her. She just turns to leave.

When her father found out, he would make her come home. Everything she had worked so hard for would be over. She would be stuck in that store, and in Greenwood.

She tried to put the whole thing out of her head. She had to leave soon to a meeting for *Anarmag*, and then another with Dr. Jones to talk about entering the Honours program this year. She was having a coffee and editing her article for *The Ubysey*.

Walking into the next room to get a new pencil, as hers was on the verge of being too small to be productive, she stubbed her toe on the door and dropped to her knees. Her coffee cup fell onto the wood and smashed. Shards covered the floor. She exhaled deeply with an ‘f’ syllable. She clutched her toe and rolled to sit up. She sat there a moment, angry at everything that she had agreed to do. Maybe mostly herself, though she wasn’t sure why. She exhaled and cleaned up. She didn’t think she would get it done, but, despite the morning she’d had, she did.

At the meeting, deciding on what went in the magazine was easier than they thought. It was a quick conversation, as there was a general consensus with what they did and didn’t like out of what they had received for submissions, which hadn’t been as much as they had hoped that first issue. In subsequent issues, they wouldn’t have that problem, and instead it would be replaced by the problem of far more arguments.

Clark convinced writers to submit to the magazine on the basis someone else had, who hadn’t, and then wrote the other person and told them the same thing. They had people interested. They created hype around nothing and now they have to live up to that. They had what was supposed to be their final production meeting before the magazine would be printed. Sam and Clark ‘liberated’ paper from the English department. sasuke wanted the meeting to start soon so she could get out of there—she was done with that day and wished it to be over. She wondered how some people got anything done at all.

Clark was telling a joke. “Husband asks her what she wants for her birthday, and

she tells him she wants something shiny that goes from zero to one-hundred and fifty in a few seconds. The next day he hands her a present and she opens it. He gave her a scale.”

Sam slapped his knee laughing. “That’s a good one. I never heard that joke before.” He leans over to sasuke. “Where did he get it? You ever hear that one? How come I never heard it?”

“no, *sam*. i never *heard* that one.”

“Whoa, jeeze-louise. What’s the big deal?”

“we print tonight, and some of us have things to do before then, sam.”

“It will get done—keep your panty-hose on.” Clark chuckled and looked around to see how others had reacted.

“easy for you to say when all you do is make jokes. maybe we could do a comedy magazine next time. i’m sure everyone will vote you as editor for that.” sasuke was done with this day, and everyone in it.

Clark looked angry, and was about to respond, but Bud jumped in to change the subject. “Almost done with my section, sasuke. I’ll leave it on your desk.”

“Thanks, Bud.”

As soon as sasuke left, Clark started swearing.

sasuke felt mean saying it, but she was through with the jokes. And she knew she was in the right. There was a lot to do still, and Bud hadn’t even showed up to the last few meetings. sasuke missed him. They had been hanging out almost weekly, but she started to get busy and started bailing on him, and then he met a girl.

He said he was visiting his friend in Seattle, and his gal brought her friend. They all went bowling, and Bud and Sue-Anne really hit it off. Since then they had exchanged

letters almost every day for weeks. This reminded her of her own letter she hadn't mailed to Sakura. He said the red and blue of the airmail makes his heart do things too cliché to put in a poem. He said she is a good Christian girl, which he was always looking for. Sasuke didn't know he was religious. He said that he hadn't talked about it much, but since meeting Sue, he had a renewed interest. They had been going to church with her family the last few Sundays.

In six months, they would be married, and Bud would work less and less on the magazine. He would finish his degree, but keep working at the mechanics. He liked cars and music and he would keep at both of them for a long time. The Blackhawks weren't good, but they were entertaining, he had a few kids, bought a little house up in Ladner and complained about the tunnel until he moved to North Van. Then he still complained about it nostalgically until the day he died. She would see him the next week when they printed, and he looked, well, happy.

Sam had been in charge of the mailing list, but Sasuke took that on as well as she felt the list Sam had showed up with was insufficient. He had just added a few people he got out of the phone book to a list that Dr. Williams had given him. Sam used his contacts through *The Raven* to get their mailing lists, and Sasuke made a couple calls to other magazines to do the same. They had each section typed up.

When she got to Dr. Jones's office, he was on the telephone. She sat down and read while she waited, but she read the same sentence over and over, not registering it. She couldn't wait for sleep.

When he finished on the phone, Jones looked at the book.

“What book?”

sasuke turned the front towards him, and he nodded.

“You look tired.”

Like that was any of his business. You look tired? He looked old, she thought.

“yeah.”

“I just mean to inquire as to your general well-being, is all.”

“I’m fine. Just fine.” She looked up at him. He wasn’t buying it.

“Mhmm.”

“well, i’m a little busy. but once we get things done with the magazine here, it will get better.”

“Sure.”

sasuke closed the book and put it into her bag. They talked about the Honours program and Dr. Jones told her that she would excel there.

“And it would prepare you quite nicely for graduate school, indeed. If you wanted. Though maybe not the best move if you are trying to clear up your schedule.” He laughed. sasuke did not and Jones’s face got more serious. “Kidding, of course. You’ll be just fine.”

sasuke was not comforted. She wasn’t a crier, but if she was, this would have been that moment.

“does it get easier?”

“Pardon?”

“this.” She gestured around his office. “does it get easier? is there ever any more time?”

“Ahh.” He took his glasses off and rubbed his eyes. He was tired too. “I don’t

know. I guess I can only speak for me, but I would say it's not so much that *it* gets any easier, but I think you get better at handling it. I'd like to think that, anyway. I think we are the type of people who take things on, so it doesn't. But when it's good it's good, right?"

He was right, and he told her that it didn't get easier, but that she could do it. It's good when it's good, and it's bad when it's bad, but you get to write, and talk about books, and most people don't. She thought about Sakura, and the magazine, and her journalism, and knew that something had to give. Maybe sleep?

"I think you just have to learn to balance it. And to learn to say no. Does that make sense?"

She nodded, thanked him and left. Immediately, on her way out the door she started going over what she had to do next. By the time she got to the end of the hallway, she stopped. Anxiety pumped through her arms.

She sat down and looked at a copy of the *Vancouver Sun* on the side table. Her toe hurt. She wiggled it and felt the pain go through it.

"fuck," she mumbled, this time in its entirety. Then she walked over to *The Ubysey's* office, handed in her article, and quit. Then she headed back to work on the magazine.

When she got older, she saw how silly journalism has become. How she didn't see how biased new media was before and how dependant it was on money, but that she still loved a good news story. She would read it, though critically, to keep informed. But it was always the first thing to go when she got busy. Her creative work was next. These were two of the things that renewed her and filled her up when she felt emptied by work.

It was hard without them.

When she got back to the office, only Clark was there. She looked around her desk. Bud was supposed to have the fiction section proofed, as well as his poems.

“did bud tell you where he put his work before he left?”

“He said he decided he’s not putting anything in. Some bullshit about not wanting to publish his own work. Makes him feel like a fraud. Says he has a hot date. I think he makes himself a fraud—if he was chasin’ skirts he could just say, you know.”

“okay, yeah, sure. but where is the section?”

“Don’t know, puddin’. Check the desk.” He turned back around.

She stomped over to his desk. It made her feel frustrated to have to act like this, but it was getting ridiculous.

“nope.”

“Nope what?”

“there is nothing here.”

“Drawer?” He doesn’t even turn towards her.

Now, more frustrated, but hopeful, she looked in the drawer and there they were—not a mark of pencil on them, but clearly not the final drafts. sasuke put a hand down onto the table and leaned on it. Shook her head with a sigh. All of a sudden a hand took them out of hers.

“I got it.”

“what?”

“Ahh, I know I was a cunt, okay? I got it. You’ve done a lot.”

sasuke looked at him for a moment. She had quit *The Ubyyssey*, and she still didn’t

have time. Maybe she should let him do it.

“no. it’s fine—I don’t require assistance.”

She threw her letter to Sakura in the garbage, and got back to work. Clark started printing what they did have. They worked until sasuke had to go work at the restaurant, and then came back to work deep into the night, until they had stacks of the first *Anarmag*. Then they would come back in the morning, and the five of them sat around and drank orange juice, smoked cigarettes, and licked envelopes together.

When she got home that night, she checked the mailbox, and there it was. A letter from *The Fiddlehead*.

Dear Ms. Oshie,

We thank you for your submission, but we regret to inform...

Well, at least they took the time to send me a rejection this time, she thought. When she came inside, she saw the phone. She thought of the long distance charges, but she couldn’t take it anymore. She was tired of waiting for phone calls, and meeting, and letters. She picked it up, and she dialled home to tell her father everything. Her mother answered.

“sasuke? It’s late are you okay?”

“i’m fine.”

“You shouldn’t call long distance. You know how much it costs.”

“i know.” She took a breath. “I need to talk to father.”

“Is it about the letter?”

Oh no. They must have already got it.

“yes, and i know what you are going to say, bu—“

“Don’t worry. Your father hasn’t seen it. I write back to your uncle and tell him it’s fine. Let me deal with your father. By the time you come home for the fair. It’s done. Okay?”

sasuke didn’t speak for a moment.

“thanks. i love you.”

“Love you, too. Now get off the phone.”

And her mother hung up quickly. An everyday sound that sasuke wouldn’t soon forget.

-8-

Before, before! Stop livin' in the past, Marge.

—Homer Simpson

-September 2022-

When her dad died, they had a funeral at the farm in Chilliwack. He would have hated that, Silvia thought. He spent his whole life pretending he wasn't from that place. He never talked about it, and sold it as soon as he could, but her brothers thought that it was fitting and called the people who now owned it, and they agreed that they could.

Silvia had told them not to but her brother freaked out about the whole thing and yelled at her, said she hated dad. Made his life harder. Suddenly, her brother forgot how they had hated each other their whole lives and blamed her for it. Funny how memories of people are so self-serving. Maybe as part of our own myth, or maybe, in this case, to sooth our own guilt. Silvia decided she wouldn't fight him on it as it wasn't worth the hassle.

It was a surprise everyone showed up. All his kids were crying at some point, though none of them got up to tell stories. He would have hated that too, she thought. Good. She felt her eyes get hot, but repeated silently to herself. Good.

Silvia picked up a copy of his memoir, which her brother was reading, and which

she never read. She looked at the front cover. *Anarmag hates the UK*. She laughed, not because she thought it was funny, but because she thought of how funny he must have thought it was. She started flipping through it.

sasuke was sort of in love with me. That book she did about the mine? I knew that book was in her. Should have won a GG. All the Anarmag crew should have, like me—it's a travesty they didn't! Except Sammy—may he rest in peace. We all knew. Sitting in that room, we all knew that we were carving out our own piece of Canadian poetry history. We were all best friends, and the second I saw the first pages out of the mimeograph, I could see it, in my mind, in an archive someday, or behind glass.

She shook her head and flipped the page.

I remember when we made that magazine. The flip flip of the pages and the stealing of the paper. The cowards. The rest. They were all good fun though, eh. We had a good time. You have seen them. The poets who love the lyric and write love poetry to themselves and to the lyric. The ones who have criticized me for having a few laughs. You have seen them before. Or heard them, but pictured them while you listened. Probably sitting at their desk and looking over your manuscript and thinking about the one describing some fucking bay in Newfoundland, or with a few lines about some Toronto something-rather that everyone's been to. They see that and they know that no one will ever criticize 'em to their face for publishing that.

So far, I have seen ten things in my life. A farm in Abbotsford that would later be just down the road from the set of Smallville. The American border gets bigger fences. The highway grows big and Vancouver gets a whole lot closer. I could drive you all around and show you which lots used to be fucking trees and which one that cop pulled

me over when I was so drunk I was slurring, and he just followed me home. I was so proud I was from Chilliwack—it was part of who I am.

That made Sylvia laugh. Growing up, he told people he was from Vancouver. It was only when he won the GG and started to gain prominence that he became proud of his farm-boy upbringings. He would tell them not to say anything about it as kids, because “no one knows where that is anyway—might as well say Vancouver, right?”

We licked stamps until our tongues were dry from laughing at jokes about licking stuff. That was it, after that. We put that first magazine out, and the response was phenomenal. Everyone wanted to be in it, and it went on to publish essays and poems by many famous poets, among whom was Tim Armstrong.

She goes back out into a kitchen full of flowers, and with tinfoil over the top of dishes that covered all the tables and counters, and straight drinks of Appleton Estates with no ice as Jimmy said he had forgotten it, they chatted. Mostly they talked about how much they hated him with a smile on. Funny how an end can turn hate into love. That’s how nostalgia works. It isn’t that the thing you are remembering wasn’t good, it was. It was a fine person, or memory, or house that you lived in for a winter or two, no doubt. But there were bad things, too. You don’t mention the bad things usually. It’s over and life has been hard and long and there was no point in reliving any of it or speaking ill of the dead so you choose to rise above it and remember the good things, and so nostalgia sanitizes it. In this case, they did remember the bad, and used words like bastard and hate, but they were smiling, and still, sometimes, crying.

She thought he would have liked this a little better, but perhaps didn’t deserve it.

“He was a prick for sure, but he had a cozy upbringing on the farm. Not like we

had on that teaching salary—or what was left of it after the liquor order,” her brother said, and laughed.

But his sister wasn't so sure it was that simple. Clark rarely dwelled on the past if it wasn't a way to get a laugh, a smile, or a free drink, but there was that time when she had to go pick him up from the pub. And when she took him home he grabbed a bottle out right away and kept drinking. He was just spewing hate. Shit talking everyone from his department. His brother. The mailman and how vindictive he had been about delivering the mail all these years. Then he got to his mother.

“She was a terrible, awful, woman, my mother. My father died in the war and left a dairy farm for her to run. I never was so sure if she wa—” he burped. “If she was, uh,” He swayed slightly, looking for the right word, trying to borrow the perfect one out of the air, grab it with his teeth and pull it down to his tongue. He shook his head. He couldn't find it. “Horrible, I guess. Like to herself. “ He tapped his chest. “Sad on the inside. I never was so sure if she was like that before Dad died. I suppose she was a little and wasn't a little.”

He cried a little now and there was saliva between his teeth when he opened his mouth to speak, and he kept trying to wipe it, along with the snot from his nose, away with his hand.

“I gave it to him. I did. You could hear his coughing through the walls all day and night. It was awful.” He looked her dead in the eyes and took another drink. She tried to grab the bottle but he shook his head, no. “I did. He almost died, you know? The ‘hooping cough. Brought it home from school, she said. ‘And if he dies, it's your fault. You will have caused it.’ She was German, and stern and sharp.”

She tried to interrupt his story and take the bottle. But she had never heard her father talk like this, and he wasn't giving up the bottle. So she said,

“Then what happened, dad?” She touched his hand.

He looked at her, wide eyed, but thinking, and stunned for a moment like when you touch a cat on the forehead. Then he went on: “Oh, she was horrible. She hit me on the face. Slapped me. What a thing to do to a little kid? I was just a little kid. What a thing to do. So I went in the other room to pray. She had taught me to pray, that's one thing she did give me.” He smiled at this.

“And I was just a little kid with a terribly mean mother, so I did love Jesus and accepted him into my heart. So I prayed in the other room for God to save my brother. His little coughs echoed through the door, eh? Shook. Scratchy little coughs.” He took another drink and coughs a little.

She was worried he might puke, though he never had before. Her father wasn't a mean drunk, necessarily. And he held his liquor pretty well, but puked occasionally. That was part of his problem. He would just drink and drink and drink and never puke unless her ate, which, often, he didn't. He always felt fine in the morning. A glass of tomato juice with a raw egg cracked into it. Then an Alka Seltzer. He swore by it. And he would go to work, and come home, sometimes a little red faced. His alcoholism was a long problem. He just wasn't always a great father. Either too busy or too drunk or too tired. He didn't put into the little necessary bits that people need to maintain a relationship, like asking how your day is, and slowly, over time, his relationship just soured with all his kids. And his family.

“The next day she was even madder. She was stoking the fire, and my brother was

still coughing.” He rubbed the scar on his arm. “She said her father had done the same when she back talked him stoking the fire, and that she had turned out just fine. That I should let it be a lesson to me because next time maybe it’s on my face or it’s an eye.”

“And so I prayed again. That was when I knew,” he pointed. “That was it. I knew God answered my prayer, because he got better. He did, eh. And my mother she told me how lucky I was. She hated me.”

“I’m sure she didn’t hate you, dad.”

“She did! She did. She really hated me. It was terribly awful.” But then his face firmed up. “But I shouldn’t speak ill of her. I want her to rest peacefully.”

She thought that like everything he said, she didn’t know how much of it was true. But the look in his eyes, she said. She’d never seen him look like that. It was like catching a glimpse of someone who was so closed up and who puts on that show think out loud. You could hear how hurt he was still, and how often he had thought about it. But she didn’t tell that story. She thought it, but didn’t speak it. Instead, keeping it for herself, as only remaining silence was capable of doing.

-9-

What's the use in remembering anything? You're just going to forget it five seconds later.

—Professor Hubert J. Farnsworth

-September 1986-

When Bud was a kid, they lived in a log house in Peace River before they moved to the farm. When it would get cold enough to freeze in the winter his dad would throw buckets of water against the side of the cabin, and the water would slowly freeze. Bucket. Bucket. Stop. He would do that for a couple days and the ice would help insulate it for the winter

Bud was very young, but he could remember the sound of it. Bucket after bucket, hitting the wall. Bucket, bucket, stop. He had used the sound in a science fiction story he wrote about time travel. Going into the future sounded like buckets of water smashing against the wall, over and over.

This was right around when they were building the Alaska Highway. He remembers eating canned olives with the US soldiers who were building it. The first soldier he had ever met read him Walt Whitman while he sat on the bumper of a large army truck. This was also the first time he heard poetry.

He had loved poetry when they made that magazine, and he loved that time in his life. There wasn't any other time where he gained so many parts of himself. The most he

would argue and quote and read and write, which were things he liked. Things he felt still defined him, deep into old age, long after he had done any of those things consistently. He had loved poetry, but truthfully, he loved many things. He loved his family, and he loved the Black Hawks, and currently he was finally falling in love with *Planet Waves*. But poetry wasn't as much a part of him as he thought it would be when he took that class with Williams. It was nothing against himself or against poetry, it was just the truth, he supposed.

So he looked through everything he had for a few poems to send one last time. In the end, he hadn't sent anything over, but he was still set to do a reading, and then give a talk on the magazine. He only brought one thing to read.

The rain was light that day, and fell so slowly it was unnoticeable, but for the pattering that darkened the sidewalk. The drive to UBC was nice.

He never figured he'd stay in Vancouver. When he first moved there he figured it was dirty, and unfriendly. No one really waved too much, and there were fewer thanks that came his way than he was used to up in Peace River. But twenty-five years later he liked that now. Folks left him alone, and he could go the store in his sweats and not run into anyone he knew. He could find places like that at least.

The campus didn't look as different as he had thought. Sure, there were new buildings, and the people looked very modern in their double-polos and white sneakers, but the place was the same green. And despite the expansion that had taken place in the last twenty years since he had been there, and how out of breath he felt walking across it, the campus actually felt smaller somehow. The talk was in a room in Koerner library in case more than the class showed up, but not even the whole class had showed up so it felt

empty. Bud was okay with that—calmed his nerves. He took a place towards the front and started to go over his notes.

“I don’t mean you suck, I mean the cards.” A girl held a cheap set of playing cards. “I love 50s Elvis, or ’68 comeback special Elvis. This?” She flipped through a few cards. “This is 70s Elvis. Ew.” Two people were looking down at a gold poker set.

“Yeah, well, they were from my mom,” he said.

Bud didn’t need poetry when he was sweating and his son was born. Poetry was not there when he bought groceries or drove a truck. He would read more fiction and watch more TV and most of all, he would listen to music far more than he ever did poetry. Maybe he didn’t love poetry in the arc of his life. Maybe what he really loved was melodies and lyrics. And not being alone. So maybe on account of not being able to listen to music all the time, for a part of his life, he turned his heart to poetry, for it had all of those things.

Bud remembered how the tight-throat fear of talking in class sometimes. But when he stood up, his story in his hands, and looked out at the audience, he wasn’t afraid at all.

“I haven’t prepared anything about the magazine.” He looked at the empty chairs and thought of sasuke.

In the end, with all the calls of things for her to do, sasuke unplugged her phone, and her fax, and packed them, and put earplugs in that she used to sleep to block out the noise from the street. In the complete silence of white noise that comes with ear plugs, she went outside and put her toes in the dirt and finished her cup of coffee. Then, leaving the garden, which needed water and weeding and pruning, she went inside, sat down, and

picked up the paper, reading the whole thing, even the sports section, and occasionally looked up at her mountain.

“I’m not sure what I remember, truthfully. That is. Not sure. I mean, not certain of what the narrative was, right.”

Members of the audience looked at each other. A few laughed thinking it was a joke. But it wasn’t.

But maybe Bud focused too much on the remembering. Did it matter who was right, who really remembers, or who was just telling tall tales? The story and the feeling are the only meaning the past can lend us, so why get hung up on accuracy? In this way, imaginations and memories are not so different. Of the things that did not scar a person so badly they do remember, there are only a few shreds. A few misspelled words or memories in the form of subliminal flashes. How hot the sun was on a new tattoo on the window arm while driving. If it’s her skin against his teeth or if it’s just vibration. The sound of laughter is a common one as it is hard to mistake, or manufacture for that matter. These fibres and fridge-stained pictures are all a person’s traumatized little memories could possibly carry with them when they were scooped from the warmth of the eternity of silence that preceded their being born, slapped on the ass to inflate their lungs, and whisked out into the once-brown dust and one lane traffic. Our imaginations, bless them, animate the rest. And we are all storytellers, making up our past, after we wake up every morning, in order to feel real.

“What I mean to say is, I’m willing to answer your questions to the best of my ability. Excited to talk about it, even. But I dunno that I’m the expert, or any of us would be. So I didn’t prepare talking points. Never was one to stand up here and tell the whole

life's story behind a poem.”

Maybe what Bud loved best was a good line. He selectively read things that had a payoff that made him feel something profound about his own life. Reading and writing were selfish acts of fighting the feeling of insignificance. It would tide him over when things were bad, until the things, the real life things, got good again. He rarely read when things were good, and certainly nothing new.

He had carried some things with him though. When his son was smoking and accused him of hypocrisy for telling him no, he told him he contradicts himself because he contains multitudes. He would use Whitman a lot when parenting. He would read the odd poem he loved to folks when he was drunk and it made him feel as though he himself had written that perfect last line from the motherland he would have hated without having read when he was at UBC, about singing in your chains like the sea.

“Anyway. This is the most fun I ever had writing something.” He nodded, assuring the audience, and himself, in a way he felt was his version of nonchalantly. “I, uh.” The remembering made him smile, large and quick. “It’s is a short story I wrote while we were making the magazine, and it’s called “Buck Pierce and the Time Sickness.” He had read it to Bart a few times when he was just little. He read it to him and Sue in the kitchen while they sat beside the baseboards the day after Halloween in ‘77. And he *was* excited to read it, and to hear and feel himself read it out loud, one more time.

Fall oh vis linc two con tin yew: A
