

PRISM international

47:3

Spring 2009

Contemporary Writing from Canada and Around the World



PRISM international

the 1990s, the number of publications on the topic has increased steadily, and the number of authors has increased from 1 to 10.

There are a number of reasons for the increase in research on the topic. First, the number of people who are interested in the topic has increased. This is due to the fact that the topic has become more relevant in the 1990s. Second, the number of people who are qualified to do research on the topic has increased. This is due to the fact that more people have received training in the field. Third, the number of people who are interested in publishing their research has increased. This is due to the fact that the topic has become more popular in the academic community.

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Contents

Volume 47, Number 3
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The Visual Issue

Editors' Notes / 7

Fiction

Stacey May Fowles

I am Dreaming of the Grand Hotel Europe Again / 13

illustrated by Marlena Zuber

Emily Schultz

The Recall Year / 37

Illustration

Allyson Haller

Fluttering / 36

Over the Bars / 50

By Ginger / 63

Robert Malinowski

Faraway / 72

Diane Schoemperlen

Word Count / insert (subscribers only)

Nonfiction

Jessica Belt

Salvadoran Graphics / 53

Poetry

Paul Tyler

- If I Were a Painter* / 9
The Fathers are Dying / 10
This Bookish Night / 11

Leonard Neufeldt

- Standing in Line with Headset at the Monet Exhibit* / 12

Eleonore Schönmaier

- Kandinsky* / 30
Sculpture / 31
Copper Thunderbird / 32

Karen Connelly

- The Painting* / 34

Fiona Lam

- Still, Life* / 44

Kate Braid

- Emily Carr: Indian Church* / 45
Emily Carr: Tree, 1932-33 / 46
Vincent Van Gogh: Long Grass with Butterflies / 47

Antony Di Nardo

- To Paint the Poet as a Driver* / 48

Rose Adams

- Routes* / 51

Shawn Riopelle

- Francesca* / 62

Michael Trussler

- Yes, Words Really Do* / 64
Not Counting the Ones / 66
A Homemade Life / 67

Trisha Cull

- Deadheading in the Garden* / 68

Contributors / 74

THE VISUAL ISSUE

Editors' Notes

When we decided to make visual art the theme for this issue, we knew we wanted pieces that responded to art, as well as those that evoked a rich visual texture. We each had different ideas about what that would mean, leading to passionate discussions about the poetry, prose and images that moved us most.

Along with publishing great literature, PRISM strives to be visually compelling. There's something to be said for judging a book by its cover, so we always seek interesting new art to compliment the best in contemporary writing from Canada and around the world.

In this issue, we are thrilled to present a graphic short fiction collaboration, two additions to Kate Braid's oeuvre on Emily Carr, an essay on the relationship between art and revolution and many more vibrant examples of the ways writing and art can inspire each another. And of course, on and between our covers, are beautiful illustrations by Allyson Haller to usher in the spring.

—The Editors

I'm not one of those writers who can draw. But I faked it for years. In high school I packed my schedule with art classes because I ran with the painterly crowd. Ms. Hillsden, with her six-inch white beehive and cat-eye glasses, assigned our first project in *Art Careers 12* by declaring a single word: sumptuous. My friends, who had real talent and understood colour, light and perspective, painted beautiful, wall-worthy still-lives, while I traced wildlife from a 30-year-old *National Geographic*. Ms. Hillsden praised my work, but only because I sat with the art stars. I soon realized I was living a lie, and dropped out of *Art Careers*.

Today, I have total respect and awe for writers-slash-artists and artists-slash-writers. You are each a source of infinite inspiration. But I dedicate this note to writers who suck at art. In paint-free solidarity, we rise up.

—Krista Eide

I have painted a deer grazing at the foot of an ancient tree. I have friends who do amazing art: Amanda Suutari, Wendy Wagner, Amy Muloin.

When we were kids, my parents hung the same print of Tom Thompson's *The Jack Pine* on opposite walls of the dining room. "You didn't notice!" my dad laughed after a month. *Daydreamers*.

I visited home, Alberta, this Christmas. Brianna, a Katimavik participant staying with us, took out a box of crafts. Mom had gone skiing. I stayed; I was trying to do less. Brianna and I made dreamcatchers (she brought all of us joy). I painted a piece of birch for my friend Carissa's wedding.

I have yet to send the gift. Burning bridge. And an idea has emerged: that one should properly mount such a gift so it hangs nicely. So it will not be something the new couple struggles to find a place for.

—Kristjanna Grimmelt

Growing up, we never had a lot of art on the walls, but we had a ton of it in comic books and on the covers of records. Reading and listening to music were vital to life in the Miller household, so for me, visuals are always tied to words, read or sung. The most iconic images in my life have been the side-profiles of tortured Marvel vigilantes and folk singers—especially folk singers.

I close my eyes and see Joni Mitchell's oil-paint self-portraits. Her mountainous outline of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young on *Déjà Vu*. Bob Dylan and his dark-haired girlfriend stumbling down a narrow street in the freezing cold. Neil Young beside a tree.

Today, I like Alison Bechdel's brilliant graphic novel *Fun Home* and Julie Morstad's wicked foxes on Neko Case's *Fox Confessor Brings the Flood*. And my brother, the musician William Delray's oven drawings. And everything in this issue.

—Michelle Miller

For me, both art and poetry are about ways of seeing. In my early art classes I learned that not all shadows are grey—on snow they're blue, on a field of grain, brown. (I grew up on the prairies, where light is our solace.) I learned how to look, to see the details, to take it all apart.

While I still hesitate in front of a blank canvas, I will put down words, move them, erase them, put down more on a blank page. All in the hope of crafting a representation that is more than just—

The last time I was at a gallery, a thought occurred to me. A good poem or work of art will bring you in real close, and fill up the room behind you.

—Crystal Sikma

Paul Tyler

If I Were a Painter

I'd paint the dull brown mud—the canal duck-sludge in low water
between seasons, the grey of this sky, and the concrete, its assurance
of overcoming.

I'd paint plastic bottles kicked next to the curb, the drink lid in an over
cast of leaves, cracks in the overpass, the cars pounding over, the
black of faded asphalt.

I'd paint gravel collecting near grates, clogged with sticks, and across
the studded grime, the nest of used spray cans under this dead,
three-day rain-light,

the cold, swollen lawns, the page nines of newsprint, bellowed, wind-
tortured near the wet glimmering benches. I'd paint bus stops,
abused, broken-willed

shelters, hollow beside grass-invaded lots, the posters, limp, left
hanging off poles.

I'd paint this for all our dislocated gazes, for our half-intentioned lives.

The Fathers are Dying

for Brier

The quiet in their eyes. Long stares through kitchen windows
Ball caps, old jeans worn on Sundays
Waking at odd hours, papers by their chairs
rearranged the next morning
Deep sighs (in through the mouth, out through the nose)
whenever anyone asks a question
Strange gifts given to their children that no one understands
Unexpected laughter, inappropriate grins—
O undefinable fatherly glee
Their great hope that at least one of their children
will excel at mathematics
Watchtowers in the mind where they pace
Prophets of everything that gets worse
Poor taste T-shirts and finger pulls
Letter openers from Malaysia
Old toys sealed in boxes you were never allowed to touch
Waking you at four a.m. on a school night
because Venus is passing closer to Earth than it will
ever again in our lifetime, he says
The fathers are dying, go and listen to them breathe
Some have risen from their chairs to answer the door
to check on the dog when it didn't return
They are calling in the night and will not come home
Some melt away into white sheets
seeking a sleep that is finally their own
When they are gone, so are the tools,
the guide books and wood stoves
the cross beams, the nails, the o-rings and joists
So are the maps, so is time, so is love
which you didn't expect. Once he is gone
the questions and the answers
remain locked in a trunk at the back of his den
its quiet stickers from Milan and Salzburg
its aroma of eucalyptus and sandalwood
its stiff hinges, difficult latches, its mouth sealed with ash.

This Bookish Night

You sleep like a comma in a thousand page
dark. Moths flip loose around lamps.
Rain chucks hymns on a hornbook lawn.
High-storied buildings, glowing paragraphs,
secure a narrative of progress. Fissures
release a clasp of bats, dark matter making us.
You've re-read the dog-eared alleys,
watched sirens steer narrowly around you.
Stay a little longer, the story goes; half-read,
you are open to a dream of possible endings.
There's that sound, repeated in your ear,
a crisp turning of hours; it keeps you here.

Leonard Neufeldt

Standing in Line with Headset at the Monet Exhibit

The pond wants to drop its utter sheen of light
into the earth and take the sky with it, a sky
that marks the distance to trees at the far edge.

Between this morning's change and the opposite
shore the water is cold and deep. I'm mired
in mud, water seeping into my shoes, feet

and knees locked, ready for me to lean forward
with shears blunt as an unspoken prayer, wondering
which movement will reach and sever a veined stem

of the pond where a face floats upward among
the water's umbilicals, turns, fades the way it came,
weighted or afraid. But flowers of the pond

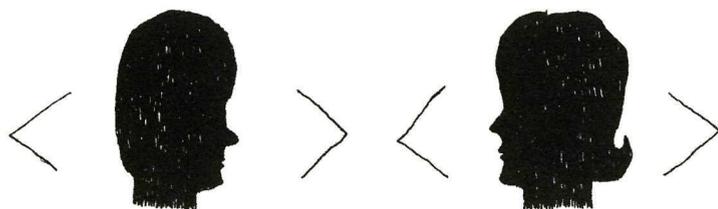
are dreaming slowly open—exiles returning
in ones and twos, coming furtively forward,
as in the story of a wide field, broken stone wall,

shoulder-high grass, twin towers of trees, a larger
symphony of blue, and children yearning toward it,
faces pale, smiling, others arriving on the margin.

The sun like a fire-bird, balancing picture and pond.
No wind to enter the quiet, no agitation from the deep.
The flowers are white. They've opened everywhere.

I AM DREAMING OF THE GRAND HOTEL EUROPE AGAIN

written by: Stacey May Fowles illustrated by: Marlena Zuber



She takes a break from him. The reader knows it is futile but she does not. A list of nine mundane and irrelevant scenes in which she desperately avoids contact.



i) On a Saturday morning in October <girl's name> fights to sleep in late, the shorter days mean less time to fight the pull of contact with <boys name>, but if she is honest with herself (which she is never, not ever) when she opens her eyes the first thing she thinks of is <boys name.>

Even that is a lie. She was thinking about him even before she woke up on a Saturday morning in October:

I'm dreaming of the Grand Hotel Europe again. I am waking up too early and walking through the city, sipping cold coffee and covertly smoking the cigarettes I've quit. I'm making sporadic long distance phonecalls to the people that I rationally discarded, people sewn into the fabric of who I am, a portrait that I paint over and over again.

I am dreaming of the Grand Hotel Europe again, an anonymous place where rational thoughts were discarded and drinks were drunk. Where we booked a room and spread ourselves thin across the bed frame.

Where we wish we'd booked a room.

I'm waking early and I'm staying up late. I'm dreaming of you again, but you look different and talk different and touch different than you did when we were there, in the Europe Hotel with me, drinking pink drinks and darting looks, exchanging currency and pulling the string on the already frayed holes in the rational plan.



2) On a Saturday morning in October she steps into the shower, presses her forehead against the blue and white tiles while the water reassuringly burns, urge to cry, urge to cry staved off, hair washed, legs shaved, dreams forgotten. She steps out of the shower, wraps a towel around the naked body that <boy's name> has never touched, wipes the steam from the mirror with a flat palm, stares at herself momentarily and thinks of the phone. She wonders if he has tried to contact her, call her, thought of her, wants her, is coming to get her, save her.

I dyed my hair brown because I knew you would have liked it. I know you would have liked it but you never saw it and likely never will. But I dyed it anyway, got my local lover to pick the mahogany #42 on your behalf. I dyed it because you would have wanted to run your fingers through it, smell the lavender you like so much, but you never did and likely never will.

Urge to cry staved off second time. Teeth brushed.

3) Coffee: two sugars, two creams. While holding the cup to her mouth, some staring at the phone. First covert cigarette of the day. It is raining. She should quit smoking again. She smoked a lot during those twelve days with < boy's name, > forty-five cigarettes in one day, she remembers, she is still recovering from that, she enjoyed how invincible that made her feel, how strong he made her feel, she -

LIFE IS TRIPS TO THE MARKET
AND BILLS UNPAID, STARBUCKS
COFFEE RUNS AND BAD DECISIONS
MADE AT THE BAR ON A SATURDAY
NIGHT. LIFE IS TOLD IN TO-DO
LISTS, TEXT MESSAGES AND
THE LABELS OFF OF UPS
PACKAGES.

- must not think of < boy's name. >
Taking a break.

4) She again looks at her silent phone
Nothing. This is good, she assures
herself. She is taking a break and
this is good.



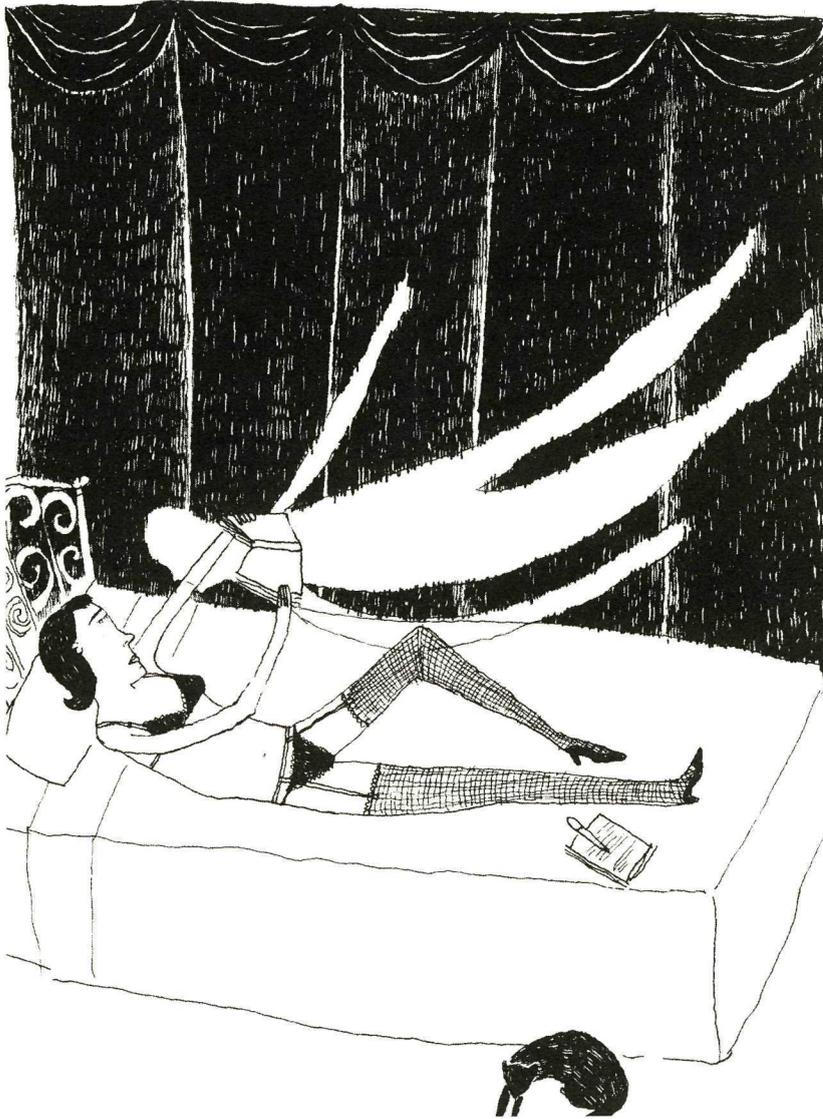
5) In the bedroom, dyed brown hair clean and wet and smelling like the lavender he likes, she reads a book while gripping a black ballpoint pen, occasionally underlining passages that appeal, lines like:

Sniffing each other, screwing, chewing the best thing we can find, living, seeing, dying, we're animals. Then we have books, beyond our animal selves we're told.

Books comfort her. <Boy's name.> referred to this comfort as "finding the others," meaning the other fictional lovers that fought and fell into the pull of faulty fate.

We're animals.

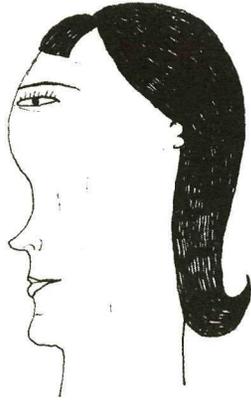
Again - must not think of <boy's name.>
Taking a break.



6) It is still raining. She is fidgeting, impatient. She wants to skip ahead in the book she is reading while her hair is wet and smelling like the lavender he likes, skip ahead a hundred pages in the book she is reading about "the others."

She is angry with them, "the others" in the book she is reading on a Saturday afternoon. By page 113 "the others" are thousands of miles apart, their time zones separated by 9 aching hours, their communication brief and fleeting, their lives madly different and their exchanges misunderstood. She wants to skip ahead because she cannot bare the weight, the wait, their many months of screwing other people and scrawling lines in the margins and holding onto relics of their brief time together, worshipping them like false idols of an idealistic future, a coming salvation where they both believe their hearts will be healed.

"The others," like them. **Taking a break.**



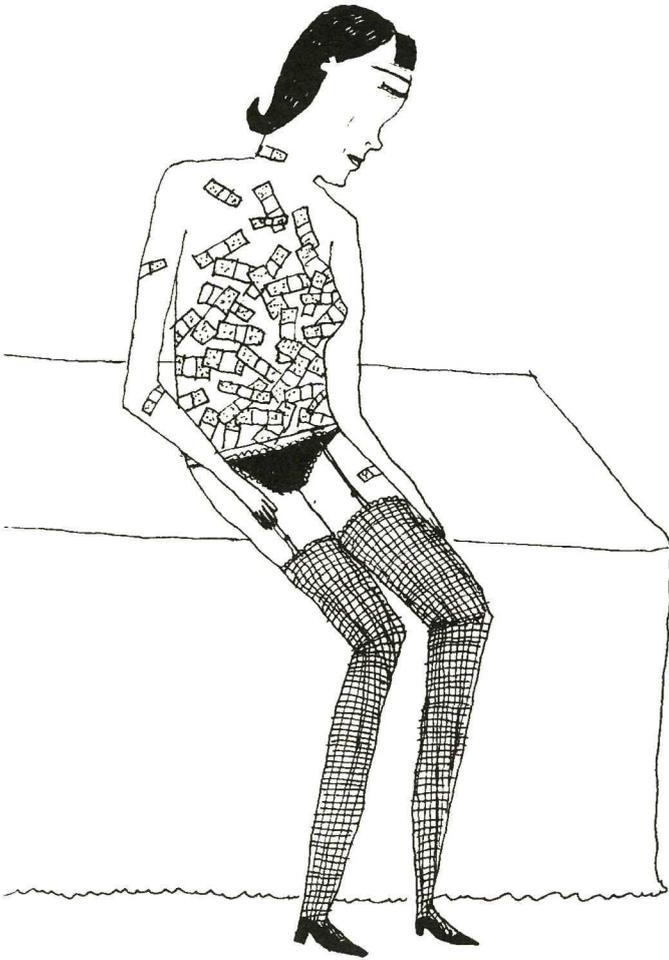
7) What do bodies decide? Bodies are notorious for making faulty choices. Bodies tear and bleed, they bruise and bind and break, they are tied to bed frames and consumed, they conjure the most vicious of desires, the most vile aspects of animal will.

Bodies do not write poetry or care of soul mates and magic. Bodies make Grand Hotel Europe reservations and lie and cheat and steal and leave scared and scarred.

Bodies fuck.

- must not think of <boy's name.>

Taking a break.

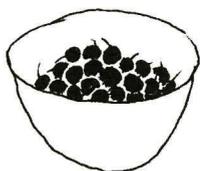


8) Early afternoon, the phone rings. Her local lover. He is sorry he has been so busy lately, sorry he has not had time for her, wants to take her out tonight, for pink drinks and dancing and later, fuck in his four-poster bed with its crisp and clean white linens and endless bliss.

<Girls name> recalls: Last time she saw her local lover they ate cherries from a blue ceramic bowl that sat between them on the couch and they discussed someday soon space and schematics. Her books could go here, her desk there, shelves installed, CD collections merged. The four-poster bed of clean white lined bliss would be hers, someday soon.

And her local lover is sorry he has not had enough time for her, and could she wear that black dress he likes so much, the one hemmed just above the knee, the one he tore the zipper on when he pulled it from her body the last time they fucked.

She agrees and gets her sewing kit.







Eleonore Schönmaier

Kandinsky

1

The day the owl flew into his mind—
A tapestry chewed on by moths.

In the hungry need: a cup of tea: star anise and licorice.
A plant with only two large arrow-shaped leaves.

2

Kandinsky waited for an answer from Schönberg.
A scroll of sheet music tied with string.

An actual curving in the nothingness.
A lesson in language nevertheless.

3

A map showing circumference and borders.
Withdrawal of the light: a black circle drawn on the white board.

Kandinsky wrote, "So everything is in order."
That night his door stayed propped open—

Sculpture

He sketches wind turbines
and enters abandoned buildings.
Lays down partial floorboards. Cuts
holes in walls. Avoids

military conscription.
Avoids jail. He forgets his ID
at home. Avoids getting arrested. Smuggles
white canvas into the derelict

buildings. He wears paint-splattered
sandals on his feet. Walks softly.
She never knows when he's out,
or in. He calls her

his Russian—her waist-length hair,
green eyes. Cooks her cups of tea.
Asks her, Why do you only paint faces?
Collects burgundy and green

rocks for her. Cuts cactuses and sets them out
on ceramic plates. Waits
for her to find human
shapes in the plants, in the stones.

Copper Thunderbird

laboured over a large vat
of liquid gold,
arsenic and cyanide. His art
rolled up
in a corner.

Thunderbird lived at times
in one large room
half open to the sky,
a room of crates, logs and old
tin Coca-Cola signs

where no ceiling crushed
into his thoughts.
Against a sheltered wall
a plain table

piled high with paper,
bark and paints.

At Thunderbird's opening
on the French Riviera
did Picasso
 and Chagal
feel the loons
 swimming?

Copper Thunderbird immersed
and invisible
in the Red Lake:
sunset-stained water:
tremolo of loons:
a cluster of four adults
their blue-purple bodies,
internal organs, swallowed
fish.

 Four sienna loonlings
encircled
by warm orange
deep red.

Karen Connelly

The Painting

On the Thai side of the Thai-Burma border

Now the tea cools
in the clay cup
as you take me
through the rooms
of this house
where I do not live.

I lived here once.
Do you remember
when a needle
from the sky
touched a needle
from the earth
and our fingertips
were reborn?

Outside the dogs carouse
leap at the gate.
Yet the white bird of the garden
has gone away.
We enter the house
only to see the painting

of scarlet and gold, men
in their dance of music
hovering over the wooden xylophones
leather drums, their skin shining
as the bronze and copper shines
worn thin by the pounding
heart of song.

Their hands and faces blur
in the passionate movement
of music
we cannot hear
from a country
you cannot enter.

Loss gives this gift.
You cannot deny it.
The canvas is more beautiful
because you remain outside
staring at that night
from a swathe of ochre sunlight
on the stairwell.

Tell me
what is exile
what is return.
Two needles passing
through so many layers of skin
to find the heart sewn taut as a drum.

My presence here
contains far more
than flesh and breath.
This pulse, the life
we did not live.

Without a sound
your naked feet
step away
from me
after we admire
the painting.



Fluttering / *Allyson Haller*

The Recall Year

It was the year that my fat friends got thin and my thin friends got fat, my parents stopped giving me money when I visited, and my girlfriend Erika ceased to kiss me on the mouth in the mornings. It was the year an exploding gun factory killed thirty, an exploding pipeline killed one hundred and an exploding star halfway across the universe became the farthest known object ever visible to the naked eye. Between headlines of explosions there was also the collapse of the economy. It was the year the government would need to recall—issue a retraction on—absolutely everything. I remember where I was when I heard the news. I remember little else, but that I do recollect, so clearly. Across my computer screen: FDA demands recall for 2008—all 365 days.

After clicking on the caption and reading the item, I glanced around the office. No one else seemed in shock. I was about to lean into my neighbour's cubicle when my line rang. It was Erika. She didn't even identify herself, just blurted: "Have you seen it? It's crazy!"

"Are you sure it's real?" I felt like the screen was flickering before my eyes. I re-scanned the article. "I thought maybe it was a scam story. The sources are kind of vague, aren't they?"

"What do you mean?" she hissed. "It's Associated Press." Then she said, "Wait, I've got it here, on the CNN web page too: 'Entire Year Gets the Boot.' Um, BBC: 'UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) Involved in Recall.'" There was a pause, the frenetic clicks of typing as she searched online, then she said, "And the CBC: 'Health Canada Supports Full-Year Recall.' How do you recall an entire year? What does this mean, James?" With each news bit, her voice pitched higher and I knew she was tearing up. My palms turned into water and I set my paper carry-out coffee cup on the desk before it could slip from my grasp. I felt my chin, as if gripping it would clear my mind. I numbly rubbed at the spot I'd missed shaving.

"No one in the office has said anything yet," I told her, almost in a whisper, although I wasn't sure why I was afraid to be overheard talking about it. "I don't think they know."

Erika had turned on the radio. I could hear it in the background, and then she said simply, "I'll call you back," and the light on the phone went out, line dead.

Processed frozen beef, French blue cheese, lunch meat of all varieties. Baby formula, rice cereal, several organic chocolates, bagged salads, peanut butter. Specific car models with cruise control. Countertop water dispensers. Batteries and power adapters. Bicycles. Tea light candles that posed a burn hazard. Treadmills that accelerated unexpectedly. Abdominal exercisers posing laceration danger. Poison pet food. Flammable tents and mattresses (even sleep was not safe). Razors too dull for shaving.

I stroked my chin again, feeling victimized.

Cuddly stuffed animals whose plastic faces left risk of lead poisoning as they were kissed and mauled by children. Toxic silly string, Halloween costumes, Casper the Friendly Ghost figurines, children's jewelry. Infant cold and cough medications, and a slurry of prescription drugs so thick with syllables a hammering began in the space behind my ears and I found myself reaching inside the desk drawer for an Advil.

It had been a long time coming. Some of the recall products had simply not been on our radar. Erika and I were city-dwellers who did not drive, did not have children, were not that adept with power tools, and unlike our friends, apparently, were not that fanatical about exercise. Even some of the food items had missed us—we got a lot of takeout.

By this time, a cluster of my co-workers had gathered in front of our boss's office. Tentatively, I joined them. A murmur hung, stunned, above us. Our words didn't seem our own.

"I don't understand," I added to the cloud.

"A bad year all 'round."

"I think—" someone began, with a kind of saved-up authority, "I think it means that everything produced last year will have to be returned. That they believe the majority of 2008 products were so bungled they've infected all around them. The natural extension is that our intellectual properties have also been affected."

"What does that even mean?"

"Shredding!" someone else called.

"They can't possibly expect that," I put in.

"How do you extend a recall that far?"

"Six countries are already onboard and the United Nations is being consulted."

"Where did you see that?"

"YouTube."

"Does anyone have a computer with speakers that actually work?"

Just then, our leader emerged, his round grey face almost jovial. Everyone shut up and looked at him. He made the expression of a sad clown, swiped a thick fist at a non-existent teardrop. "Well, what can we do?" he bellowed. "Go home! We'll sort it out tomorrow."

We assaulted him with a burst of simultaneous questions. Some of the

women were laugh-crying and Ed, who had the desk across from mine, was rolling and unrolling his shirtsleeves, something he also did during downsize rumour days. One sleeve was down and the other up, his crab-like fingers scrambling over the cotton.

Our boss held up his hands. "We have to wait until they issue more information. Who knows what a recall of this size entails, whether they'll change their minds. There's no point in doing any more work. It would only cost us, be more to undo—if that's where this is indeed headed. Seriously," he said, and he waved his hands like he was shooing pigeons, "off you go." It was just like him to be so cavalier.

The phone rang. I ran back to my desk, made a grab for the receiver, and knocked over my coffee. Quickly, I sopped up the brown mess with my white sleeve before I realized it probably didn't matter. The company had bought the keyboard and mouse in 2008. I stared at my ruined sleeve—I'd bought the shirt in 2008, too. I grabbed the receiver. It was Erika.

"Dean and Adam are coming over," she informed me. "They said they didn't want to go through this alone, that if we're going to lose a whole year of our lives we should all be together. Come home."

I nodded, dumbstruck.

We went to our local bar because we each needed a drink and because there was a large-screen TV to keep up-to-date on what was happening with the recall. Dean and Adam were strangely in bright moods, talking about fate, saying that maybe it was for the best—maybe it would prevent the awful direction things had been heading. Prop 8 would be recalled: cause for immense celebration. Then again, so would Sean Penn's Hollywood portrayal of Harvey Milk.

It was past noon when we got there, but the bar wasn't serving. "I'm sorry," the server squeaked. "We could be shut down because of the recall."

"Don't you have anything that's from today?" Erika pressed. She could be insistent and logical at the same time.

"Oh!" the server exclaimed. "We get a keg drop-off this afternoon." She dashed into the kitchen to check the time it usually arrived, and then we saw her making the rounds to the other tables, placating them with the knowledge that beer would, at some point, be available.

In the meantime, we made lists—as we were being instructed to do by our local news station—of things we had said and done last year. Ideas we'd had, projects we'd begun, household items and articles of clothing we could remember purchasing. All of these things would need to be returned, erased or destroyed. We worked through month by month, room by room.

“Fug ’n snug,” I reminded Erika. “You coined the term ‘fug ’n snug’ sometime last spring.”

“No, I didn’t.” It was clearly something she wanted to hang onto in spite of warnings issued around the globe.

“What’s a ‘fug ’n snug’?” Adam asked.

Erika shot me a look.

“It’s dirty,” I muttered.

Erika glared harder.

“You heterosexuals,” Adam dismissed.

“Don’t worry about it,” Dean comforted Erika, patting the back of her hand.

Just then, a driver in a beer logo jacket arrived and the whole room stood up cheering. Unfortunately, he was pushing an empty dolly. He explained to the staff that the beer he would have brought had been brewed over the past few months—he was sorry, but it would be a dry establishment for a while. Worse, he took the existent kegs from behind the counter away. He was lucky to get out alive.

Just as the chaos was dying down Erika burst: “I thought you liked fug ’n snug!”

I had a lot of things on my list I didn’t want to give up either: a new method I’d found for bringing out the flavour in the spaghetti sauce, recent additions to my porn collection and a new position I liked to fall asleep in. But I supposed if those things were contaminated, who knew what damage I’d been doing to myself?

We had a long list of things we had acquired that would have to be gathered together and deposited at one of the Designated Areas, things one didn’t even think about buying at the time, like elastic bands and thumb tacks, extension cords, cleansers, socks.

“We’re so much richer than we thought,” our friend Adam said cheerfully as we rolled up our papers and prepared to leave the morose bar where last year’s hits were being struck from the jukebox with a black marker.

“Compensation,” I said as we stood. I jabbed my finger into the table. “How are we going to be compensated for all of this? And who’s going to pay?”

Erika just stared at me stonily. “People are dying,” she said. “There were 941 recalls in 2006, almost 700 in 2007, and now this. That’s all you can think about?”

It was true: a long list of symptoms had been released and we were supposed to monitor one another. All of the afflictions they pointed toward seemed to end in “osis.” However, it was also true that hundreds of billions of dollars had been spent around the world, and I knew that when the companies were affected the people who worked there would

also be affected, that businesses and countries and even little neighbourhoods like ours were going to fall. I kept my mouth shut about that.

Later that night, Erika said she needed some air. There wasn't much to do. The laptop we used to watch DVDs in bed and to play music, though second-hand, had been a new addition to our household in, yes, the recall year. Erika had her stationary computer, on which she checked the news every twenty minutes, but eventually it just got to be too much. At a loss, she suggested we walk our cat around the garden. She had a small dollar-store leash for Twinkle but insisted it was not from the recall period.

Ever since the cat had joined our household, Erika would on occasion take him outside to sniff around and paw about the garden, get some sunshine lying on the edge of the sidewalk, tentatively pad around in the snow. We only had a few feet of yard outside the building, but Erika insisted that Twinkle should get to make use of it too.

When we had first adopted the cat from the Humane Society, Erika had been afraid to let him roam, thinking that he might forget this was his home, so she'd begun this futile task of cat-walking. A black and white ten-year-old male, Twinkle always looked a bit stunned. He had a face mask like the Phantom of the Opera. That was part of his odd appearance, but we still weren't convinced there wasn't actually something wrong with him.

As he was roving at the end of the red woven lead, Erika suddenly started crying. "I can't believe I forgot," she said. "My mother—she died in January last year."

"Oh god," I said, putting my hand on her elbow. "I forgot too. It probably had to do with the recall. Maybe what made her ill..."

Erika took deep breaths, throat thick with saliva. The sun was starting to set, and people were walking by looking at us.

"Can't they recall her death?" Erika sobbed. "Huh, can't they?"

I told her I didn't think it worked that way. Then she remembered she had bought new shoes for the funeral. She told me to go inside and write it on the list before either of us got ill. "Now!" she gestured, and Twinkle's leash, which was draped loosely around Erika's wrist, slipped from her hand. The cat lurched across the pavement. A man was going by, and Twinkle seemed bent on following him. He dodged away as Erika cried, "Twinkle! Twinkle!"

Twinkle ran with a spryness we'd never seen. He hopped, side-stepped, and skittered around the stranger, who kept walking although it was obvious Erika was trying to catch the cat at his heels. She ran after them, but Twinkle dove through the hedge only to appear a few feet ahead of the man again. "My cat!" Erika yelled, pointing. The stranger didn't glance

back. Twinkle trailed the red dollar-store leash in and out of bushes, and Erika flip-flopped after the two of them in the large rubber clogs she'd slipped on to go just outside our place. She pursued them around the corner, the snow no doubt seeping in under her socked heels.

I took the opportunity to light an on-the-sly cigarette. The evening had fallen, and sat particularly damp and weighty on us. When I'd phoned my parents earlier, my dad had grumbled with absolute apathy, "Well, that's life. When you get older, you'll see, that's just what happens." Like it was the most ordinary thing to scratch an entire year of your life away. I watched my breath full of smoke meshing with the quickly darkening sky.

When Erika came back, she was catless and foul. "Why didn't you help me?" she implored.

"We got Twinkle in the recall year. I thought of it before. I just—I didn't want to say anything in front of Adam and Dean. But, you know, maybe it was meant to be."

She eyed the cigarette.

"Should you really be smoking that? I mean, you don't know where that came from. The tobacco leaves..."

If I knew Erika, she was still peeved about fug 'n snug. Plus the cat. And now my bad habit. "I suppose you're also going to tell me that kissing me is like kissing an ashtray?" I challenged, and took another puff.

"No, it's like kissing the trash can that twenty ashtrays got emptied into."

"Take it back," I begged, dropping the cigarette into the snow as if it had burned me.

"I can't." She stared off in the direction that Twinkle had gone. "I said it this year."

Erika did not take the loss lightly. She made posters with Twinkle's picture on them and pasted them up on telephone poles all over the neighbourhood. She was furious with me when I wouldn't help her put them up.

"Maybe that man was sent by the government to take Twinkle back," Erika spat. "If you don't fight the system, you're part of it."

The Recall Year—as the media soon dubbed it—was hard on Erika, but it was hardest on small businesses. Somehow the large ones got off the hook. "How can I assure you of this?" the corner store clerk said a dozen times when I asked him if his product was new and not part of the recall. The store had newspapers up in its windows the same week Erika moved out.

It's funny, but I don't remember much of the life we lived together. They couldn't take everything back, but they did enough of a job, I

guess. In the end there were negotiations, and the words “mass compensation,” a lawsuit that wallpapered the headlines but didn’t really seem to go anywhere. After work, I would walk home with very carefully selected grocery items, which I would scrub. On several poles there were still posters for Twinkle, ghosts, growing fainter and fainter, ragged and washed-out white, hanging in the air of a new year.

Fiona Lam

Still, Life

No ladder, no kids to shake them down,
the high stubborn apples have gripped
the gnarled arms of their tree
after the descent of leaves, the last snowfall.
Still yellow, mere husks
sourly persisting as humans do.
Who do we wait for,
who awaits us?

Nascent leaves furled and tensed in their buds.
A few crocus tips in half-frozen soil.
How can these apples
imagineappleness now?

By the stove, a bowl of static apples
probably picked months ago, their ripening slowed
in the cool dark of shipping containers.
A still life, I tell my son, and point
at colour plates of Cezanne, Picasso.
The fruit does not move,
composed and stuck in some precise
slice of light and time.

He runs to the table to sketch out
the tree, the ground. Then the apples,
with new blue capes billowing out in the air.
They leap from their branches, never
falling, to their glorious fate.

Kate Braid

Emily Carr: Indian Church

Brave Heart church
rings out in a tight white voice,
a necklace of crosses
stuck in its throat.

Whitewashed in a firm Christian hand,
Indian Church rings bells,
stamps its foot on the forest floor.
Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
For God's sake, stand up!

It has gathered its dead like an amulet
around it but already graveyard crosses
waver in and out of focus.
Weakening, they wonder
what it would be like to lie down,
rejoin earth,
the dark authority of trees.

Another kingdom, forest,
laps at the prim white door.
One day, it whispers,
one day I will come again.

Emily Carr: Tree, 1932-33

*Vancouver Art Gallery 42.3.63
oil on paper*

Stand back! This tree is going places!
It's a thunder of branches,
a wilderness of wind,
a highwayman riding.

Here's a dark and stormy night, teamster's whip
as tree boughs whistle and lock
to the sharp brown shouts of cedar and pine
and there's the small green bullet at the heart of things.

Notice how this tree doesn't fall but lays itself
down, gives itself when no one is looking,
to love, to a wild desire.

Night's eyelashes blink wide in shock.
Moon blanches. Sky is a memory.
What is real is this—love unleashed,
an epic of tree trunk and limbs.

So ride, ride on my beauty! Now we know
woodsmen only carry their axes
to cut themselves free. Ride on!

Vincent Van Gogh: Long Grass with Butterflies

1890, St-Remy Asylum near Arles

It takes a madness to hear the high silver of grass,
carve its whisper
so the merely sane can hear it too.

Butterflies pounce but are largely ignored
by black gnashing teeth, the grinding of green
under the appetite of a hungry wind.

Life with its teeth bared, feeds
on darker dreams, dares you
to take the first bite.

Antony Di Nardo

To Paint the Poet as a Driver

*but if he sings it's a good sign
a sign that you can sign*

—from “To Paint the Portrait of a Bird” by Jacques Prévert

First you need the car.
He would prefer
a top-down coupe,
the open sky, the wind
with its fingers running
through his hair
in the cutting profile
of a copper-coloured thoroughbred,
Kirk Douglas-rugged,
horse-powered in the saddle
by metaphor and trope
and all that comes with that
driving through the canyon
of a memory.
He'd want a road less traveled
or pick up speed unlimited
on a highway of free verse,
high-pitched through the city
streets on his way to a café
where I've placed him.
He's a one-handed driver,
one hand on the wheel and,
unaccustomed to companions
on the road, the other
on the radio dial, tuning in
to local chatter or bird calls
on the airwaves.
He turns a corner
and sees a parking spot
just on the other side.

He pulls in, no need
for precision or review mirrors
when your car's a *Deux Chevaux*,
his elbow
on the driver's open window.
Hey, Monsieur Prévert,
someone calls,
will you sign my poem?
and he looks up,
adjusts his cap,
a feather waving in the air.



Over the Bars / *Allyson Haller*

Rose Adams

Routes

I.

Axons, in whales,
twelve metres along spinal cords.

The body channels—
charges
more neurotransmitters
than the brain can hold.

A lymph pool stagnates
at the base of my neck.

It's full moon the wharf submerged
even in moonlight
there's no safe path back
out to water.

II.

Exercise those axons!
In fourteen days you too
can stave off dementia!
Brain fitness, an easy routine.

Prescription:

1. a senior
2. a community centre
3. a watercolour course

Is it so? or are there things we need
to accept with grace? A northern right whale glides
into a tangle of turquoise and orange lines.

Waves, colour surge.
Paths open in sulci.

DeKooning's lines delicate threads wandering
across the white canvas glow.

Salvadoran Graphics

Sister Peggy didn't wear a habit. Her white hair was cut short, exposing her neck. She led me and a hodgepodge group of students and religious workers to the ruins of a school courtyard that must once have been beautiful. The school, just outside the Guazapa Mountain region in the town of Suchitoto, El Salvador, was bombed twice during the civil war that lasted from 1980 through 1992. Now, Sister Peggy was in the early stages of restoring the property to become *El Centro Arte Para La Paz*, the Art Centre for Peace, with classrooms, a cafeteria, dormitories and eventually, a chapel.

She led us over to some chairs. When everyone was seated and still, Sister Peggy began. "Being a virgin has nothing to do with sex," she said, picking up her feet from the dusty terracotta tiles and stamping them down together. Some people suppressed smiles. We had expected to hear about war. She paused, serious, and looked at each person.

Sister Peggy, a Sister of Charity of Saint Elizabeth from the United States, had lived in El Salvador for more than twenty years, through the civil war and after peace agreements were signed. Now she worked with women—who outnumbered men by nearly 20 percent—and youth. When renovations were complete, El Centro Arte would offer training in graphic design, painting, drawing, other arts and a women's co-op. She and some other Sisters also worked to develop a feminist theology for Latin America, continuing the work of bygone priests of liberation. A friend had spent the week at El Centro Arte and she insisted that I go. "It will inspire your art," she said.

"Virgins are pure because they know themselves," Sister Peggy said, and scooped her hands as if to dig at her belly, "right from their centre."

Then she talked about the war, about her town being bombed not once but twice, about women who were raped, blockades constructed from severed limbs, massacres of entire villages. The air hung thick and warm, and only a pregnant woman fanned herself.

"The more we learn what happened, the more virginal we become."

Love letters in El Salvador are marked with birds sketched in the lower corner of the paper. The birds are as important as the words; to eloquently express affection, Salvadorans must know how to draw as well

as how to write. Though the government regulated speech long before the war broke out, they were never able to terminate communication between the people because images remained vivid and abundant.

The conflict can be traced back to rich, earthy coffee. The farmers who harvested the beans came from the indigenous Pipil tribe. In the 1930s, they were forbidden by law to speak Nawat, their native language. In fact, Salvadorans who spoke any language other than Spanish were assumed to be communist rebels, worthy of death. Coffee prices plummeted, meaning longer hours for workers and less pay. When the farmers began to speak up, General Maximiliano Martínez identified Pipils by their small build, broad faces and scruffy *campesino* clothing. He gathered entire villages in the town square, tied them by their thumbs and executed them by firing squads. Thousands died in *La Matanza*, The Massacre, in the western part of the country.

Survivors fled to Nicaragua and Honduras where they could speak freely and wear colourful patterns. Those who remained in El Salvador didn't speak until they learned Spanish. Men dressed in slacks and drab button-down shirts and women wore plain dresses. Years later, after the United States government increased its interest in El Salvador, the poor farmers wore donated clothes: faded Budweiser T-shirts, collared polos and Levis, which did not so much disguise their heritage as it marked them as targets of North American anti-communist propaganda.

During the Cold War, the fear of communism was growing worldwide and the United States trained the Salvadoran National Army to use people's livelihoods against them. Just after the civil war began in 1980, Colonel Monterrosa—one of eight Salvadoran officers trained at Ft. Benning in Georgia—labeled the people of El Mozote as communist sympathizers, apparently because he knew the guerrilla army, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), was camped nearby. The National Army rounded up the townspeople, who were famous for their bread. Mothers were forced to watch as the soldiers baked their children in ovens. Men dug their own graves. The entire village—one thousand and nine people—died.

There are terrifying images. A blockade of left arms tied one to the other stretched across a main thoroughfare: left arms for leftist ideas. And other images too. The black thick-framed glasses of the formerly conservative Archbishop Oscar Romero. The limousine that stopped outside the open doors of a little chapel in the woods. The single bullet that sped down the centre aisle into Romero's heart as he broke bread. The blood that pooled at the altar.

Jesuit priest and prominent social activist John Dear later recalled, "Romero's funeral was the largest demonstration in Salvadoran history,

some say in the history of Latin America.” More than 250,000 people from all over the world—peasants, aristocrats and government officials—attended. It wasn’t only a memorial; the funeral was a symbol of the tension between rich and poor, church and state, domination and liberation. People who had formerly embraced non-violence joined the *campesinos* organizing in the mountains. Those who had been slow to advocate for change realized that their very lives depended on it.

When I traveled to El Salvador, I knew little about the gruelling years of civil war and subsequent recovery efforts. I knew of Romero, the opening religious bookend to the civil war, though the years after were a blur to me.

For Salvadorans, my ignorance was both expected and forgivable. “*Solidaridad*,” they said. “Not many North Americans know about our little country.” I would have argued that North Americans did know something about their country, except that before I left, a co-worker who spends much of her free time working on U.S. political campaigns had asked me if El Salvador was on the coast of Africa or inland. Perhaps ignorance is part of what spurred me to visit El Salvador—to apologize for my country’s and to try to overcome my own. The group that I traveled with brought gifts, practical things we had been told Sister Peggy needed. The giving itself was a polite gesture that any grateful house guest might make. Some of the gifts were purchased for El Centro Arte with grant money—plastic chairs for the cafeteria, a computer. A pregnant woman and I bought artwork. Even now, I can’t help thinking that the gifts were a sort of recompense for all we didn’t know.

We presented the gifts to Sister Peggy upon arriving. While she walked around to think about which classrooms would receive the first computers and to count the chairs stacked in the area that would become the cafeteria, I laid out six watercolour panels on the dusty walkway. I scurried back and forth from the courtyard with small rocks to hold down the corners. The panels were a collaborative piece of visual and literary art that I’d made with a painter friend. We called the series “Healing” and together came up with six subtitles for the panels. We had agreed not to talk about the project to one another until she had finished her designs and I had written six poems to accompany her visuals.

We met on my way to Boston’s Logan Airport to share our work before I left. We used the trunk of her car to flip through the panels. A female figure was drawn with wax on each one. Watercolours ran over the lines so the figures remained in white against washes of colour. The first woman lay crumpled on the ground and the final leaped with her foot kicked behind her.

“They’re just right,” I said, running my fingers across the heavy paper.

A gust of wind fluttered the paper's edge. She rolled up the panels and tied them with a rubber band, making me promise not to smash the corners on the plane. I kissed her cheek and handed her printouts of my poems.

The first night in San Salvador, I spent hours kneeling on a concrete floor to transcribe the poems onto the panels. I pressed a white pencil hard to make the letters show up on the bright watercolours, stopping to sharpen every few letters. My fingertips went white from the pressure.

When Sister Peggy finished looking at the other gifts, she walked to where I had spread out the panels. I had ordered them the wrong way, from right to left, and I put my hand on her shoulder to guide her to the beginning. She read every word, followed the lines of the colour with her eyes. She put her hand on her brow when the sun caused a glare. I shuffled along next to her, trying to view the panels this time as if I wasn't a co-creator.

At the last panel, Sister Peggy pressed her hands together at her chest like she was praying. "These are exactly the colours of this country—magenta, gold, turquoise—and they are very important to the Salvadoran people. Pay attention, Jessica, and you'll see these colours everywhere."

As the war began, words again were used candidly to inspire and round up the *campesinos*. The story is that those who practiced Liberation Theology continued to resist with non-violence, while others in the FMLN participated in attacks. This is what Damien, a guerilla friend of Sister Peggy, said on a U.S. radio interview. He recalled that he and many other resisters "didn't want to be fighting with guns, because we really hated the army when we saw how the army uses the weapons against people." A mutual friend told me later that Damien was drugged, captured and tortured with electric shocks and sleep deprivation. When Damien tells his own story, he simply says that he survived capture, and when he returned to the FMLN, he reluctantly decided to use weapons, first for defence and then against the growing national army.

Radio Venceremos—Radio We Shall Win—formed alongside the guerrilla army, declaring themselves the voice of the revolution. Journals written by radio announcers and technicians say that FMLN commander Joaquin Villalobos announced the first broadcast in January, 1981: "Brothers of El Salvador and the world. At this moment Radio Venceremos, the voice of the FMLN, begins broadcasting from somewhere in El Salvador to accompany the Salvadoran people step by step in their march towards final victory over centuries of oppression."

The original radio station ran on short-wave to make it more difficult to track. DJs and sound technicians from Venezuela and Nicaragua helped to set up a station that could be broken down and packed for

transport within fifteen minutes. Venceremos announcers invited priests, soldiers and sometimes local children to air their voices as a reminder of why the FMLN was fighting—so that everyone could speak freely.

Toward the end of the war, the FMLN trained San Salvadorans for urban combat over the airwaves. Radio Venceremos gave lessons on calisthenics and instructed listeners to play sports, two or three every day, to gain strength and endurance. The lessons quickly became more technical: how to build bombs, how to use weapons.

Radio Venceremos relocated from the hills of Morazan to the city of San Salvador only days before the guerrilla siege on the capitol began. Through its ten years, the war had not strongly affected San Salvador, and urban dwellers—even poor ones—did not share farmers' economic motivations for fighting. Much of what San Salvadorans knew of the war, they heard on the radio, which reported news from the National Army. In the first days of November, 1989, Generals said that the guerrilla forces were dwindling in the mountains and that many had deserted and fled to Guatemala. San Salvadorans, including leaders in the Salvadoran government, apparently believed that the National Army had nearly won the civil war.

The FMLN attack came as a surprise: on November 11, 1989, guerrilla troops snuck into city limits, joined by hundreds of urban comandos. Over the radio, the guerrillas issued a 7:00 pm curfew for the entire city of San Salvador—anyone breaking curfew was considered an enemy. Radio Venceremos reported each night during the siege while gunshots fired in the background.

The morning after the attack launched, so the story goes, a group of radio announcers and guerrillas traveled to the wealthy section of Colonia Escalón. They knocked on a door, demanding to speak with the owner. A wealthy *doña* appeared wearing a linen suit. The soldiers asked for food, and she hollered for her cook to make tortillas. "No," one guerrilla said as he looked straight at her eyes. "You will cook for us and for your servants. The revolution is here." The *doña* prepared fried eggs, beans and coffee for thirty.

The National Army responded to this siege in the way they had been trained at the School of the Americas: by killing the village priests. Six Jesuits teaching at the University of Central America in San Salvador were shot to death. A note left near their mutilated bodies was signed FMLN. Of course, it was illogical that the guerrillas had anything to do with the murders of priests who were long-time advocates of liberation.

By the day of the priests' funeral, the fighting in San Salvador had died down. Both the guerrillas and government officials attended, just as they had done when Romero was murdered. The National Army still publicly blamed the FMLN, even though a witness had testified to seeing

soldiers dressed in the national green fatigues sneaking into the university on the night of the murders. The witness was taken to the United States—she was told it was for her protection—where she was asked so many questions that even she began to doubt the legitimacy of her story. However, no matter what story was told by one side or denied by the other, the FMLN, the government and the people, who for ten years had lived fearing that they would be suspected of communism for harvesting coffee or baking tortillas, knew why the Jesuits had been murdered.

I had forgotten to translate the poetry on the artwork I gave to Sister Peggy from English into Spanish. Actually, until she mentioned it, it hadn't even occurred to me that the primary audience at El Centro Arte would be Spanish-speaking. The same kind of oversight had caused North Americans not to consider the *campesino* perspective for the years before and during the war.

I shifted my weight.

"Don't worry," Sister Peggy assured me. "I'll have it translated."

"Oh, good," I sighed.

The next day, a group of Salvadoran students about our age met me and the other North Americans visiting El Centro Arte. They ran a radio station, Radio Victoria, which broadcasted from a province bordering Honduras. They had been evacuated during the civil war to refugee camps in Honduras and Guatemala and had returned to their homeland as adolescents. Sister Peggy wanted us to meet, though none of the radio staff spoke English and most of us gringos spoke broken Spanish at best.

Sister Peggy arranged a game, a sort of charades, where we and the Salvadorans could communicate. "What do you do during the day?" she asked in Spanish then English, looking from one group to the other. The English speakers had one minute to talk amongst ourselves and then strike a pose that answered the question.

I pretended to sit at a desk and type on a keyboard, like I do most days at the office where I write booklets and emails encouraging high schoolers to think about going to college. A couple of people held imaginary books.

Then it was the Salvadorans' turn. They adjusted radio knobs with one hand, held imaginary headphones to their ears with another.

Sister Peggy nodded approval. When a pose was unclear, she translated.

"Now another," she said. "What was your childhood like?"

Again, the English speakers posed in scenes: as a pitcher and batter, as a mother holding child, as schoolchildren.

This time the Salvadorans had more questions.

"Do you all know your mothers?" Sister Peggy translated. I nodded

and held my position as teacher, with my hand raised as if I was about to write on a chalkboard. I looked around at the other English-speaking students; they nodded also.

“Did you go to school every day?”

More nods.

“Were you ever scared?”

No one answered right away. Sure, I was scared of the dog behind the fence at the end of my block. I’m sure someone was scared of the dark. One of the baseball players laughed, “I was scared of losing.” We let him answer for us, and broke our poses to end the questions.

Sister Peggy told the Salvadorans that it was their turn. And again, they made one scene. Two people hid behind a column in the courtyard, others held make-believe guns pointed at the hiding place. An older boy lay on his back on the ground, his arms and legs sprawled to the sides, eyes shut.

We, too, had questions.

“Did you see anyone die?”

Nods from everyone.

“Did you go to school?”

Some nods as they glanced at one another. A woman about my height spoke to Sister Peggy. “Some went to school in refugee camps,” she translated, her voice clear and direct.

The Salvadorans broke their poses and came over to where we were standing. I hung back, unsure of how to respond to them. Suddenly, I was thankful for the language barrier, that I would not be asked to respond in words. The Salvadorans shook hands with the English-speaking men. They hugged the women and kissed our cheeks, though we should have made the first gesture of friendship. Sister Peggy announced that we were going to a restaurant for dinner since the kitchen was still under construction. We walked intermingled, making small talk as best we could. When our broken conversation gave way to silence, the woman beside me smiled and said, “*Solidaridad*.”

I heard this word—*solidaridad*—again and again, and I too began to say it. The *campesinos* fighting in the mountains used it to convince villagers that they were friendly. Romero said the word in his sermons to urge Salvadorans to work for peace. After a week I had begun to understand its subtleties—how it recognized the past while remaining hopeful for what lies ahead. It is used sometimes as a greeting, other times as a prayer, and in my case—a U.S. American whose country has not yet recognized its impact on El Salvador—as an apology.

In the fall before the six Jesuits were murdered, an artist hung a series of pencil sketches at the university chapel as a contemporary depiction

of the Stations of the Cross. The artist had sketched close-ups of broken torsos, missing limbs, male and female bodies ripped between the legs. The bodies that served as his models had been thrown over the cliffs at El Playón, a pit of hardened lava where death squads deposited corpses. Families of the disappeared would visit the cliffs, hoping to catch a glimpse of a loved one before the bodies were pecked by vultures or covered with other corpses.

The sketches were large and detailed. They filled the entire wall at the back of the chapel. The Jesuits faced the images throughout the Mass; worshippers viewed them only if they looked up as they returned to their seats after partaking of Christ's body and blood.

Another image that comes from later in the same story: in the courtyard where the Jesuits died, six red rose bushes have been planted for the Jesuits, and two yellow bushes memorialize Elba and Cecelia, women who had also been killed. The building in the background was painted turquoise, and the bright, pure colours of the building and the flowers were stunningly mournful.

I visited the courtyard with the other North Americans. A Salvadoran Sister led our tour. She was dressed more traditionally than Sister Peggy, wearing a black and white habit. She let us stand by the courtyard for a few minutes, and I tried to picture the scene of the priests splayed on the now-lush grass. Inside, there were albums of photos of the murdered priests. I asked the Sister if many people viewed the photos.

"Oh yes," she replied. "Salvadorans want to look at these images. They show them to their children, to students, to foreigners. It is how they remember."

But remembering was beyond me because I wasn't there. I shut my eyes and in my mind, I cut out the roses and replaced them with bodies. Close, but not right. I could still smell the roses, though I knew they weren't there originally. And I didn't feel panic.

The guerrilla invasion of San Salvador lasted fourteen days. Peace talks began soon afterward. The siege proved that the Salvadoran National Army's reports of the guerillas' dwindling numbers and motivation had been grossly underestimated. The United Nations intervened, documenting mass murders, charging leaders of both sides with war crimes. The FMLN became a recognized political party, workers were allowed to participate in trade unions and people were guaranteed freedom of speech and of expression: Radio Venceremos permanently relocated to San Salvador; magenta hammocks were hung around the outskirts of Suchitoto. Though the conflict continues, the agreements remain loosely intact.

More than a decade after the treaties were signed, I saw a country that

in some ways looked quite familiar to me: corporate-owned food and clothing stores lined congested streets. Inside, produce too expensive to be purchased by the farmers who harvested the fruits and vegetables. The poorest people lived concentrated together where they were more likely to die or be killed than anyone else. Still, the Salvadoran peace treaties are considered a success.

On my last day at El Centro Arte, Sister Peggy said to us, "I want to give you something." From her pocket she pulled a tangle of string attached to small oval pendants.

As she went around the circle and handed out the necklaces one by one, Sister Peggy explained that the pendants were painted on *Copinol* seeds by La Semilla de Dios, an artist co-operative specializing in Salvadoran indigenous art.

I took a pendant and whispered thanks. The seed was about the size of a quarter, but thicker. The front and back were sanded down flat and a half-moon bird was painted in turquoise on the seed's blond flesh. The bird stood sideways against a tiny hot pink mountain and adobe homes with red-tiled roofs.

When she finished passing out the gifts, Sister Peggy asked us to sit in silence. I looked down at the seed in my palm and ran my finger over its heavily varnished surface. The little painting was simple, almost elementary in its two-dimensional lines and bright colours. The gift seemed almost improper. I hadn't suffered, yet I was being encouraged to hope. "*Solidaridad*," Sister Peggy said to end the silence.

What does art have to do with liberation? For Sister Peggy, creation using words and images counteracts oppression of all kinds. It requires life to respond to death, insists on Sister Peggy's kind of virginity. I took each end of the string between my thumbs and index fingers and reached to knot the string around my neck. *Solidaridad*.

Shawn Riopelle

Francesca

When you said spaghetti wrestling,
I heard spaghetti westerns,
only to transition to a first date mount
of sweat and limp canoodles
and no Eastwood double bill
at the Mayfair matinee.
Francesca, my translation—
umlaut eyes and tilde lips,
eyebrows cocked, grave
and then aigu, as you puffed
the soft parentheses
of your cheeks. Thousands
flocked to Mexico
to toast Jesus on a tortilla,
yet only one was there to witness
your face in stratocumulus. Mary
on a grilled-cheese sandwich,
the Cydonia Mensae of Mars,
a nation's *jisou*, neck-craned esteem,
as the Jade Rabbit nibbles the moon—
none could pierce that overcast
day, the Rorschach Max Factor
of your blush. And though likely
a fractal of accented light,
I couldn't dismiss the sincerity
of your apology, the way only the French,
in their tongue, can properly
express sorrow, exchanging sorry
for the formidable *desolé*.



By Ginger / Allyson Haller

come out of the crowd
to touch them. And not far

from this bridge that both men must
have walked across, Hermann
Kafka sleeps and Hermann

Göring shields his face
with his hand
from

the Russian photographer at the Nuremberg
Trials. Hides his face
only from
the Russian. Yanks and Brits can flash
away, but to the Russian:
Nihil. These, then, are

dedications to Yevgeny
Khaldei who was never

paid but keeps showing up during this summer's
Olympics
while

protestors might be permitted
to demonstrate at theme

and amusement parks, near
Beijing's outskirts. Everyone

come: Tonight is Daylight Night all Night on Tiptoe

Not Counting the Ones

still in boxes downstairs, there are nine mirrors
in this house. It's time to feed

them. On a rainy Sunday morning down the street
is this Buddhist temple in the spring. But today
from here

is sunny, almost summer. My neighbour, who is
in her late eighties, hangs some nylons out to dry. Each month she
receives a pension cheque

from Germany
because the Nazis made

her a refugee from Sudeten, Czechoslovakia. She's lived in
Saskatchewan for

almost seventy years, and her boarder, Freddy, also
is because he served in Lithuania gets a German pension but his
as a teenage soldier. He goes

to bed early, she late. Late last night, after work, I waited
in the parking lot
outside the

porno movie store because of a sign on the door that said: "Be back in
5 minutes.
Thanks."

We were city people, my neighbour has told me, and we had to learn
how to become farmers. We had to farm unbroken land. But we didn't
know how.

A Homemade Life

Beneath a clothesline, sitting on top of a stoop my Dad made, I once read Epictetus to a straying red-winged blackbird. My mother, then, was more than a decade younger than I am now. How little I know about hers or anyone else's life. My son's. I run my hand through our dog's fur searching for ticks. Envy you your sleep. Ban autobiography.

From dull candles within little glass jars. Shave lemon peel over stroganoff. A train is a night's telephone. But the sky staggers

like a woman on high heels on an uneven sidewalk. She could be coming from any

number of places. A funeral home after seeing someone she knew very well. A grandchild's recital. The street you'll never find again. Some clouds offer

that a homemade life might deserve attention once more.

Trisha Cull

Deadheading in the Garden

Cool June evening in suburbia, mist in the air, snipping buds,
coffee cup in my one free hand. A grey cloud rolls
up and over the Volvo windshield, reflected
in the day's metallic sheen. The sky,
silvery, the sea wind
mercurial: mollusks and cans
washed up on the beach
at Gonzales Bay a block away. The jagged edge
of a rusted tuna tin, the lid peeled back but hanging on,
nothing left inside. Serrated lids wreak havoc on
unstable minds. There's something wrong
with a can of tuna turning up empty
on the shore of a sea filled with tuna. These kinds of ironies
kill me.

This leaf feels stiffer than should be permissible
of a wild thing but the rose petal,
velvety. I envision perfection, each dying bud
snipped from the cusp
of inevitable decay. Suburbia
is getting to me. I've started wearing gold hoops
and Gap jeans, carry a cloth bag
to the grocery store, say no
to plastic,
but drive to the store. I am no longer alarmed
by the magnitude of statements like, *Save
the Planet* or *Stop
Global Warming*. The earth
is dying, I'm certain of it. So close
to the prickly stem, so close
to what may yet come to bloom
in this place of beauty and propagation,
of matchbook lawns, tree-lined streets and Mercedes-Benzes,
the same question repeats itself
as withered bud is pinched from node

after node, from the absence
of the blossom at the crown of this flower
to its tender green root:
*What will I deadhead,
and what will I keep?*

Savouring all that is hot and bitter, the aroma
of my Fair Trade Bold Roast
coffee stirs my senses. I kneel down
and clear a space in the soil, envision emptiness, the tin can
now an oyster pried open, scraped
clean: the gleaming abalone
of its lustrous shell
reflecting the violet
of the gleaming sky, the creature's
hollowed halves
still hinged together along its spine;
the creature gone.

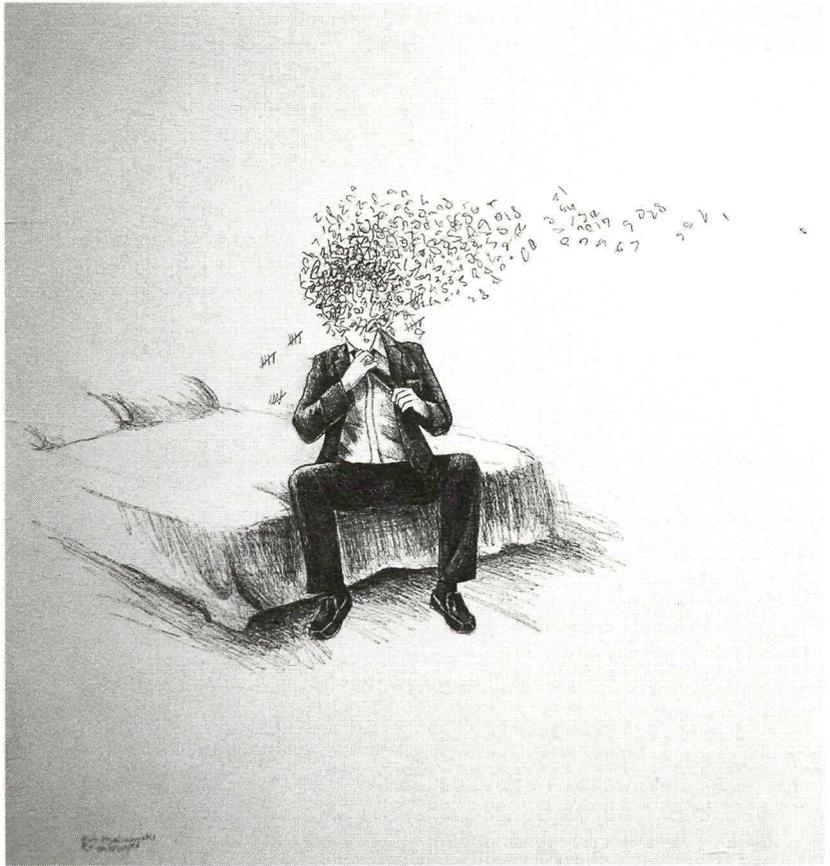
I have been waking before dawn, walking by the ocean, through
the cemetery, unable to sleep. An excess or absence
of serotonin or dopamine
leap from receptor to receptor across my neuroleptic
bipolar arc. Fireflies (like those that buzzed around my ears
in the dark of a kiwi grove on the shore of Lake Geneva
a number of years ago) zapped
by the killer bug light in my mind. Each tiny carcass
burns as it falls, until the soft light in the bulb of its thorax
burns no more; something is forever lost. The information
does not always make it across. I miss the most obvious
connections. I do
see things. My sickness
is unquantifiable, questionable, imaginary. I cut
through the graveyard this morning, saw an old woman
scrubbing a tombstone
as the first rays of sun bled through
the foliage. As if reposed
in a sepia photograph, the frame
that contained her was blurred at the edges,

the light around her, grainy and diffused. I heard the slosh
of water in her pail, and soap and bristles,
some faint circling
of hands
moving against a stony surface. I heard this
long before I saw it,
and mourned in that moment
the last faint star in the sky
as the day brightened, the despondence
of epitaph,
that the cherry blossoms
had long since drifted out to sea. And I wondered,
Will I ever be ready?
Sweet berry suet sways in the cage hanging from the plum tree
above this garden, but the starlings are wary, and none
have come to peck at it yet. I pinch
a new stem between two fingers, between two thorns, the taproot
of this full-bloomed rose, this perfect blossom
were it not for the growth, this epiphyte,
that's begun to bulge an inch below.

The signs are evident: nausea and fatigue, cravings
for meat, tender breasts,
illogical irritability, piqued awareness; two weeks
late. Someone far away
has started his leaf blower, though there are no leaves
and the wind is unruly. Am I so illogical to make no sense
of such random rearrangements? Is it just
to bring a soul into a world like this? And who
invented the leaf-blower?

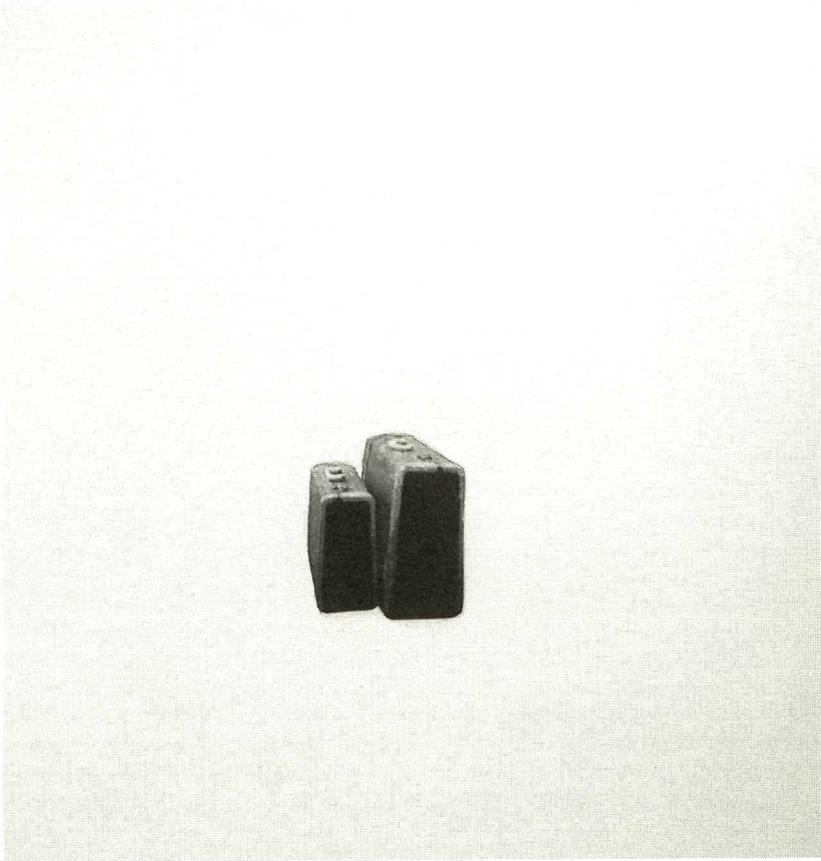
Beneath the surface is my guilty conscience, my carelessness
derived of a life built on the platitudes
of relative wealth and superficiality, and a run-of-the-mill
chemical imbalance. I'm on my knees, a spade
poised in my one free hand, cast
in the gesture of a thinking
woman, consumed by the grotesqueness
of what sustains us: animal dung;

blood and bone; Miracle Grow. I've uprooted
a snail with the spade, but the edge
of my instrument (having exacted itself
inside the rim of the shell)
has torn it back
and exposed the tenderness inside.



Faraway

Robert Malinowski



Contributors

Rose Adams (Dartmouth, N.S.) is a visual artist and writer who teaches in the Foundation Department of NSCADU. In 2004, she was the Artist-in-Residence in the Memory Disability Clinic at the QEII Hospital. Her poems have been published in several journals and in a limited edition chapbook, *Worn Loops*.

Jessica Belt writes essays on religion, Texas and the eccentricities of urban living. Her nonfiction has appeared most recently in *Relief Journal* and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Jessica received her MFA from Lesley University in Cambridge, M.A., where she lives and writes.

Kate Braid has published four prize-winning books of poetry, the most recent being *A Well-Mannered Storm: The Glenn Gould Poems* (Caitlin Press). She co-edited *In Fine Form* with Sandy Shreve, the first book of Canadian form poetry. She has also written three books of creative non-fiction, and her poems and essays have been widely anthologized. She lives in Vancouver, B.C.

Karen Connelly is the author of the internationally acclaimed novel *The Lizard Cage*, which is set in a prison in Burma. The novel won the Orange Broadband New Writers Prize in 2006. She is also the author of the memoir *Burmese Lessons: A Love Story* (forthcoming Fall 2009), as well as several collections of award-winning poetry and travel writing. She lives in Toronto and a small village in Greece.

Trisha Cull has won the *Prairie Fire* Bliss Carman Award for Poetry, the *Lichen* Poetry Prize and the 2007 PRISM *international* Literary Nonfiction Contest. She is a graduate of the UBC MFA Program in Creative Writing and a recipient of the Earl Birney Scholarship. She lives and writes in Victoria, B.C.

Antony Di Nardo has poetry appearing in journals across Canada and the United States. A collection of his poems, *Alien, Correspondent*, is forthcoming from Brick Books in the spring of 2010. He lives in West Beirut where he teaches at International College.

Stacey May Fowles is the current publisher of *Shameless Magazine*. Her first novel, *Be Good*, was published by Tightrope Books in 2007. In fall 2008 she released an illustrated novel, *Fear of Fighting*, and staged a theatrical adaptation of it with Nightwood Theatre. Her writing has appeared in various magazines, including *Broken Pencil*, *subTERREAN* and *Kiss Machine*, and she has been widely anthologized.

Allyson Haller is an illustrator living in Southern California. Editorial and book illustration are her specialties but she has also worked in both the animation and graphic design fields. When not drawing she likes to drink tons of coffee and eat peach pie while watching campy sci-fi flicks. For more information visit www.allysonhaller.com

Fiona Lam's first book, *Intimate Distances*, was a finalist for the City of Vancouver Book Award. She co-edited and contributed to the prose anthology, *Double Lives: Writing and Motherhood* (McGill-Queen's, 2008). "Still, Life" is from her latest collection of poems, *Enter the Chrysanthemum* (Caitlin Press, 2009).

Robert Malinowski (b.1974, Sault Ste Marie) left to live in Toronto, and has learned to draw a line behind him ever since so that he always knows how to get back home. He is currently represented in Canada by XEXE Gallery in Toronto and AK Collins Gallery in Port Hope, Ontario. At this moment he is working on new pieces with artist collaborator Erin Glover.

Leonard Neufeldt's poems have appeared throughout Canada and the U.S. His work has also been published in Europe, the Far East and India. His sixth collection of poems is currently on a press editor's desk. He hails from Yarrow, B.C.

Shawn Riopelle is a writer from Vancouver. Recent poetry has appeared in *The New Quarterly*, *Grain* and *The Dalhousie Review*.

Diane Schoemperlen is the author of three novels, most recently *At A Loss For Words: A Post-Romantic Novel*. She has also published several books of short stories including *Forms of Devotion: Stories and Pictures* which won the Governor General's Award for English Fiction in 1998. In April 2008 she received the Marian Engel Award, an annual prize that honours a Canadian female writer in mid-career for her body of work.

Eleonore Schönmaier is the author of the poetry collection *Treading Fast Rivers* (McGill-Queen's University Press) which was a finalist for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award. She won the 2008 Earle Birney Prize for Poetry and second prize in the 2005 Sheldon Currie Fiction Contest. Her writing has been published in numerous magazines internationally and has been translated into Dutch.

Emily Schultz's forthcoming novel, *Heaven is Small*, will be published in May 2009 by House of Anansi Press. She was a finalist for the Trillium Book Award for Poetry for her debut collection, *Songs for the Dancing Chicken*. She lives in Toronto, where she teaches creative writing and edits Joyland.ca, which the CBC has called "the go-to spot for readers seeking the best voices in short fiction."

Michael Trussler has published literary criticism, poetry, and fiction. His short story collection, *Encounters*, won the City of Regina and Book of the Year Awards from the Saskatchewan Book Awards in 2006. His collection of poetry, *Accidental Animals*, was short-listed for the same awards in 2007. He teaches English at the University of Regina, and was the editor of *Wascana Review* from 2002 to 2008.

Paul Tyler's poems have appeared most recently in *Grain*, *The New Quarterly*, *The Malahat Review* and *Event*. He was an associate editor with *Arc Poetry Magazine* from 2004 to 2008. He works as a library reference assistant in Ottawa.

Marlena Zuber is a freelance illustrator and artist whose illustrations have appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *HOW Magazine*, *BUST Magazine* and *Print Magazine*. Her work has been shown in galleries throughout North America. She lives and works in Toronto and is presently collaborating on an illustrated book, entitled *Stroll*, with writer Shawn Micallef. It will be released in Spring 2009 by Coach House Books.



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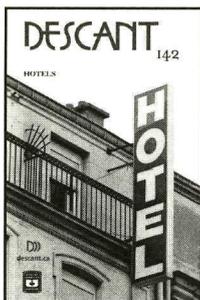
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the 1990s, the number of people with diabetes has increased in all industrialized countries. In the Netherlands, the prevalence of diabetes has risen from 1.5% in 1975 to 5.5% in 1995 (1). The prevalence of diabetes is expected to increase further in the next decades (2).

Diabetes is a chronic disease with a high prevalence and a high mortality. The major complications of diabetes are cardiovascular disease, nephropathy, retinopathy, and neuropathy. The prevalence of these complications is high, and the mortality is high. In the Netherlands, the mortality of diabetes is 1.5 times higher than in the general population (3). The mortality of diabetes is expected to increase in the next decades (4).

The major cause of mortality in diabetes is cardiovascular disease. The prevalence of cardiovascular disease is high, and the mortality is high. In the Netherlands, the mortality of cardiovascular disease is 1.5 times higher than in the general population (3). The mortality of cardiovascular disease is expected to increase in the next decades (4).

The major cause of mortality in cardiovascular disease is atherosclerosis. The prevalence of atherosclerosis is high, and the mortality is high. In the Netherlands, the mortality of atherosclerosis is 1.5 times higher than in the general population (3). The mortality of atherosclerosis is expected to increase in the next decades (4).

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Michelle Miller and Crystal Sikma

Illustrations by Allyson Haller and Robert Malinowski

Graphic Fiction by Stacey May Fowles and Marlena Zuber

Art postcard subscriber bonus by Diane Schoemperlen

And new work from:

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Jessica Belt
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