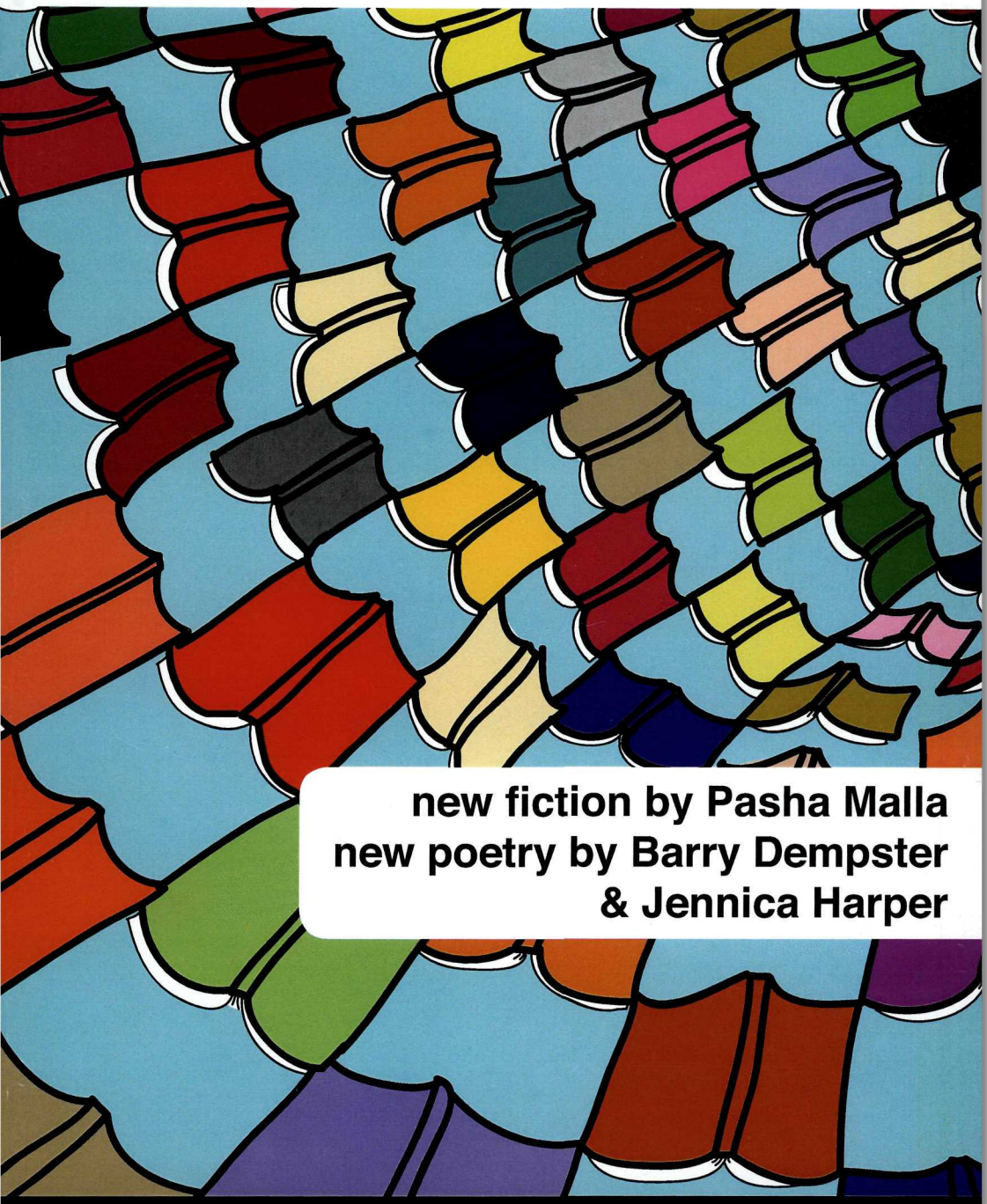
PRISM international

49:2 Winter 2011



new fiction by Pasha Malla
new poetry by Barry Dempster
& Jennica Harper

Micro-fiction & Prose Poetry Issue

Contemporary Writing from Canada and Around the World

PRISM international

PRISM international

Fiction Editor
Jeff Stautz

Poetry Editor
andrea bennett

Executive Editors
Ben Rawluk
Chris Urquhart

Advisory Editor
Rhea Tregebov

Production Manager
Jennifer Herbison

Editorial Board
Jordan Abel
Emily Davidson
Erin Flegg
Kaitlin Fontana
Jordan Hall
Elizabeth Hand
Anna Maxymiw
Alexis Pooley
Bill Radford
Sigal Samuel
Melissa Sawatsky
Natalie Thompson
Erika Thorkelson
Emily Urness
Cara Woodruff

PRISM international, a magazine of contemporary writing, is published four times a year by the Creative Writing Program at the University of British Columbia, Buchanan E-462, 1866 Main Mall, Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z1. Microfilm editions are available from University Microfilms Inc., Ann Arbor, MI, and reprints from the Kraus Reprint Corporation, New York, NY. The magazine is listed by the Canadian Literary Periodicals Index.

Email: prism@interchange.ubc.ca / Website: www.prismmagazine.ca

Contents Copyright © 2011 *PRISM international* for the authors.

Cover Illustration: "flying books (in formation)" by Linton Murphy.

Subscription Rates: One-year individual $28; two-year individual $46; library and institution one-year $35; two-year $55. Sample copy by mail is $11. **US and international subscribers, please pay in US dollars.** Please note that US POSTAL money orders are not accepted. Make cheques payable to: *PRISM international*. All prices include HST and shipping and handling.

Submission Guidelines: *PRISM international* purchases First North American Serial Rights at $40 per page for poetry and $20 per page for other genres. Contributors receive a one-year subscription. *PRISM* also purchases limited digital rights for selected work, for which it pays an additional $10 per page. All manuscripts should be sent to the editors at the above address. Manuscripts should be accompanied by an **email address**. If you wish to receive your response by regular mail, please include a self-addressed envelope with **Canadian stamps** or **International Reply Coupons**. Translations should be accompanied by a copy of the work(s) in the original language. The advisory editor is not responsible for individual selections, but for the magazine's overall mandate including continuity, quality and budgetary obligations.

For details on how to place an advertisement in *PRISM international*, please contact our executive editors. *PRISM* occasionally exchanges subscriber lists with other literary magazines; please contact us if you wish to be excluded from such exchanges.

Our gratitude to Dean Averill and the Dean of Arts Office at the University of British Columbia. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the British Columbia Arts Council.

January 2011. ISSN 0032.8790

BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL
We acknowledge the support of the Province of British Columbia through the British Columbia Arts Council

Canada Council for the Arts
Conseil des Arts du Canada

Contents

Volume 49, Number 2
Winter 2011

Micro-fiction & Prose Poetry Issue

Editors' Notes / 7

Fiction

Ron Koertge
Hanson and Greta / 14
Eulogy / 16
The Fundraiser / 17

Heather Campbell
Dog / 22

Michael Reid Busk
from *The Eighties: A Brief Primer* / 29

Phyllis Rudin
Luck / 36

Pasha Malla
Twilight-Night / 41

Bruce Holland Rogers
Unpleasant Features of Our New Address / 44
The Fourth Floor / 45

Roy Kesey
Come Due / 50
Wishes / 53

James Phelan
Ten Sentimental Educations / 55

D.W. Wilson
Let Me Try Science / 59

Poetry

Meghan L. Martin
Dear Ancient Predators / 8

Antony Di Nardo
Isotopia / 9

Julie Cameron Gray
Radish Dreams / 19

Nick Thran
Festival / 20
The Long Gone College of Franconia / 21

Anne-Marie Turza
The Collector / 25
On Sleep / 26

Barry Dempster
Distance / 27
Starting Over / 28

Chris Gilpin
Delivering Jam / 34
My Baptism / 35

Almeda Glenn Miller
Nature of Fire / 39

Daniel Kincade Renton
Everyday Adjustments / 40

Bardia Sinaee
7/4 Gridline / 43

Jennica Harper
Realboys / 46

Patrick Pilarski
a sampling of things juxtaposed and cyclic / 49

Susan Steudel
Not An Easy Thing For Ilych / 57

Laura Clarke
Book of Kings / 58

Nikki Reimer
from *one or two things to consider* / 61

Contributors / 64

MICRO-FICTION & PROSE POETRY ISSUE

Editors' Notes

Welcome to *PRISM*'s annual theme issue. This year we decided to focus on form rather than a content-driven theme: we were drawn to the genre-bending landscape of contemporary micro-fiction and prose poetry, and the ways in which writers employ these forms to tell their stories.

We received just under a thousand submissions from writers all across Canada and around the world, and we spent months trimming the shortlist down to what would fit between the magazine's covers. Questions we had while divvying up our slush pile reading included: what separates a short narrative poem from a short poetic narrative, anyway? Is it word count? Metaphor? The intensity of imagery or the size of the figurative leaps?

Either way, both micro-fiction and prose poetry are incredibly demanding forms. To be successful, the writer needs to deliver a full emotional arc in a very compact space. The best micro-fiction or prose poem features a heightened attention to language—what Gary Lutz refers to as "steep verbal topography"—deft handling of characters and conflict in very few words, and a compelling voice.

We were incredibly excited to receive submissions of arresting new work from Barry Dempster, Pasha Malla, Jennica Harper, Ronald Koertge, and Nikki Reimer.

Though we'd focused on form rather than content while composing our call for submissions, we nonetheless noticed patterns in storytelling emerge as we began the editing process for the issue. We found content influenced by internet communication (the self-referential, hypertext-like linkages in Michael Reid Busk's excerpts from "The Eighties, a Brief Primer," and the brief lines of Nick Thran's "Festival" that read like the "short, timely messages" of Twitter); finely-wrought stories with sharp corners like Roy Kesey's "Come Due" and D.W. Wilson's "Let Me Try Science"; and poems, like those of Antony Di Nardo, Jennica Harper, and Anne-Marie Turza, that delve into rich, fully realized and compact worlds.

Got a short attention span? Perfect. This issue is densely packed with everything we just mentioned and more—in fact, it's the readerly equivalent of trail mix to get you through the long slog of winter.

—*andrea bennett & Jeff Stautz*

Meghan L. Martin

Dear Ancient Predators

Back when the theatre of no mistakes was still staged in the dark. Back when being an artist meant showing your teeth and every animal had an audience of one. You were the gods of perfect timing. The gods of *we don't give a damn.* You answered to no one, to nothing, but the shallow pulse in your eardrum. With each footstep, the whole desert would cock its head, waiting for the next cue. Every meal was a show-stopper. Every kill, a succulent renewal of your birthright. Even your victims were licking their lips.

Antony Di Nardo

Isotopia

In 1986, an explosion at one of Chernobyl's nuclear reactors realized the world's worst fears about harnessing nuclear power and made a mess of Mother Nature. Within days, over 50,000 people were evacuated from the city of Pripyat in Ukraine where workers at the plant were housed, their lives forever changed. Clouds of toxic radiation covered almost the entire European continent and spread across the Canadian arctic. The poems in Isotopia *isolate the fallout, both real and potential, past and present, associated with our overzealous consumption of nuclear energy.*

ZONE

It's the country north of Belleville—or its memory—tall, untamed grasses, birch and poplar trimmed by cold at the edge of taiga, ragged meadows where winter wants its meadows. Even the rough-paved road in the photo, patched by summer's respite, and rugged, is not far from home—rising skyward like the one long wish of a simple destination.

She lived in concrete comfort at the end of that road. A kitchen sink, rooms for two, the balcony in spring with the night air of newborn blossoms when that night in April an alien fluorescence came and took her breath away.

And the next one too. It was Chernobyl '86.

She was first to see the cloud shine, the lantern-light of beast that fed her city leaking yellow glow from eyes and nose and mouth and ears, and it burned a memory on her soul that split her life in two, like nuclei get split.

No one saw the hard rain fall. Nothing touched the radium rain of cesium and plutonium and other names she'd heard before, until it touched her deeply.

Within a day, Lyubov Sirota, station poet and playwright, was pronounced alive at 32 and evacuated to a state of depression, far from home, with only two rooms behind her and the constant burden of abandonment.

Once, she lived to see her plays materialize—the promise of Prometheus who claimed and tamed the fire in a line of hers—now she lives in a zone of alienation, her body doing its best to keep her alive.

DARLINGTON

Down at the plant they're planning more bang for their buck and one more buck gets them all another number to play, another spin at the wheel.

Meanwhile, the Darlington of all nuclear reactors radiates its own multibillion-dollar price tag and if you read the tag you'll see why, taxed at just another buck a head, what's a few million for a hi-ho-Silver-get-'em-outta-here-radio-triggered-high-alert-system-signal-evacuation device that will super-save lives for that messy moment when panic will be no picnic and the whole thing blows.

Then the law in support says let us legislate everyone an energy power bar in a radius of outdoors 3 kilometers from where they fly their crows and all will have a fair and equitable chance at pandemonium.

It was the nightly newsleak showed the power brokers how to manage an outburst of hysteria—you send them all indoors turning on TVs down on their ass where they'll be expected to stay calm tuning in to cable channel *Your world's about to make ka-boom*

and you just watch them try to keep still sitting on the couch when their numbers come up and there's that radiant glow of the afterlife beckoning.

FALLOUT

It's '66 in New York City and rats are the size of cats and roaches are the size of rats.

Cars are bigger than that, bigger than what they need to be, missing doors and windshields, further crippled by missing wheels.

Here and there, New York City posters ban the bomb.

Here and there, black and yellow panels point to points east or west where Fallout Shelters lead the way to basement bunkers. Room enough for multiples of ten or twenty teeming in a city of millions.

Her button bans the bomb. He makes the sign of Peace. The only two to rendezvous in a Fallout Shelter on a Friday night.

When they go at it head to head, toe to toe, they glow. They radiate.

It's their first time, the first for both. The mushroom cloud above them like a speech bubble stuffed with *oohs!* and *aahs!* fluoresces.

The fallout of first time love spreading from cell to cell.

BIGGER AND BIGGER

There is no McClean Lake.

McClean Lake is a big hole, a giant pit that got bigger and bigger spitting out everything in its mouth. The more it spat out, the bigger it got. That's how holes get big. They empty out.

Big sounds make them get that big. Sounds like big men make. And the growl of big machines, dirt movers with muscles this big, rock crushers with even bigger teeth.

The more a hole is not, the bigger it is. The more gets taken out, the bigger it gets. The less there is, the greater yet.

A hole is an absence, an emptiness when something's gone missing. We all know that.

Where there is no McClean Lake there was yellowcake. That's why the hole got bigger. Once yellowcake is found it can't hide anymore. Big machines and big budgets scrape money together and then scrape yellowcake out of the hole.

That's how the hole got bigger.

Then yellowcake does things it never expected—like turn the lights on, turn turbines, make people bigger and bigger, power up the morning coffee.

When yellowcake is gone it leaves a big hole—anywhere you go in the world and there was yellowcake, you'll find a big hole.

Even in the power plants and their aftermath. Even in the lives of people.

Ron Koertge

Hanson and Greta

When I was in college, I didn't have the time or the money to date. In the daytime, I waited tables in a sorority and at night I worked in a pharmacy. I always seemed to be on my knees filling shelves with Maxi Pads when the prettiest girls came in.

I had friends who were girls, though. One or two from my French study group, one or two from the sorority where I worked. They'd pledged, then dropped out to live in the dorms.

It was one of the latter, Greta Arnold, who asked me to go with her to the clinic. Her boyfriend, a notorious Sigma Chi, was hopeless, she said, and she wanted nothing to do with him. "C'mon, Hanson, be a pal."

I enjoyed driving her car, a BMW just a few years old, because I usually walked everywhere or took the bus. Business was brisk at the clinic. Two girls sat side by side flipping through a tattered magazine. They showed each other pictures of celebrities and called them names: bitch, lesbo, faggot. The usual. A pale girl with tri-coloured hair sat by her mother, who glared at me. The only other male was a Hispanic kid with a shaved head and clear, terrified eyes. His girlfriend sat with both arms across her breasts and exuded an air of great sexual regret.

Greta was having the procedure when the mother emerged with her daughter who was, if possible, more pale. Her blue eyes looked like chips of tanzanite dropped in snow. As she groped for the door, her mother stopped long enough to snarl at me, "Use your head next time, Stupid." I was nervous, and I laughed. Then she slapped me.

At three-thirty I drove Greta home, stopping along the way for a chili dog which she devoured then promptly threw up. I helped her to her room and got her some water. "You're sweet," she said, and kissed me on the cheek. Her breath smelled metallic.

A few weeks later, a girl I didn't know stopped me by the Science Building, introduced herself as Beth and said, "I'm a friend of a friend. Want to take a ride with me on Friday? Looks like I got bit by the pants leg snake."

Our destination turned out to be a medical building downtown. On the way Beth said, "I was Wendy in high school. In *Peter Pan*, I mean. J.M. Barrie is probably pretty disappointed in me."

This waiting room was blue with a huge aquarium along the north

wall. The fish were sluggish, and drab as Mormons. A nurse offered me bottled water. I read a very literate article about how fireflies blink to attract mates. Eventually Beth came out and used her Visa card.

She was woozy and we walked slowly toward the elevator. Halfway there, she stopped and leaned against me. I automatically put my arms around her.

"You bastard," she sobbed, "you creepy, crummy bastard. Keep your fucking hands to yourself."

The next time a stranger asked me for a date I said that I was very busy. When someone persisted I said that my name was Hanson, but I wasn't *that* Hanson.

I couldn't be alone in my room, so I went to bars, put my quarter on the pool table or my name on the chalkboard. I played badly but was courted by the feral stickmen with their personalized cues. I liked the chivalry of eight ball. I liked the jukebox turned as high as it would go.

Eulogy

Thank you for coming. Let's begin—Veronica always thought that she would be a hit by a car, and she was. I was with her at the end and she said that she was watching clouds become other things—not just sheep and cartoon dogs but also furniture and quicksand.

My sister was not a gloomy person. Abbott and Costello convulsed her. But from the beginning she was amazingly empathetic. Once when I was nine and she was five, a child dropped his ice cream cone in front of Rite Aid and, like the three little kittens, began to cry. Immediately Veronica joined in, but so melodious was her mourning that a crowd gathered and threw coins into the cap I held out.

When our parents passed away, we stayed in the house. The upkeep of our home took most of our time. She hurried to meet the importuning of every blade of grass and cyclamen. I taught myself to use power tools and worked bare-chested while she sang spirituals.

Many of you know neither Veronica nor I ever married. A man did caress her breasts once but the way his right hand moved from one to the other seemed to her indecisive.

I see some of you are squirming uncomfortably now. I know what you are thinking. It is true that we were preternaturally close. If she fell, my knee bled. If I had a splitting headache, she took two Advil and lay down with the dog. I believe it was our family doctor who suggested we practice mouth-to-mouth resuscitation in case one of us should swoon.

Very well. Leave if you must. Huff and puff like big, bad wolves on your way out. You are going to miss the elevator story: Veronica hated going up in one but she loved going down, calling the descent akin to slow suicide with time to change one's mind. After each of these Otis excursions she was often forlorn and liked to take a cab to that oxygen bar on Lexington and then go home and dress me in her winter togs so we could re-enact the doomed Shackleton expedition.

I see those of you who remain moving quickly but politely toward the marked exits. Oh, who cares?

I need to get home, too. That dog I mentioned, half coyote half god-knows-what, is alone in Veronica's room howling. And that's what I want to do—take off my shirt, lie on her flowered quilt, and howl.

The Fundraiser

This gala, there seemed to be one every few months, was for Cleft Palates in Peru. Tickets to toss a bean bag, throw darts at balloons or Whack-A-Mole were ten dollars. But after a fifty dollar admission, drinks were free.

Everybody had heard about the Kissing Booths, but they were surprised to see Maxwell Blevins—in an Izod polo with his skinny legs sticking out of faded cargo shorts—working there.

In the next booth stood Amy Wright, Foxborough's resident bombshell. Most of her attractions were surgically enhanced, but everybody liked Amy. She was colourful and not a real threat to the other wives, all of them in their 60s and 70s. None of whom would be caught dead in hot pants and tall, tasseled boots.

Some of the men played along with the Carefree '50s theme and turned up the collars of their shirts, handed Amy a blue ticket and received a kiss on the cheek or a dry, I'm-your-auntie peck on the lips. The widowers also got to experience Amy's expensive, unyielding boobs when she threw in a quick hug.

No one knew what to do with Maxwell. He'd volunteered, and who could say no without hurting his feelings. The gals who'd organized the gala felt obligated to patronize his booth but no one wanted to be first. Maxwell was such an odd duck. Pleasant-looking, but not striking like Rex or Andrew. Fit enough, but soft compared to Jason or Karl. He had some hair, but he combed it over. When his wife passed away a year or so ago, he showed up at AquaRobics. The only man doing Side Stretchers, Waist Trimmers, and Standing Kickbacks and never—like the others—getting his face wet.

Finally, when there was something going on everywhere but at Maxwell's booth, Francine took a deep breath, smiled, handed over one ticket and closed her eyes. She felt his hand drift to her face and tilt her head just so. "You're beautiful," he murmured, and then he kissed her. Something inside, a personal ice age, perhaps, melted just a little. She turned away, dazed, and got back in line.

Barbara stepped up and Maxwell said, "This should help quell the dread," and he put his lips—moist and slightly citrus-flavoured—on hers. She, too, returned to the end of the line.

When it was her turn, Judith heard arias, Susan started to weep, Aimee put her arms around Maxwell and had to be pulled gently away. The line grew long and restless. Small things were unpeeled. Larger things rose from a long sleep. A silence fell over the community room.

No one could get enough. Everyone wanted to be kissed, really kissed, again and again. Kim, who had quit smoking years ago, lit up a Marlboro. Lucia fell to her knees and thanked Saint Anthony, patron of lost things. The temperature in the room rose steadily.

Finally the men put a stop to it. They led their disheveled wives away, then came back for the others and took them, too, even though they resisted. Rex swore at Maxwell, and the other men glared menacingly. They threatened to meet Maxwell in the parking lot. Soon he was alone and he, being last, turned off the lights as he left.

Julie Cameron Gray

Radish Dreams

Your tidy rows of frilled green lace threaten to call my mother and tell her all my dirty thoughts if I don't love you this instant. French Breakfast, Plum Purple, Red King; you're all in on it. You're underground, hot and bored in your garden brothel, calling out to every passerby to pick you. They know your kind—the ready heat, the neon on the tongue. Your white is devoid of cream, is no thick silk. You are neon on the tongue, you are hailstones of tango. I will take a halved baguette, your Easter Egg bodies mandolined into thin coins. Salt, pepper. Thirst. Taste. Once. Bite. Perfect little tuber ravishing the palate—You say you weren't waiting for me but there you lay. Your brothers fill my hands, the colander, my eager mouth. I will have you pickled, baked, chipped into dip. My darlings. I'll choose you, and you, and you, and you.

Nick Thran

Festival

"Ocean Mist." This soap does smell like ocean mist.

So much for my threadbare shirt with its tears in the collar, its missing button, its just now barely blue.

The festival of ants is in full swing under the dome of the ant trap.

Clack of the heater.

The theme music from *Law & Order.*

When the sun angles in through the bedroom window, everything shines like a souvenir.

The Long Gone College of Franconia

It got to be that a beaded curtain replaced each door in the dormitory. It was like moving in slow motion through the hair of a man or a woman—each room an outpost in the wilderness, a place to relax upon beanbag chairs and listen to Janice. And we desired more than the tenured nudity of the student body. Some of us kept small animals. They were like family to us. Their beady eyes jeweled the enduring smoke. And our hope was enduring, at least for those few early years. Long Gone was the name of the student president. Long Gone was the name of our humanities professor. Long Gone was the name of the janitor. He doubled as a cab driver. Had a personalized plate: GAZHAL. Left his country because his parents and siblings were murdered. Long gone, we didn't mind that the meter was going up in spectacular increments. It reminded us of the eyes of the dealer's ferret. The guy with the blue pills—wasn't Long Gone his name? Our whole outlook was going to change.

Heather Campbell

Dog

I once had a roommate whose mom had a dog, and when we went to her place for dinner we'd take the dog for its evening walk, and her mom would always say something like *be careful, he owes me another poo.* The care needed was a plastic bag. The debt, I supposed, was due to whatever calculation of dog food intake versus the expected reciprocal output. We always, whether the dog managed to shit or not, reported that it indeed had. It was the least we could do, we supposed, although I haven't a clue what the most we could do would have been.

Moving away from that place had nothing to do with the dog, or the mom, I don't think. It was eight years ago now and not so clear in my mind. I bring it up only because my boyfriend just admitted to having a crush on a girl who he sees at the dog park up the block, off Lakewood. That's an interesting fact in and of itself, and more so because we don't actually have a dog. I've always wanted a dog, and I don't interject that to seem like a neglected six-year-old, but to point out that he and I could have, in some parallel-universe way, been together at the dog park for a logical reason. Then I would have a better idea just who this girl is. She's not really a girl, I'm sure, but you know how it goes. Call her a woman and she's got thigh-highs and a mission.

I've decided I can't be—or more accurately, don't feel like being—in a relationship in which my boyfriend tells me about crushes he has on strangers. This is even considering he did it in the self-deprecating way he has of starting the actual dinner conversation right at the moment when most people would be silently analyzing their chances at either sex or dishwashing. In any case, I made the decision. Perhaps that's not fair of me, but I believe in setting the bar and walking away. We live together, so walking away actually means sorting my John LeCarrés from his, packing my breakables in his neatly collapsed Puma boxes, and getting my name off the lease so that I can rent elsewhere and preserve my credit rating. It's his place, in fairness, and we put my name on the lease when I moved in as a gesture of moving forward in open togetherness or something along those lines. I suppose talking about crushes on strangers is a gesture of open togetherness too, but as I said, the bar has been set.

The thing I did after sorting and packing and calling the super—it was my day off, my boyfriend was at the office—was buy my boyfriend

a dog. On the way to the SPCA I jotted some bullet points on what I—or rather, he—was looking for in a dog, and of course what he could offer it. The SPCA volunteer would be, no doubt, screening me to make sure I was not one of the villains of society who abandon dogs, or expect them to be perfect from day one, or bring them back when they growl at the neighbour's cousin from out of town who was just trying to get a little peace over the weekend.

But in fact, it didn't really matter what I thought I was looking for. I could give a good overall description of my boyfriend's daily schedule and living habits, but I imagined a glowing horizon of new schedules and habits brought to life simply by setting the dog down in the newly-vacated space in my boyfriend's apartment. I felt this was, in a way, the least I could do.

The volunteer in question did indeed take me through a slightly bottled sermon on schedules and the square footage required, in a lobby that smelled of Pine Sol and pee. She told me about the time needed for walks every—and that's *every*—day, and the location of the nearest dog park. This last bit brought everything into one of those sharp-focus moments when you feel like this second has in fact been going on since about seven in the morning and has no hope of ever passing. And then it does pass, and time rolls on as normally as it can when you're talking about responsibility with a sixteen-year-old who has hash burns on her fingers and a small misunderstanding of the word forever.

I chose some kind of hound cross, one of those dogs that sees no need or has no ability to take its nose off the ground, ever. I thought a tracking dog, in my absence, had poignancy, but regretted it halfway home as I realized this might make it look like I wanted my boyfriend to find me. I didn't. But I couldn't exactly go back, as I believe I've covered. Villains of society, et cetera.

I also bought a small blanket, a chew toy, and a sampler of dry dog food. The volunteer almost choked on her Trident at the unpreparedness implied by the sampler, but I pulled off some story about not wanting to shake up his digestion, and that I'd slowly change him onto the brand of food I had stocked up, and that seemed to fly. So I didn't just dump the dog in the apartment. I left him on the blanket, with the food and some water in a couple of bowls that I thought my boyfriend didn't have any significant attachment to, and then I went on my way. I stayed at a friend's for a week before I found a new place that really seemed to click. I had to go back to the old apartment with the movers when the time came, but neither the dog nor my boyfriend were there. He had stacked all my boxes and furniture near the entrance, and I didn't immediately see any signs of dog-habitation.

I've thought about subtly going by the dog park to check on things,

but thought better of it. The dog may remember me, in that dog-brain way, and then things could be less than subtle. Or perhaps the dog would in no way remember me, which would actually be harder to handle. Not that he had some debt of recognition he owed me or anything. In the end, I decided staying away was the better option, for all of us.

Anne-Marie Turza

The Collector

A year passed, and another year, and I was old. I had a visitor, a woman who knelt on my porch in the circle of electric light, sewing clothes for a collection of dolls she believed I kept concealed beneath the sofa or the wardrobe, somewhere close to us, in my unlit rooms. I told her I had no dolls. But her percussive fingers and the needle flashing in the rich fabrics never slowed. *For the doll with the dancing shoes,* she said, shaking out a miniature overskirt printed with velvet bulls. And a bourbon cloak of ripped silk: *For the doll with one gold tooth.* To be polite, I admired her intricate knots, a hand-dyed shirtwaist with a row of ebony buttons, glowing like a line of dark glass eyes. Now every night for months, I've heard her thimble on my door, its wintry toc toc toc. I've filled my trunks with impossible garments. My neighbours have begun to say they live near the house of dolls. It might be true. Last night at my suggestion, a doll widowed by a Russian prince in a previous century acquired a long veil of black lace sewn by a woman kneeling on my porch in the floss-poured light.

Who can say yes or no, in these months of little sleep. I'm told that moths aren't drawn to the bulb, but to the darkness just beyond it, the darkness light intensifies. This explains their circling.

On Sleep

Have you never met, in passing, a stranger who addressed you knowingly? "You can't sleep well, in your language," a man once told me, sweet pipe smoke rising from the bowl of his vowels. I was reading a book with a soft cloth cover, a monograph on medieval painters, waiting for a train in the glass-domed station, the book's pages stippled with dust. The man pointed to a table where a woman sat eating almonds from a green bowl: "In my language I can put that table anywhere." "Pardon me?" I said. Already, the table, drifting upwards; tendrils of the woman's hair, on end; the rope soles of her shoes, fraying overhead; a rain of almonds from the high dome where bird-shapes shattered in the noise of trains. To sleep well, not in this language. "It is a matter of the sentence." Did he tell me this, those years ago, painting his consonants indigo and gold? "In my language, there are not so many rules for where things go. The end, the middle, the beginning. They could go anywhere."

Barry Dempster

Distance

There's his cat at the living room window, watching him
fold his body into the car, already too lonely to lift a paw.
There's the bare square on the January driveway
where only seconds ago he was parked. Soon enough, the street
will up and end, trading him off to disparate routes, directions
coded like a secret agent's map. He always felt he was losing her
each time she'd spin away, reducing him to an unblinking cat.
And now it's true, every mile doubles its distance, northeast,
southwest, no matter, no her. Highways were devised
for the sole reason of keeping them apart. He scrutinizes
the rearview mirror as if it were a bush about to spring
into flames, the past appearing closer than it really is.
Miles of missing her, those erratic white lines.
He keeps forgetting where he's going—city,
corner store, centre of the universe. No wonder
arrival feels so temporary, like a borrowed bathroom key.

Starting Over

Was it her youth he loved, a reminder of his own petty scrapes,
the way days used to toss together in a blue glass bowl?
Her skin was his skin back when fingers wore soft cotton tips
so that even rock felt like sky. The thick of her hair, sinewy
wrists, belly like a bongo drum. More like nostalgia, not desire,
time tightened in a flourish of knots, a re-gifting. No wonder
he could stay with her for days despite her mumbles
and the shallow play of sunlight on her lips, as if being alive
was just a dabble. He wanted her tiny shrugs, her rosy entitlement
for himself, like the queen of hearts beaming in a card sharp's
hands. If only he could start over, oh, the coliseum's
kicks, the yoga pose that even God can't do, the shine of
elbows making lots more room. How he'd caress himself,
veins sewn long and loose like prairie highways, eyes wide
with circuses of ivory clouds. He'd make the world
his this time, lay it on the crisp flowered sheets, all oceans
and frills, smoothing every wave, every glower,
a flatness defying expectation, a faultless fit.

Michael Reid Busk

from The Eighties: A Brief Primer

RUSSIAN EIGHTIES

The USSR spanned eleven time zones, which was a great source of pride for its citizens and premiers alike. Sometimes a member of the Politburo, watching the red sun fall past the onion domes of Red Square, would dial a Kamchatka number at random and ask whatever bleary-eyed oilman or bureaucrat answered whether the sun was indeed rising over the Bering Sea. When, after a few moments, the sleepy easterner said, "Yes, yes," the Politburo member back in Moscow would smile, spinning the antique globe by his desk, and say, "Good. Very good." Russians only spoke Russian when Americans were present, to intimidate them—to each other they spoke English in growling monotone.

Naturally Americans were concerned, their states stretched thin over only six time zones. A sense of superiority was a longstanding national attribute, and a nearly two-to-one Soviet-American advantage was unacceptable. Everyone demanded the "time zone gap" be closed. To remedy the problem, Americans tried numerous tactics. Highly trained operatives parachuted into Siberia with outstanding vodka and thick gold coins in an effort to incite rebellion. Locals agreed on the condition that the Americans best them in chess, and although the Russians guzzled all the vodka before the first castling, the Americans, ignorant of the Sicilian Defence, captured nary a pawn (see *Olympics Eighties*). Another idea was to subdivide America's time zones into twelve, but for the week it was implemented, chaos reigned as citizens set fire to clock towers and pounded their watches with the soles of their shoes, culminating in the Half Past Denver riots of 1985.

Direct conflict with the Soviets was impossible, since this was a cold war, and a hot war would require 1) a draft and 2) hardship. Hardship was unpopular in the Eighties, and no one much liked the idea of a draft, since it would decrease sexual opportunities (see *Sex Drink Eighties*) and weaken households against the sociopaths always waiting to dismember and eviscerate the well-adjusted (see *Horror Eighties*). The United States

might have settled for a less militaristic advantage, such as athletics, but throughout the decade, the Russians, with their manly female swimmers, hard-jawed gymnasts, and elven figure skaters, took back to Moscow many kilos of gold, silver, and bronze (see *Olympic Eighties, Brian Boitano Eighties*). Senators and shot-putters alike had visions of the Russians crowded into their hangar-sized gymnasia, heat shushing through vents, floury clouds of chalk blooming from the claps of their meaty hands, every man, woman, and child sporting a blood-red leotard, performing the Iron Cross and handstand push-ups, cleaning and pressing barbells bowed with shiny plates.

Ultimately, government officials decided that the only way to close the time zone gap was to eradicate the Soviet Union altogether. Many words were spat about a wall in Germany, but everyone in the First World knew it was merely a symbol—the real barrier, the true wall, was the Iron Curtain itself, that three-thousand-kilometre shroud fashioned from the ore of the Krivoi Rog and the Kerch peninsula, and hung from God knows what as it Geigered its way from the Black Sea to the Baltic. Nothing—neither person nor manufactured good nor idea—could pass from one side to the other without the imprimatur of the Politburo. Only one solution presented itself: melt the Iron Curtain. Accordingly, the CIA purchased a hundred thousand acetylene torches, which they gave to democratically-minded citizens of the nations whose eastern borders rubbed against the Curtain, and at a perfectly coordinated moment of Slavic twilight, the citizens pressed the sharp flames into the metal. In satellite images it appeared that the Earth's molten core was exploding to the surface along an immense fault line in central Europe. The Americans had also given out a certain number of cinderblock-sized mobile phones, and sometime after sunset, when holes were growing in the wall as though it were a shabby coat left too long unmothballed, one of the operatives rang an Austrian stationed outside Bratislava. The Austrian pulled the mobile phone from his satchel, yanked out its antenna with his teeth, and held it with both hands to his ear. Peering through a gap the size of a bicycle wheel, the Austrian said hello, and that he was there. The CIA operative asked if he could see anything. In the foreground was nothing but a dull tableau of skiffs floating atop the lazy Morava. But the Austrian was also an amateur astronomer, and after setting the phone at his feet, he pulled a telescope from his satchel and peered through the hole. "I see a man," he shouted down at the mobile phone, "at a window. Holding a telephone. A globe is spinning. He's playing chess against himself. He's winning."

AFRICAN BENEFIT CONCERT EIGHTIES

What did people know about Africa? Very little. There were drums. Ancient melodies. Rains, which they blessed. It was waiting there for them. But no one was exactly sure they wanted to go. There were reports of glottal stops, ten-year-olds with Kalashnikovs, strange diseases old and new, a distinct lack of air conditioning. On late night TV flashed photos of ribby, potbellied children who could eat for a month for less than the price of a pair of fuzzy dice. So thousands sent monthly checks, blessing the children down in Africa.

It was at just such a moment that the African Benefit Concert was born. In this case, the cheque-writer was Bono, serving the second of two nonconsecutive terms as President of the Eighties (see *Brian Boitano Eighties*), sitting at an Edwardian rolltop in Cleveland, sending his $3.67 to eight-year-old Gabriela Ngangi, c/o the St. Claire Children's Relief Fund. As always, Bono sent with the cheque a complimentary U2 concert shirt, smiling at the photo taped above the desk of Gabriela wearing an oversized tee silkscreened with the image of an angry Caucasian child. As much as Gabriela seemed to be enjoying her memorabilia, as well as her millet and potable water, Bono knew she would be happier still if she had a chance to see him perform live. Being a man with a wide and disparate network of friends, Bono began calling them all: men in double-breasted suits who had "constituencies" and "interns"; matrons with blown-out hair who spent most of their days in Lycra leotards, women who had "time" and "money" and husbands they could cajole or guilt or blackmail into assisting them; other mulleted rockers who might have had similarly charitable thoughts as they glanced up from their own rolltop desks to admire photos of little smiling Mateo or Dominic or Gloria wearing shirts emblazoned with giant lips or drooling demons or the phrase I Touch Myself; and of course, the Archbishop Desmond Tutu. On the advice of the South African cleric and others who had actually been to Africa, Bono soon decided to move the venue from Johannesburg to New York and London, cities where it was less likely that black musicians and/or concertgoers would be arrested and/or shot.

The transatlantic concert was a televisual extravaganza. The telecast was simultaneous, the venues in New York and London connected via satellite, and at certain moments, the enormous screens would show a live video of the other venue's act. The necessary technology was byzantine, but NASA engineers had stepped in to oversee the project. Besides the technical challenges, Bono feared a Soviet death ray might destroy the satellite mid-concert. The NASA engineers told him the Soviets probably had bigger fish to fry, and moreover that shooting down a satellite

was an extraordinarily difficult task. But Bono's dreams were plagued with TVs falling silent, lasers as red as the Soviet flag, stellar explosions the fiery gold of the hammer and sickle. He grew so desperate that he called his nemesis and fellow balladeer Sting to ask him to intervene with the Russians, since he had written a song about them. Sting told him he didn't actually have any Russian friends. Bono mentioned that the Archbishop Desmond Tutu was his friend. Sting said he would see what he could do, then visited the Russian embassy in London, imploring the ambassador not to use the death ray. The ambassador excused himself, called Red Square, and discovered that there was neither a death ray nor a plan to shoot down the satellite. He returned to Sting, telling him the Russians would indeed refrain from using the death ray on the satellite, but only if Sting agreed to sing "Money for Nothing" at the concert, which he did.

U2 was scheduled to play three songs in the late afternoon in London, and as was his custom, Bono began their set with a plaintive stillness that slowly elided into a grandstanding strut—half soldier, half strumpet—that took him to the edge of the crowd. As the rest of the band continued cycling through an instrumental riff, Bono—shirtless in suspenders—spotted a young woman being crushed by other fans into the barrier beneath the stage. He waved for the ushers to pass her over, then leapt from the stage into the makeshift orchestra pit and directed them in pulling her from the crowd. As soon as she was body-surfed backward over the barrier, she collapsed into Bono's arms, and as the rest of the band continued the hopeful four-bar riff, Bono slow-danced with her in a way that seemed as much avuncular as romantic, before kissing her hand and rushing back to the stage to finish the song, ending with a medley of "Sympathy for the Devil" and "Amazing Grace."

Offstage left was Gabriela Ngangi, who loved "Amazing Grace" and admired Bono's dancing. Bono had been devastated to think that his Gabriela would not have had the chance to see him perform, and so he'd had her driven from her orphanage near the shore of Lake Victoria up to Kampala, and from there, she flew to London. Despite the protests of the nuns who ran her orphanage, she stayed with Bono and the rest of the band at a Chelsea flat in the days prior to the show, where she grew adept at Centipede (see *Computer Eighties*) and won a large sum of money playing Uno with the bandmates. Gabriela enjoyed the show despite the overwhelming crowd and the coffin-sized speakers that made her cover her ears against the noise. Of the other performers, she liked very much the moustached man in the sleeveless T-shirt and gold armband, as well as the thin man in the pale blue suit who dedicated his song to the children of the world and then sang about being a hero. Gabriela was exhausted by concert's end, a cloud of white noise crackling in her head,

but wanting to experience whatever she could, she went with Bono and the band to the after-party, where she drank orange juice and ate peanut M&Ms for the first time. At the end of the night, she fell asleep on Bono's shoulder while he carried her to the taxi, just as she was about to ask if the energetic man with the moustache and armband had indeed ever found someone to love.

Chris Gilpin

Delivering Jam

My mom and I are two tiny heat signatures encased in a speeding bubble of glass and steel. We are Chevrolet cosmonauts, somewhere in Saskatchewan, sometime after Christmas, hunched toward the console, scanning the white upon white for signs of life, or at least the road. Fortunately, just like outer space, there is no need to turn. A mile of skygauze and snow above our heads dampens and diffuses the light from a medium-sized star so that it bends around and under, hosanna-ing shadows away. Mom puts labels on the mason jars containing our precious cargo.

Saskatoon Jam. Raspberry Jam. Strawberry Jam. Jesusberry Jam.

A column of iron towers holding high-tension power lines materializes out of the white, like Recognizer droids from Tron. Each with its rigid arms outstretched, they march back from here, into barely there, into nothing at all, like yesteryear memories.

Pyjama Jam. Morning Glory Jam. Popeye's 'I Jam What I Jam.' We're Jammin' Jam.

Surrounded by snow, even the pumpjacks look angelic—or like Jewish robots, their heads nodding up and down in rabbinical devotion, a corporal prayer looped in slo-mo.

Rushdie's Hussies Jam. Ambush Jam. Mary's Many-Splendoured Placenta Jam. Wham! Bam! Thank You, Jam!

The snowstatic clears, revealing a patchy black line known as Highway 33 and the fresh sparkling endlessness of our home planet. A blip of a town called Lajord flashes by, dominated by a red wooden castle. "Lajord means 'flat place' in Norwegian," Mom says, putting down her mason jars. "A lajord is pretty much the exact opposite of a fjord."

My Baptism

I was baptized under a basketball hoop. This explains everything.

Our church, when I was growing up, was buildingless. We made and unmade our place of worship in a rented high school gym. It was a shoestring set: no stained glass saints to bless us, no pipe organ pumping our prayers heavenward, no pomp, no circumstance, just people, sitting on metal chairs arranged in a circle, the curve of which seemed like heresy against the crisscrossing court lines drawn on the gym floor.

When I was introduced to God, he was wearing sweatpants. His son was a Jewish Michael Jordan without a shoe deal.

Sunday school happened in the same classroom as weekday school, so it's no surprise I became a secular poet. I leave the cryptic mysticism to others: I believe in details.

It was in a fluorescent-lit, standard-issue gymnasium when our minister dabbed fountain water on my forehead and called it a blessing.

Phyllis Rudin

Luck

There was only so much luck out there, a finite supply. She couldn't afford to squander her family's fair share. The luck came pre-packaged in cardboard containers like those boxes of plonk on the shelves at the SAQ that were meant for picnics and frat parties, the ones that came rigged with a plastic spigot. Each member of the family had his own box, though it was the mothers who had the say-so over their children's boxes, managing the taps on their behalf until they reached the age of majority. Some mothers opened the spigot for a mere sniffle or scratch, so that soon the box ran dry and kaboom, next thing you know the kid had a blastoma and no luck left. She wouldn't play fast and loose with her family's welfare. She controlled her kids' boxes with the iron fist of a *kapo.*

"C'mon, Ma. I've been throwing up all day. Let some luck out for me."

"Shut up and live with it. When you're fifteen and come down with zits or leukemia, you'll thank me."

"Ma. I have a test today on the *subjonctif.* I really need some luck. Please. Everyone else's mom opens the tap for tests except you."

"What other moms do is no concern of mine."

She was on the radar of those other moms, though, make no mistake. They'd cottoned on to her tight-fisted ways. Soon her children were no longer welcome in their friends' homes. Her kids were forever coughing and dribbling, infecting the others, forcing their playmates to draw on their own luck more lavishly than their mothers had bargained for. The moms circled the wagons against her kids and against her to boot. All the kaffeeklatsches and car pools they'd shared over the years counted for zipola.

Like she cared! She had no intention of joining those profligates over on the dark side. She continued to let her family's luck trickle out in mere IV droplets, proud that when her kids left home their boxes were still four-fifths full. And leave home they did, at the tender age of sixteen, bingo, out the door before the candles had a chance to burn down on their cakes. They didn't really have to move out just to take legal control of their boxes. The Quebec Régie was very forward-looking in that regard. In the rest of Canada, liberation only came at eighteen. In

the States, not till twenty-one. But the kids knew that as long as they remained under her roof, Ma would refuse to relax her death grip on their boxes, whatever the law decreed, deeming herself responsible to a higher authority. So they split, one by one.

The familial exodus had actually kicked off years earlier with her husband. Of course, as an adult he had titular responsibility over his own box. But when they married, like so many couples of that generation, the wife was expected to take charge of hubby's box and launder his socks, while he was ordained to mow the lawn and drive the family to the Orange Julep once a week. It was a satisfactory division of labour for many years. Then came the day when he was up for a promotion and she balked at opening the tap.

"What if something better comes along down the line?" she said. "Something with dental?"

"There'll be plenty left over, hon."

"Not if you come down with Alzheimer's. Talk about a luck-sucker. Better to hold off."

So they held off. And in the end it was his moronic cubicle mate with the more obliging wife who won the promotion. That's when the gloves came off. She lit into the wuss pre-emptively for always siding with the kids when they begged her to be more loosey-goosey with their boxes. Any dummy knew they were supposed to present a united front. But he whomped her a good one right in the gut when he called her chokehold on the boxes psychotic. That was it. Finito. She had always viewed herself as a judicious overseer of her family's good fortune, and suddenly she was cast as Mommie Dearest. Frankly, by the time he left, she was glad to see the back of him.

She was alone in the house now, with no company but her own box. What the hell! Why not give the spigot a big reckless quarter-turn and then go out and spring for a lottery ticket. The payout was six million this week. The timing couldn't have been more propitious. There were no pending claims on her luck. No planes to keep up in the air, no pap smear results on the horizon. The coast was clear. Her box was temptingly close, right there on the end table next to the Valium. She reached over to open the spout, but it was stuck fast. She fetched the WD-40 and gave a quick shpritz, but still no movement. The rubber husband, same story. A flop true to its name. She yanked off her clog and battered the damn nozzle, but nary a drip. When she picked up the box and shook it, her ears couldn't pick up the normal slosh.

Finally she decided to slit a peephole. This was an emergency measure amateurs were strongly discouraged from attempting, on the order of a roadside tracheotomy with a butter knife, but she ploughed ahead and poked an exploratory opening. Her flashlight beam revealed a sludge

the texture of risotto and the colour of pus. She pulled a parfait spoon out of the buffet drawer. Maybe she could just scoop some up and swallow it. She fished out a glob and brought it up to her lips. But it smelled like sewer gas, and she couldn't force it down. She carried the box out back and spread the slop on the lawn where the skunks had been digging up the turf in great chunks every night—let it work its magic on the little buggers.

Almeda Glenn Miller

Nature of Fire

Our baby sister draws a fire for us on a scrap of paper and the adults scuttle to its centre while we kids hover on the periphery, warming ideas like marshmallows that burn and stick for a generation. We poke the embers with wiener sticks as simple as we are, sparking secrets into the swerve of darkness—*here, no here, no over here*—stupid. The story isn't about us and we're not as curious as they'd like us to be with their Kumbaya and House of the Rising Suns 2/4, 4/4, bladiblahs—our baby sister itsy-bitsy-spidering her fingers like glow worms in Mom's lap—she's close enough to the fire to catch a lick. And as the adults nod their heads in a drunken grammar, we kids move into the fire to fry wasps and beetles, things that whistle when they're hot. Our sister is delighted, crawls from Mom's lap, flaps her arms like dragonfly wings, looks ancient in the light. When we toss more wood into the fire she spreads those tiny arms with the bones so close to the surface—we get caught in the stretch of skin—and she tells us that the wood's relationship to itself will reveal the nature of fire. She won't survive any of this knowledge, not any of it. You can't be that wise and live that deeply without having something go terrible wrong—wispy lungs, crooked kidneys, bad heart—the kind of blistering that happens when you get too close to the heat. So when she opens her mouth and fire poppies blossom like secrets through fluted vowels, we braid our hands like ropy verbs and from the burning notes we sing in fizzle and pop. The melted words the adults speak about—the peace, the love, the possibilities—are all just mouthfuls of ash.

Daniel Kincade Renton

Everyday Adjustments

If a sparrow smacks the window, she retorts *good omen,*
and my old melon flaunts its soft spot; reluctant
to correct this, I buy more organics and we eat another

rich, raw meal—five-year-old gouda, tapenade, blueberry
nectar. In this house, we don't sacrifice the Teflon with steel.
Fine cuts are verbal, juicy. No one circumnavigates the eerie,

oily sink. Effervescence echoes up a plastic bottle; it's a wonder
we fear the world's best water. The fridge drones like a sandstone
beach. What's in the microwave but caramel sinew, glass wire

and wax paper? We'll eat more—we will always eat more.
Forget this serving. Electric heat is borrowed like a fantasy
novel or a schedule; it doesn't matter, we argue. Money

is imposing as a teddy bear, as a photograph of a dead uncle,
an unanswered call from a memorized number. So what
if no one polishes the fractured pane? I iterate, good omen.

Pasha Malla

Twilight-Night

If a batter has 150 hits, what does that mean?

—David Grabiner, "The Sabermetric Manifesto"

The first pitch is wide and outside; the seat beside me, empty. Every other seat in the stadium it seems has a body sitting in it beside a body sitting next to them. Ball one. It's a late-August late-afternoon, golden cottony air and the light just starting to slow and thicken; it's a beautiful day for baseball. On my other side concrete steps slope down to the tunnel that leads to the concessions, outside to the parking lot and this strange new city, and, beyond that, the rest of the planet. For now though, I am here. After these nine innings will be a break and then another nine with the same two teams—a doubleheader. Hot dogs are being eaten in the last few hours of P.M. sunshine. Beer is being drunk from plastic cups which crinkle when crushed or clop when dropped. The organist plays a song that requires clapping and cheers; everyone claps along, everyone cheers. The batter taps dirt from his cleats. He taps the plate with his bat. He points his bat at the pitcher—*you*, he seems to be saying—and then swings it up over his shoulder, bends his knees, and me, I'm thinking about how that one cloud, there, looks just like the sort of car a person might leave everyone he knows in. The bleachers smell of deep-fry and human sweat. The pitcher checks the signal. The catcher is a scrunched-up squatting person and the umpire hovers behind him like the catcher's supportive dad, both in masks. There's a blimp on the other side of the sky from the car-cloud, a Goodyear Blimp, but how can a whole year be good—be *only* good, a year? The pitcher cranks into his wind-up and here's the pitch; the ball thumps into the catcher's glove and the umpire clenches a fist and pumps it briskly: strike. Five pitches later—a ball, a strike, two foul balls, a swing and a miss—the batter strikes out, is elided. The next batter flies out to centre. The batter after that grounds out to short. That's the top of the first, and as the teams switch places—the fielders to their dugout, the batting team to the field—it makes you think, I think, how sometimes all we can ever do is keep each day one night away. The car-cloud drifts out of view, disappearing as a car might twist around a bend as you stand there on your

porch, trying to understand what a life is. To grand ovation the home team's lead-off batter tattoos a single over the third baseman's head, then leads off, then steals second in a puff of dust. But he's abandoned there, on second base, when down through the batting order his teammates fly out, strike out, and dribble a tepid grounder straight to the first baseman, who scoops and pivots and steps on the bag. The guy on second slinks to the dugout and the inning's over, scoreless. The sun's going down; the sky deepens like a hole burrowed underwater to some place beyond light. There's another switch and another out and another and the tink of a hit, and another out, and a switch, and a ground-rule double and a walk and some RBIs, more outs, more switches, bullpen activity and a change of pitchers, a bobbled and dropped pop-fly, a homerun—the crowd roars—and midway through the seventh inning with dusk descending the floodlights clack on, one after the next, until the whole place glows. We can see one another, behind and in front and all around. Maybe we'd forgotten there was anyone else here, that it was just each one of us, alone, and baseball. And now from out of the gloom here are human faces. A high school baton twirling team scampers onto the field; their shadows stretch across the grass like souls or ghosts. In the stands are kids asleep, leaning on parents' shoulders, and men standing shirtless in a row with Ks painted on their chests. A woman in a home team jersey is waving on the Jumbotron—at herself, at everyone. Some people are actually stretching. Down on the field the twirlers twirl. From where they are we must all seem to have the same face, ten thousand faces in the floodlights. Above everything the sky is a sky-shaped bruise and at the horizon the sun has become a half-forgotten memory of the sun. The score's all tied up. There are two and one-half innings to go, but then another game of baseball. What is now will become an echo, later, when it all happens again. For now though, together we wait. Clouds of bugs sizzle and swirl. The sun is going, going, gone. The twirlers conclude their routine, and bow, and to mild applause withdraw. With no one on the field there's a clear, empty stillness. It is almost like nothing. It is like standing inside the lightless core of light. And we are out here, all of us, thinking of our friends tonight.

Bardia Sinaee

7/4 Gridline

What better way to celebrate new city limits
than a transformer station? We've seen this one before:
the podium, the mayor spurting like a burst pipeline.

Behind him, billboards plug peerless pediatrics
and a dated exhibition on bees: *Try to find the queen*
among all the workers and drones!
Behind that the ground, stapled with hydros, won't even shrug;
the hills roll like doormats, like a torn lover down the stairs.

A honey of an idea: speed up the city, there's room in bars
and truth in numbers. The mayor even lets out a few:
three quarter-centuries, faces in the millions
and the birth-size almost doubled. We've seen this one before:
a bloodshot octogenarian, our oldest citizen,
tears the ribbon like a last catheter.

Bruce Holland Rogers

Unpleasant Features of Our New Address

One: the overgrown tangle of weeds that is the back garden. None of us owns the land. Not us, not Andy and Tomi in the flat above ours, not Enrico in the flat below. Enrico says "They should send a gardener 'round," and we agree that yes, they should. Whoever *they* are.

Two: the black-and-white cat begging at the front door. "She lived in your flat before you bought it," Tomi says. "I guess they left her behind."

Three: the speed of cars flying through the roundabout. They ought to do something to calm the traffic.

Four: the black-and-white cat's kittens. Why wasn't the cat spayed? They should have had her spayed.

Five: the kittens of the kittens. So many, so soon. They hunt in the jungle of the back garden by night. By day they crowd the front door, begging. We buy cat food at the convenience store and bribe them so they don't rush inside when we unlock our door.

Six: more kittens.

Seven: wrecks in the roundabout. Again and again, bleeding drivers make their way through the cats and kittens to ring the bell. These people leave spots of blood on the walkway. None of us owns the walkway. We don't answer the door. Why don't they bother someone else? Can't they see we've got troubles of our own?

The Fourth Floor

All the professors and lecturers notice him, the man who is building a scaffold on the outside of their building. He is old enough to be a professor himself, but he wears the wrong sort of clothes, and he spends the first part of the day assembling the structure that rises to the top of the building, and higher. The academics on the ground floor are the first to see him working with sponge, pail, and squeegee. He is a window washer. One of those ground-floor scholars, Doctor Földi, having categorized the fellow, thinks nothing more about him. Doctor Földi's back is turned when the window washer nods a greeting through the glass.

On the first floor up, the window washer sponges sudsy water onto the pane, swipes his squeegee along the glass, and catches the eye of Doctor Kis. The professor does not return the window washer's smile or greeting. He gets up from his desk and closes the blinds.

Outside a window of the second floor, Doctor Nagy notices when the window washer greets him. He smiles back. He waves. He even calls out a polite greeting, but then he returns his attention to the paper he is writing.

It is Doctor Hegyi on the third floor, the top floor, who actually gets up from his desk when he sees the window washer. He opens the window to ask the man how it is to wash windows in the fresh air all day long. He complains a little about the paper he is writing, how much trouble he is having with one passage which the editors say he must make shorter. He tries to explain the nature of the problem and at last opens the window wide and says, "Well, come see for yourself." The window washer sits in Doctor Hegyi's chair to read, and so as not to break the man's concentration, Doctor Hegyi steps out onto the scaffold. He tries his hand at window washing. He decides that he is pretty good at it. The window washer comes out to join him and agrees that it is hard to shorten that passage without making it seem to say something else altogether. Together, they admire the view.

Doctor Hegyi returns to his desk, frowns, and tries to concentrate on his work. He has not failed to notice, however, that rather than going down, the window washer has climbed even higher on the scaffold. What could he be doing up there? Perhaps on an invisible fourth floor there are also professors whose windows need to be kept clean.

Jennica Harper

Realboys

Poems for, and from, Pinocchio.

BECOMING A MAN

Father hopes I will become a realboy because realboys become men. Good men take over the family business or learn a new trade, bringing in goldpieces for their families. Money's traded for food, money keeps the rain out. I have tried to carve wood, Father showed me the *shwick!* of the knife. But I'm scared of the knife, and to me the wood looked fine as it was.

EDUCATION

Cindy A. sits in front of me. I'm learning to sit still, say nothing. By saying nothing, nothing good nor bad can happen. Good odds for bad boys like me. But Cindy A. Cindy A., when she puts up her hand, her back spoons like an oar. I think of Ms. Blue, her blue dress her shoulderbones blue dust her collarbone. I think of two oars, sculling. Then I think of nothing.

There is a knock on wood. Glances to the door, standing open—no one's there. Eyes turn my way. I shut mine tight, avoiding Cindy A's. In my lap, wood meets wood. The friction feels good, and all through spelling, I buff I whet until I worry my worrying will spark a blaze. Fear of fire makes me good again at last. It hurts to stop, but I do. After school I hold my spelling book in front of me, as though very proud to be a pupil.

EVERY GOOD BOY

Every good boy deserves fun. Every good boy deserves food. Every good boy deserves a father. Every good boy deserves forgiveness. Boy, everybody's good. How did they get so good? Father says I'm good wood—when he's in a good mood. Good wood deserves food, fun, fudge, favours, fairy dust. Every good boy deserves dessert. Everyboy wants. Even good ones would. God wood. Even good boys desert fathers. Fairyblood, realbody, borrowed air, floatboy. Whoa. Am I being rood? Every good block of wood... I *know* I know it, give me a minute.

Patrick Pilarski

a sampling of things juxtaposed and cyclic

on a slow day empty hour the rainfall hammerfall of cups on tables sticks like builder's clay or moss on rocks waiting for winter. this is broken, frost hurled parts colliding with water in the stream. this is cigarettes and short knives, holstered and curling skirts on pavement; an extension built piece by piece from pig flesh or borrowed hearts, pumping, as a neon fire escape to a place where hooks and hand-grenades rest softly in a mirrored foyer under three tonne chandeliers. this is royalty made easy—air conditioners that drip cash night after night pooling on the floor with slits of streetlight carrion. the remains of absent pigeons pecking crumbs of builder's clay. moss on rocks. hammers and cups. an empty wall.

Roy Kesey

Come Due

This evening's verbena does not start for another ten minutes and so I sit in my office, the lights off, the telephone unplugged. I asked Karina to join me but she said that she was busy. When I asked what she had planned, she could not remember, but promised to be waiting for me at home when I arrived.

My last verbena was two years ago in the Communications department—a month before Pilar's graduation, two months before our marriage, a year before her death. Her classmates had at me. The first skit was a fake television news report about a fat foreign archaeologist who had been sentenced to life in prison for attempting to steal a priceless artifact. A photograph flashed onto the big screen: Pilar and I very nearly holding hands. We in the crowd, we laughed, some of us less than others, as the anchor went into deeper and deeper detail regarding precisely how fat and foreign the archaeologist was. For the second skit, the fattest male student in the department dressed as a conquistador—fake beard, cardboard armor, plastic sword—and the second fattest wore mock-aclla vestments, balloon breasts and a wig of smooth black hair that hung almost to his waist. The virgin priestess spoke Spanish with a Chiclayan accent, the conquistador with an American one. He ran fish-eyed and foamed at the mouth, chased and cornered her, gathered her onto his shoulder and staggered off stage. Pilar looked at me to see how I would take this and other jokes. It was her gaze that kept me from taking the stage, from grabbing the microphone, from shouting, There is no equivalence and it is only this, their hooks in me, their fanged hooks, *their motherfucking fangs.* Which no one would have understood.

Now it is time. Out through the dark trees and I do not know why but this week my classes have been fluid and deft, my students working cleanly through prepositions of time and adverbs of manner, through the schwa and defining relative clauses, through reporting verbs and false friends. During my office hours they come to me in pairs and small groups, sometimes with problems and sometimes only to chat. When there are problems I try to help. When I cannot help I invent geometric proofs to show the students that their problems are slightly smaller than they thought.

There is the faint shriek of fighter jets, three or perhaps four. The

stage is set up at the far end of the parking lot. There are far more chairs than spectators. The verbena has already begun and I search for Armando, find him, take the empty seat beside him and he smiles.

A few of the jokes this evening are at my expense—my immense bulk, my gait, the size and colours of my underwear—but my likeness is jovial, is often allowed a last laugh. Less kindness is shown to the head librarian and her single eyebrow, to the dean and his limp, to Armando himself. There are puns on his alcoholism and effeminacy. All the same we laugh, the dean and the librarian and Armando and me, we laugh as is required.

From time to time I glance at the rector, and it seems that his laughter wanes sooner than that of those around him. There are many reasons why this might be, and when the skits end, students come running to talk to Armando and me, to assure us that no harm was meant, that in fact we are well loved, that laughter had been the only objective. Some of the students are sincere when they say this. Some only believe that they are. I tell them the truth, that I always attempt not to care. Armando says that he found each and every joke extremely amusing, claps the students on the shoulders and laughs, pretending to remember.

His posture is as always slightly off centre, not as if he were about to fall but as if at any moment he might bend to pick up something he has dropped. I shake his hand, shake the hands of the dean and rector. Then I walk for home.

A hundred yards from the gate, a group of students is gathered on the sidewalk beneath an algarrobo. They are staring, and I go to stand and stare with them. There is a fox stretched out dead at the base of the trunk. It is cat-sized and twilight-coloured. Its skull has been crushed.

A car or truck, surely, and someone tossed the body to the side. I leave the students there staring. Some things cannot be helped.

I walk out of the gate and along the sidewalk to the Panamericana. Now that the rains have ended, a few of the old smells are returning, plumeria and jasmine, and of course the smell of sweat never left. There is standing water only in the deepest of holes. And there are fewer stars visible than one might perhaps guess, the desert haze building again.

I turn, walk through the park and its trees to the Virgin under glass. She is no longer crying, has not cried in days, and my neighbours discuss the meaning of this more loudly than is necessary. Karina finds their theories preposterous. I wonder what Pilar would have thought of them. She was often open to the possibility of this sort of miracle, but did not speak of it with me, was unwilling in this and other respects to provoke my derision. It is not that Pilar feared it, but that she hoped to save me from it. Also it angered her, and she enjoyed the sudden flush of her own anger less than most people I have known. In other moments what

seemed to be anger came unprovoked and was in fact something else, a wildness, and Pilar laughed, pinned me down, magnificent. Karina is more knowing, more agile but less strong, and she fits me differently: her edges are sharper, hip and wrist and jawline. Her arms are thinner, her smile slower, her eyes less easily read, and I am suddenly and violently sure that comparing one's dead wife to one's girlfriend is unjust, is a certain evil, is something for which a bill will at some point come due.

Wishes

I sit down at a table in the centre of the chicken restaurant, and am the only client. The chair is hard plastic. The table is linoleum and the lights are very bright and the chicha music is unpleasantly loud. There is a television mounted in the corner, a soap opera, and all the waiters are watching it.

There are dozens of restaurants like this in every Peruvian city: precisely like this. Now a commercial comes on, and one of the men walks over. He has a pea-sized mole growing from his eyebrow. We both shout to be heard, and I order a roast chicken, whole.

—To go?

—No.

The waiter looks at the ground, at the television, at me.

—Would you like a bigger table?

I look around the restaurant. All the other tables are of the same dimensions as mine. I shake my head. There is nothing else to say but he does not go away so I tell him that I am from the United States, and that today happens to be my birthday. He nods, asks me which state. California! I say, and I say this with what I hope will sound like great confidence and joviality, as if eating alone in a chicken restaurant were a Californian birthday custom.

The waiter is too smart to believe me, smiles sadly and takes his leave, returns abruptly with a beer I have not ordered. He says that it is courtesy of the owner, and points to a small, closed door on the far side of the restaurant. I thank him. Ten minutes later the chicha is extinguished; the soap opera actors shout briefly and are turned down as well.

All four of the waiters come walking in a line, and behind them is an aproned cook. The cook's face is bright with grease and pleasure. He holds a platter bearing a large amount of French fries, and a roast chicken from which protrudes a single candle, lit.

The waiters take up positions around me, the four cardinal points. The cook begs my pardon, says that the nearby bakeries have all just closed, that otherwise he would have treated me to a muffin, that the following year I will have to arrive earlier in the evening. I assure him that the chicken and candle and sentiment are more than enough.

The five men sing to me now, and they sing surprisingly well. The

cook sets the platter on the table. I blow out the candle, wishing for happiness.

The cook applauds. The waiters look at one another. I nod. The waiters and the cook nod back. The cook returns to his spits, and the waiters to their soap opera. Wishes are not normal things though we make them all the time.

James Phelan

Ten Sentimental Educations

1. Rick and Trin married fast so they could go to bed together and in three years had three daughters, called Faith, Hope, and Madison.

2. Olivia told The Professor, who corrects her when she calls him that but obviously likes it, that it's not so much immaturity—she'd known this question was coming—but more like, the guys her age that want her, the way they talk when they soften up makes you feel like a really nice edition of something you've been looking for, that you put back because there's pink highlighter all over the first twenty pages and in the margins, you know, *Irony* and *Important passage* in pen.

3. Watching his train disappear, Ashley thought how like a movie their goodbye had been; then, how she would remember that morning when she was old; then, that her first love had not had the effect of making her imagine a future self who was not alone.

4. The novel Ben started to write in Paris began, "Aurélie felt a *frisson* as his *puissance* grazed her *avoirdupois*," and ended after the girl at the hostel asked could she read it.

5. In the basement of the old Library Annex, the most private place he could think to take her with a party on at his apartment and her parents sure to be home, your mother looks up at the moment you're conceived and sees graduating classes from before the War, framed galleries of coiffed and whiskered faces staring over them with an indifference that says, *Not new, just next.*

6. Lori and Heather realize, a moment too late, that their prom dresses are in rival gang colours.

7. Paula is convinced it's love when she remembers the last time a look from a stranger made her feel free to become someone new: Frank, the first of several Franks, watching her with a smile that could make a motel bed start to vibrate—and on her husband's face, a look so dumb you felt he might die for king and country right there, in the freezer section.

8. At fifteen I had a vision of the difficulties ahead, like in that arcade game where a map of the maze flashes onscreen for a second before the level starts, when Myron said to me, "Man, girls just don't understand Dylan."

9. Ernest figured his heart was broken for good, till he met a nice girl whose idea of fun was defibrillating middle-aged men to see if smoke would come out their ears and nostrils—so to speak—but not only so to speak.

10. Talking with his mouth full again, your little brother says the safety word by accident; bad things stop happening to good people and a bearded face erupts from a big cloud asking, Is everyone okay?

Susan Steudel

Not An Easy Thing For Ilych

Be the extraordinary number of pens and pencils; be the noon traveller by autosleigh; be mucilage and rubber stoppers; be the ornamental inkstand and potted palm; be the ape sitting on a stack of books; be the orderly transmission of commands; be Petrograd; be everpresent; be pseudonym; be top-heavy with descriptive adjectives; be ice-cold; be the conference table and green baize cloth; be global, cautious; be remote pastoral villages; be the conspirator in the midst of flux; be Lenin and Luxemburg poles apart; be the electrification of Vladivostok; be midnight and moon tucked in the jaws; be belief; be the half-Scottish daughter; be half French; be the picture of a medieval master; be distressed by comparisons, be clad in capes and gunfire; be hardline; be back in the harness at the Kremlin; be *duende*; be strangeness; be the recording authority; be difficult to separate the peasant from Lenin; be *gorki*; be bitter; be flower, be pine; be the change.[1]

[1] Found and original text: Payne, *The Life and Death of Lenin*, New York, 1964

Laura Clarke

Book of Kings

1992. Sitting at a picnic table on the porch working on clay art projects. Half-dogs with exaggerated snouts, too-skinny tails that break off when touched. Earth-toned unicorns, rainbows and stars etched into their haunches with crooked safety pins. My sister, four years older, working for several hours on a masterpiece giraffe. It will be better than my animals. A textured mane. Good proportions. Eyes that look real.

She is hunched over in a plastic green lawn chair, knitting Barbie clothes—a dark purple shapeless skirt. The overall effect: Eastern European Immigrant Barbie.

Oma says: Look what I have, emphasis on the last word. She produces a wrinkled five dollar bill from a black crocheted bag, smoothes it out on her knee. A steel-coloured knitting needle pokes through a hole, its dull point aimed at me.

She fumbles at her chest until she touches the red frame of her glasses. Puts them on, holds the bill up to the shock of sunlight falling across the porch.

You have to share it, she says. Rips the bill in half and hands us each a piece.

D.W. Wilson

Let Me Try Science

Content removed at author's request

Content removed at author's request

Nikki Reimer

from one or two things to consider

"are you looking for oil?"

she is the system. she is "entirely affectation." all she wants is transcendental experience, but she *only* wants transcendental experience. she is chasing the white dragon. she's 29 and bleeds business acumen.

"are you managing your weight?"

washers and o-rings. a stimulus package to end all stimulus packages. the kind of brain drain you can wrap your thumb & index finger around and then squeeze, applying ever-increasing pressure with your fingernails. hovering inside the oilfield, somewhere between 2nd and 3rd. gelatinous. water soluble. leaching to the athabasca water basin.

"are you finding a job?"

we want mythmaking for our grandchildren and our grandchildren's grandchildren. to blast dynamite in caverns below the earth; we want to farm in. we want yellow fields from horizon's edge to horizon's edge. we want 21st century cowboys with gold and platinum plating. we want to hitch a ride on the back of the water buffalo.

Contributors

Michael Reid Busk is a PhD student in the University of Southern California's Literature and Creative Writing Program. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize in both fiction and poetry, and his stories, essays, and poems have appeared in *Gettysburg Review*, *Fiction International*, *Florida Review*, and other journals.

Heather Campbell grew up in the Maritimes and has since lived and worked in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, in various non-profit communications and marketing positions. Her short fiction has been included in the *Wascana Review*, and her poetry has been included in *Prairie Fire* and *The Capilano Review*. Heather currently lives in Ottawa.

Laura Clarke is a poet living in Toronto and a recent graduate of the Creative Writing & English MA program at U of T. She has previously been published in *Bywords Quarterly Journal* and *For Crying Out Loud: An Anthology of Poetry & Fiction*.

Barry Dempster, twice nominated for the Governor General's Award, is the author of sixteen books. In 2010, he was a finalist for the Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts. He is also Acquisitions Editor for Brick Books. His most recent books include *Love Outlandish*, *Ivan's Birches* and *Blue Wherever*.

Antony Di Nardo is the author of *Alien, Correspondent* (Brick, 2002) and *Soul on Standby* (Exile, 2010). His work appears in journals across Canada and internationally. He divides his time between Oshawa, Ontario and Sutton, Quebec.

Chris Gilpin is a two-time member of the Vancouver Poetry Slam Team (2008 & 2009), the champion of Vancouver's 2008 Haiku Death Match, and winner of the Vancouver's 2009 CBC Poetry Face-off. In the summer of 2006, he toured the Canadian Fringe circuit with his play "87% True: The Lies That Bind," co-created with Rosemary Rowe. His work has been published in *Geist*, *Poetry is Dead*, *Vancouver Review*, *42opus*, and others. He also performs as part of the clown-rock supergroup Awesome Face.

Julie Cameron Gray is originally from Sudbury, Ontario. She has previously published a chapbook with Cactus Press, entitled *The Distance Between Two Bodies*, and is a contributing editor for *Misunderstandings Magazine.*

Jennica Harper is a Vancouver poet and screenwriter whose books include *What It Feels Like for a Girl* (Anvil Press, 2008) and *The Octopus and Other Poems* (Signature Editions, 2006). Previous *PRISM* publications include the long poems "The Octopus" (41:1) and "Liner Notes" (47:1), winner of the Silver National Magazine Award.

Roy Kesey's debut novel *Pacazo*, from which these excerpts are taken, will be published by Dzanc Books in February 2011. His work has been widely published and anthologized, with stories appearing in *Best American Short Stories*, *The Robert Olen Butler Prize Anthology,* and *New Sudden Fiction*, among other places. He currently lives in Peru with his wife and children (www.roykesey.com).

Ron Koertge writes fiction for Young Adults and poetry for everybody. His awards include grants from the NEA and the California Arts Council and poems in *Best American Poetry.* Recent books of poems are *Fever* (Red Hen Press, 2007) and *Indigo* (Red Hen Press, 2009). Recognition for fiction include two PEN awards. Recent books for young readers are *Shakespeare Makes the Play-Offs* (Candlewick Press, 2010), and *Strays* (Candlewick Press, 2007).

Pasha Malla is the author of *The Withdrawal Method* (stories) and *All Our Grandfathers are Ghosts* (poems, sort of). His first novel, *People Park*, will be published in 2012.

Meghan L. Martin was born and raised in Hyde Park, New York and currently resides in Vancouver, BC. She holds an MFA in Poetry from Arizona State University and is the recipient of a Theresa A. Wilhoit Fellowship. Her poems are currently available or forthcoming in *The Adirondack Review*, *The DMQ Review*, *EVENT*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Ryga,* and an anthology called *Paradigm.*

Almeda Glenn Miller is the author of the novel *Tiger Dreams* (Raincoast, 2002). Her short stories and essays have appeared in *Grain*, *Dandelion*, *EVENT*, and *Ploughshares.* Almeda lives and writes in Rossland, British Columbia.

Linton Murphy: Born in Toronto, lives in Vancouver.

James Phelan is from Montreal. His story "Something Fierce" appeared in *PRISM* (47:4) last year.

Patrick M. Pilarski's first full-length collection, *Huge Blue*, was released in 2009 by Leaf Press, and he is co-editor of the international short-form journal *DailyHaiku*. Patrick's poetry has appeared in journals and anthologies across North America, Australia, Europe, and Japan, recently including *The Fiddlehead*, *Carousel*, and *The New Quarterly*. He lives in Edmonton.

Nikki Reimer is the author of *[sic]* (Frontenac House, 2010) and *fist things first* (Wrinkle Press Chapbook, 2009), and chronicler of the East Van Cats. She divides her time between East Vancouver, New Westminster, and nikkireimer.com. These poems from "one or two things to consider" are for Tim Reimer.

Daniel Kincade Renton has been published in *CV2*, *Portal*, and *The Telegraph Journal*, and is a former poetry editor of *Qwerty Magazine*, a literary journal. Last August, he canoed 108 km with three other Montreal poets on a seven-day poetry tour along the Grand River in Lower Ontario.

Bruce Holland Rogers recently spent five months teaching creative writing on a Fulbright grant in Budapest, where he performed "Unpleasant Features of Our New Address" in Hungarian. He is on the permanent MFA faculty at the Northwest Institute for Literary Arts. More stories at www.shortshortshort.com.

Phyllis Rudin lives in Montreal. Her short stories have appeared in *This Magazine,* and *The Massachusetts Review*. She won *This Magazine*'s 2010 Great Canadian Literary Hunt for fiction with her story "Candlepower." Her novel manuscript *The CEO of Oz*, which follows a group of immigrant women working the line in a ramshackle Montreal lingerie factory, placed second in the 2010 Yeovil Literary Competition.

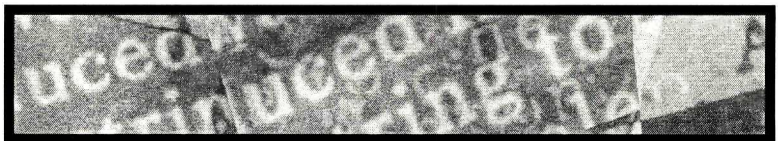
Bardia Sinaee's poetry and reviews have been published or are forthcoming in *Arc*, Geist.com, *This Magazine,* and *The Moose & Pussy*. At Carleton University, he's a third-year linguistics student and poetry editor for *In/Words*.

Susan Steudel lives in Vancouver. She is currently writing poems on the topic of Lenin.

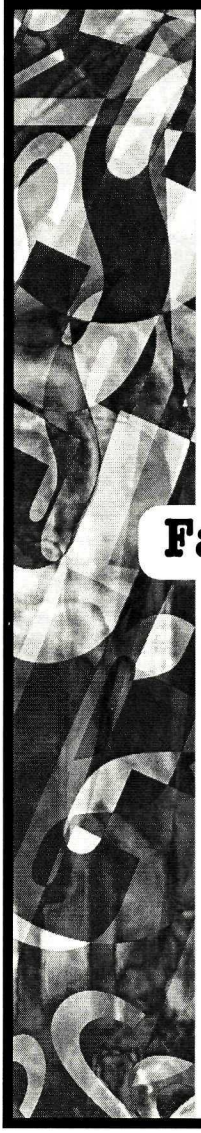
Nick Thran's second collection of poetry, *Earworm*, will appear this spring with Nightwood Editions. Poems from the collection have recently appeared in *Arc*, *The Best Canadian Poetry 2010,* and *The Fiddlehead,* and are forthcoming in *Canadian Notes and Queries* and *The Walrus.* He currently lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Anne-Marie Turza lives in Victoria. Her poems have appeared in *Grain*, *The Malahat Review*, *The New Quarterly*, *The Antigonish Review*, and most recently in *Arc.* She has a poem forthcoming in *The Best Canadian Poetry in English, 2010.*

D.W. Wilson's fiction has appeared in literary journals across Canada, Ireland, and the UK. His short story collection *Once You Break a Knuckle* will be published by Penguin Canada in 2011, to be followed by a novel, *Ballistics.* He's a Canadian citizen by birth and temperament, but currently living in London to pursue his PhD.



The Creative Writing Program at U.B.C.



The University of British Columbia offers both a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing. The M.F.A. degree may also be taken by distance education. See our website for more details.

Students work in multiple genres, including: Poetry, Novel/Novella, Short Fiction, Stage Play, Screen & TV Play, Radio Play, Writing for Children, Non-fiction, Translation, and Song Lyrics & Libretto.

Faculty

Meryn Cadell
Steven Galloway
Keith Maillard
Maureen Medved
Andreas Schroeder
Linda Svendsen
Peggy Thompson
Rhea Tregebov

Online Faculty (M.F.A.):

Luanne Armstrong, Gail Anderson-Dargatz, Brian Brett, Sioux Browning, Maggie deVries, Zsuzsi Gartner, Terry Glavin, Wayne Grady, Sara Graefe, Stephen Hunt, Peter Levitt, Susan Musgrave & Karen Solie

www.creativewriting.ubc.ca

Annual Non-Fiction Contest*

Three winners will receive $500 each plus publication!

$29.95 entry fee includes 1 year of EVENT

5,000 word limit

Deadline April 15

The Rules

- Previously published material, or material accepted elsewhere for publication, cannot be considered.
- The writer should not be identified on the entry. Include separate cover sheet with name, address, phone number / email, and title(s). Send to EVENT, PO Box 2503, New Westminster, BC, V3L 5B2, Canada.
- Include a SASE (Canadian postage / IRCs / US $1).
- Multiple entries are allowed; however, each entry must be accompanied by its own entry fee.
- Make cheque or international money order payable to EVENT.
- Contest back issues are available from EVENT.
- Entries must be postmarked by April 15.

Visit **http://event.douglas.bc.ca** for more information

Canada Council for the Arts Conseil des Arts du Canada

Douglas College

2011 Short Grain

(with Variations) Contest

2 Top Prizes of $1000! 2 Great Categories!

Fiction Judge: **Zsuzsi Gartner**
Author of *All the Anxious Girls on Earth* and editor of acclaimed anthology *Darwin's Bastards.*

Poetry Judge: **Jeramy Dodds**
Author of Trillium Award-winning and 2009 Griffin Prize-nominee *Crabwise to the Hounds.*

$35 entry fee for up to two entries in one category; every entrant receives a free 1-year subscription to *Grain*. Fiction 2500-word maximum. Poetry 100-line maximum. **Deadline April 1, 2011.**

For full contest details at **grainmagazine.ca**

THERE'S **MORE** TO **EXPLORE** IN BC'S MAGAZINES

ARTS **CULTURE** EDUCATION **LEISURE** TRAVEL **PEOPLE** PLACES **LIFESTYLE** LITERARY **RECREATION**
SPORTS **NATURE** ENVIRONMENT **NEWS** OPINION **SCHOLARLY** **bcmags.com**

Magazine association of BC

THE ANNUAL
subTerrain

LUSH TRIUMPHANT

Literary Awards Competition

FICTION
MAXIMUM 3,000 WORDS

POETRY
A SUITE OF 5 RELATED POEMS
(MAXIMUM 15 PAGES)

CREATIVE NON-FICTION
(Based on fact, adorned w/fiction)
MAXIMUM 4,000 WORDS

ENTRY FEE: $25 PER ENTRY
INCLUDES A ONE-YEAR
SUBTERRAIN SUBSCRIPTION!
(You may submit as many entries
in as many categories as you like)

SEND ENTRIES TO:
Lush Triumphant
c/o subTerrain Magazine
PO Box 3008, MPO
Vancouver, BC V6B 3X5
or email subter@portal.ca
More details at www.subterrain.ca

Subscribe to PRISM international and save!

☐ Two-year subscription (8 issues): $46.00 (HST included).
☐ One-year subscription (4 issues): $28.00 (HST included).

Residents outside Canada please pay in U.S. funds. U.S. POSTAL money orders are not accepted. Please make cheques payable to: PRISM international.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Province/State: _____ Postal/Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me later

VISA/MC: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

Subscribe to PRISM international and save!

☐ Two-year subscription (8 issues): $46.00 (HST included).
☐ One-year subscription (4 issues): $28.00 (HST included).

Residents outside Canada please pay in U.S. funds. U.S. POSTAL money orders are not accepted. Please make cheques payable to: PRISM international.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Province/State: _____ Postal/Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me later

VISA/MC: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

Place
Stamp
Here

PRISM international
Creative Writing Program, UBC
Buch. E462 – 1866 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z1
Canada

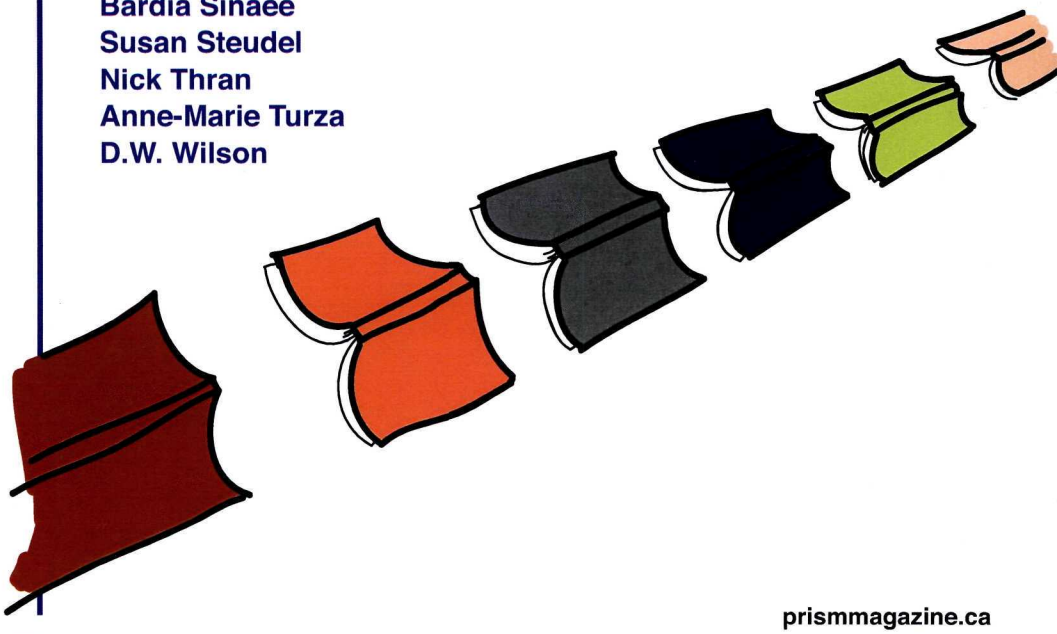
Place
Stamp
Here

PRISM international
Creative Writing Program, UBC
Buch. E462 – 1866 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z1
Canada

PRISM is Fiction, Poetry, Drama, Translation & Creative Nonfiction

49:2

Michael Reid Busk
Heather Campbell
Laura Clarke
Barry Dempster
Antony Di Nardo
Chris Gilpin
Julie Cameron Gray
Jennica Harper
Roy Kesey
Ron Koertge
Pasha Malla
Meghan L. Martin
Almeda Glenn Miller
James Phelan
Patrick M. Pilarski
Nikki Reimer
Daniel Kincade Renton
Bruce Holland Rogers
Phyllis Rudin
Bardia Sinaee
Susan Steudel
Nick Thran
Anne-Marie Turza
D.W. Wilson



GENUINE CANADIAN MAGAZINE

Cover Illustration: **flying books (in formation)**
by Linton Murphy

prismmagazine.ca
$10.00
02
7 25274 86361 7