



pulp
MAG

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Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) takes its name from the Kwantlen First Nation. We at pulp MAG encourage our readers and community to explore all the ways to further support decolonization; we work to support the efforts of Indigenous voices.

PULP MAG aims to be a safe, inclusive space for emerging artists of all types. We want to give a platform to unique voices with important stories to tell, no matter the medium. We believe in the importance of artist recognition, exposure, paying our creative talent, and in building a strong community to hold the work. At pulp MAG, we especially appreciate the avant-garde; we are ready to push the boundaries of art with you.

VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE ARE NOT NECESSARILY SHARED BY THE EDITORS

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Birch 106
12666 72nd Avenue
Surrey, BC V3W 2M8
778-565-3801

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Poetry

Liam Fleming

to see stars

I don't know when it happened
One day they suddenly weren't there—

gone without a trace,
without evidence.

I peer over the edge checking
the submerged support beams,

barnacle patches spot the posts.
The pier's creaks synchronous with the waves

and yet, no starfish
vibrant purples and oranges,

gone.

Don

Sitting alone in your room
at the senior's home
wearing a white diaper &
reading the Bible

*We come into this world
naked & naked
we must leave it behind us
you tell me as I
help to put on your trousers.*

As you walk slowly
through the poorly painted garden way,
clutching your walker
you say that life is only
a dream within dreams
& that God is the dreamer.

A few days later
& now you're in a coma
mouth gaping open,
the breath of death is
inconsistent.

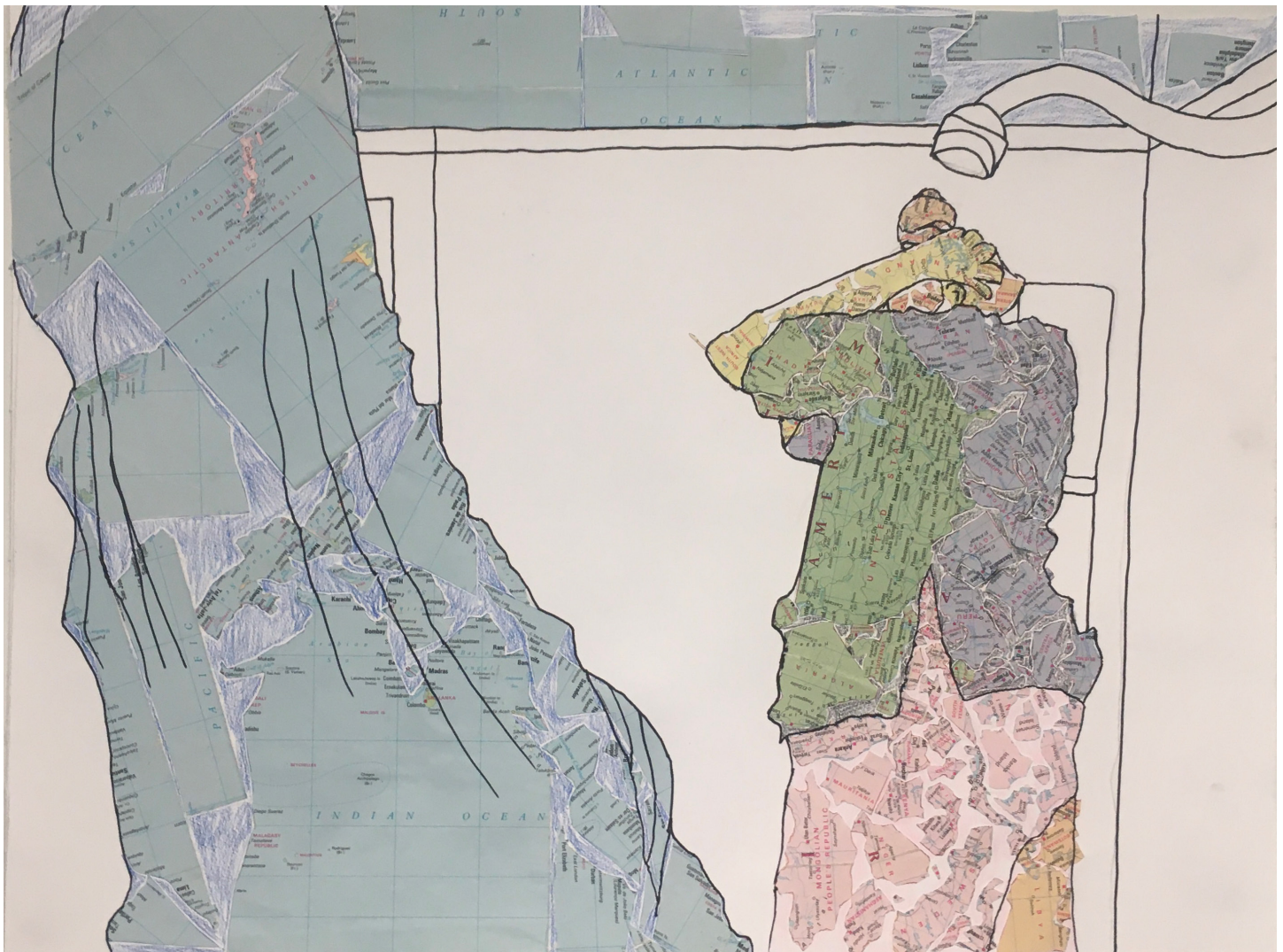
You always told me silence
kept a man from sin
& that silence really is
the language of God.

I play the CD
I made for you with all of
your favourite songs;
it starts to skip & so I
turn it off & sit
as you wake up to the end
of dreaming,

Visual

Makayla Rose Goldsmith
Pencil Crayon/WWII Map Collage
18" x 24"
2020

The Unknown Exhaustion



The Way We Are

Eight hours after Emma called, I stood on the bow of the *Salish Raven* headed for Salt Spring Island. The autumn fog crawled in thick through the Strait of Georgia and piled like snowdrifts by the side of a highway. Shadowy islands slid by my periphery, each one shrouded in a dream. The fog was so complete that even my hands clasped a few inches before me on the damp metal rail took on a ghostly quality, and if I tilted my head back, the ship itself slipped away into an ocean of white, and it was as if the world had ceased to be.

It had been well past midnight when she called. In my dream, I was flying high over the Fraser River, artfully weaving through the cables of a towering bridge. I was looking for someone among the traffic far below when suddenly the off-beat honking of commuters melted into breezy acoustic guitar chords. Back in my bed, I answered the phone. For a few moments I heard nothing but ragged breathing and the sound of waves, and I wondered if I wasn't still dreaming. When Emma finally began to speak, I could barely make her out over the crash of the ocean.

"You have to come down now. Something is gonna happen, something bad is gonna happen."

Suddenly wide awake, I had unleashed a torrent of questions into the phone. Where was she? What was she afraid of? Why me? But the line hung dead in my hands, and every call back fell on the deaf ears of a dial tone.

First thing the next morning, I had packed my tattered old hiking pack and set out on my bike to the ferry terminal. It surprised me how easy it was to leave. I had nobody to call, no pets to feed, no obligations. It felt as if I was a ghost in someone else's world.

The murky silhouette of Salt Spring Island bloomed from the fog like a dark stain, and I suddenly felt the same cold panic grip me as it had last night. I realized

that for my entire trip across the water, my anxieties had been blunted by the veil of fog that surrounded the ferry. Deep in the shroud of white it was as if the outside world, and all of the problems within it, simply faded away. I reached out towards the terminal that was slowly coming into focus, hoping to touch some window of immaculate glass that separated my haven from the insidious black island like it was just an exhibit at the zoo or a monster stuck in the confines of my T.V. screen. Finding nothing but air, I pushed the worry deep into my chest and forced my legs to take me down into the catacomb of cars below deck to retrieve my bike. Soon, the hydraulic gates parted with a grunt of protest before falling back into their deep slumber, and I rode down the off-ramp and set out along the pine-fenced road to Emma's house.

I had only visited once before. Her house, which was more like a cabin than a house, sat at the end of an avenue overgrown with arbutus trees and dense pines that obscured the home entirely. You had to walk down a groaning wooden staircase that plummeted into the brush, and at the bottom, you would find the world split into bands of colour like a minimalist painting: the impossibly blue sky, the black ocean below, and the rocky shore crusted with bone-white oysters. When you pulled yourself away from the view and turned around, you would find her cabin tucked neatly into the treeline by the stairs—perfect with its green porch and cherry red roof.

This time was different. I was shocked when I stepped out onto the beach. Even here, the fog had blanched all life from the landscape. I squinted out into empty space and found I could barely see past the rocky shore. The sky had a cold yellow tinge like the lights of a dentist's office, and the waves licking at the edge of the mist were black as tar. I turned to face the cabin and found that it too had been reduced to greyscale—all colour bled away into the heavy sky. All of the lights were off. I checked my watch and found that the small display had gone dark—no battery—but it had to be almost four in the afternoon. I knocked hard on

the door and paused as it echoed flatly through the small house. I tried the cheap brass knob next—locked. She had known I was coming. I had seen her faded blue jeep parked up on the road.

I sat down on the stairs, defeated, but quickly reconsidered my resignation and set out to try the back door. Emma never was punctual or prepared. In fact, she was bordering on amnesiac. She used to have every teacher at our old high school on a steady payroll of lattes so that they would look the other way when she handed in a month's worth of papers a month late. She had never shown up for parties on the right day, let alone the right time. After a while, I began to look forward to her impromptu visits during the week of my birthday, always rattling off a tearful apology—gift in hand—before I even opened the door, even if she was three days early.

The sides of the cabin were completely overgrown with tree roots and blackberry bushes that snagged my pack and tangled like fingers in my hair. They had clearly never been trimmed. Like most aspects of her life, Emma had left her yard to grow wild until it was completely unmanageable. To nobody's surprise, she had been diagnosed with ADHD halfway through our sophomore year. For a while, the meds had seemed to help, but before long, she would forget to take them or would take too many and wind up in the hospital for a few days at a time. By the time she was discharged, she always had another prescription, and before long, her life was caught in the crossfire of drugs playing tug o' war in her head. She took uppers to balance out her downers and wound up stretched thin somewhere in the middle as they fought to drag her to either extreme. It was an endless battle: Take pill A with pill B, or pill B with pill C, but only after breakfast and NEVER before pill D, which could only be taken after pill A, and so on. One day I sat down with all the labels of all the drugs she was taking and found that technically she was only allowed to eat and drink on Sunday evenings. I asked her how she felt then. She had just laughed.

“About the same as I always do, but with this constant buzz in my head,”

Emma explained.

“A buzz?”

She bit her lip and seemed to think for a moment. “Yeah, it’s like there’s this fog that just rolls around in my head, and everything I see and hear feels like it’s underwater, and all I can do is look up through the ripples and try to make out faces and nod and smile,” she said, vigorously nodding her head and staring intently at the wall as she spoke, “it feels like even my thoughts get blurred at the edges,” Emma smiled. She had a beautiful smile, “that’s probably too real though, hey?”

I don’t remember what I said after that. We always talked about those things—drugs (prescription or otherwise), sex (we wanted it), mental health (we decided we were both crazy), but always with a smile, never with the gravity it deserved. There was something comforting about the humour, like turning the lights on to reveal that the ghost in your room was only a chair, but this disappearance was something new, and I wasn’t sure I wanted to see it in the light.

By the time I reached the back entrance, I had a cold film of sweat across my forehead. I wrestled with the knob and found it stuck just like the front door had been. Panicking, I pulled down a small planter full of weeds and what looked like withered chives from the windowsill to get a look in through the glass. The loose shapes I could make out through the dusty panes all twisted and swam in the dark room, morphing into all my worst fears confirmed. I saw Emma slumped on the floor in a black puddle, a blurry figure standing over her body. I blinked, and the blurry figure was Emma too, and she turned to face me before being dragged by the neck up into the rafters by some invisible wire. I felt myself pushing against the cold glass as Emmas crept out of every corner of the room, bodies bent and broken into spindly animal shapes, all hobbling towards me. Suddenly,

the glass wavered under my hands and then stretched like saran wrap, the thin membrane tearing at my fingertips and bowing inwards until my whole arm, then my whole body, passed through the window, and I collapsed in a heap on the floor.

When I woke up, it was all blue. I was in Emma's room, familiar but barely recognizable under a thick whorl of blankets and clothing that poured from every corner. I was on the bed—Emma was sitting across from me. She smiled.

“Do you like the lights?” She said, pointing to a blue bulb hanging from the ceiling. “They're supposed to trick your brain into being happier.”

“What happened?” I asked. Her question had barely registered. “How did I get in here?”

The smile dropped from her face, “You broke in through my fucking window, dummy,” she pouted.

At once, I felt a cluster of sharp stings spread across my shoulders. I clawed upright in the bed and frantically ran my hands over my arms. They were covered in tiny cuts, and just above my left elbow was a shard of glass the size of a fingernail.

“You want a drink?” Emma asked and produced a bottle of vodka that she wiggled by the neck. I grabbed it. She walked to her dresser to light some candles as I took a swig. I needed to know what was going on. Three wisps of black ash hung in the air as Emma shook out the match.

“I missed you,” I blurted suddenly. She turned back, smiling again.

“I missed you too, it was nice of you to come,” she said. It came out as barely more than a whisper. She flopped back down on the bed with arms out-

stretched, “would you believe I forgot you were coming?”

I laughed, and things felt normal again. The burn of the vodka started to melt away, and I took another sip. The blue light pulsed overhead.

“I’ve just felt so off lately,” she began, “that’s why I had to call you. I would wake up in the morning, and everything would be impossibly heavy; I wouldn’t even be able to wiggle my legs under my covers,” she cocked her chin towards the duvet that was still bunched up around my waist and idly kicked her legs, “either that, or everything in the house would be floating just off the ground, and if I tried to touch something, to really grab on and pull myself back to earth and know I was still real, it would just drift off out of reach, or warp like cheap plastic in my hands,” she had rolled over now; her chin was propped up on her hands. The neck of her oversized t-shirt hung loose and I caught a glimpse of her breast, “but now you’re here!” She exclaimed, “You aren’t gray. You don’t bleed away into the background when I try to look at you,” she crawled up onto her hands and knees, “or fade away when I touch you,” Emma whispered. She reached out slowly and brushed my lip with her thumb.

“Emma, I—” then she kissed me. The light throbbed overhead, and the walls fell away. I couldn’t feel my lips. She pulled away with a playful grin.

“This is what you wanted, right?” She slid her hand over my crotch under the duvet. “This is why you came all the way down here? To save me? To have me fall into your arms?”

“Yes,” I breathed, “yes, I want you,” I strained against the covers, my clothes, her body. My hands trembled as I moved to pull her shirt over her head.

“You want to feel real. You want to make *me* real,” she said as I lifted her shirt past her pale breasts and over her raised arms. The collar was still around her neck, and for a moment, her face was hidden in the billowing fabric. I had

imagined it like this so many times. As I brought my hands to her chest, I suddenly felt the sting of broken glass, and I recoiled in shock, my fingertips oozing with blood and shimmering dust. Emma laughed and reached up to finish pulling the shirt past her head. Where her face should have been was nothing but a flat blue oval.

“You want to fuck me like nobody else can because only you can make me happy, right?” The faceless girl scoffed. Her voice seemed to come from all around me at once. I tried to push her off, and she shattered into the glass that rained down all over me.

“What a sweet guy,” the voice boomed. There was a door in front of me where no door was before, and I ran towards it. The tangled sheets turned to sucking grey mud under my feet and I fell hard into the writhing muck. The faceless, bodiless girl cackled as I sank up to my waist, then my shoulders. At once, there came a knock at the door, then another, but it was too late. The mud filled my eyes and ears, and I gasped in shock. I felt my lungs fill, and then the knock came once more before everything went blue.

I was back in the dark kitchen, alone but for the tables and chairs and the bicycle in the corner. I tried to make out more, but the night had long since set in, and my strained eyes saw only shadows. They didn't bother me because they laid still. There was a knock at the door, and I felt myself rise as I was drawn towards it. I could feel an angry nest of pinpricks burning across my back with every movement as I slowly limped to the front of the house. The window was broken in a million pieces on the floor behind me, and it twinkled like starlight. I finally reached the door. The floor had begun to bow and sag like peat beneath my feet. When I grabbed the doorknob, it was hard, the brass unyielding under my firm grip—I turned it.

Outside, there was nothing but thick white fog. It seemed to glow with a ghostly light, though I knew the sky was black. For a few moments, nothing changed, just endless white mist rolling over itself. There was no sound, and I drew a sharp breath just to hear myself. My eyes burned, so I blinked. Then I saw her. She was standing on a distant white hill, waving for me to join her.

Then she was gone, and I heard the crashing of waves.

Coffee Morning

hot
 steam
 wafts the up
 from the cup
 con densa tion
 kissing your face in
 an tici pation
 roasted bean aroma
 hangs in the room

 then the
 first sip
 touch es
 your lips
 warm ing
 sleepy fin gers
 gr asp tight
 se arching for
 that familiar drug
 sip ping slow and
 stretching towards the
 world and
 the be
 ginn ing
 of life and a new day dawning now drink in
 the darkness and awaken

Visual

Renée Cohen
Acrylic Paint
10" x 12"
2021

Reflections After a Sun Shower



Varmint

“Just Ignore them, Paul,” his wife pleaded. But he was already whirling about the bedroom, shod in his work boots and forcing his stubby arms through the sleeves of a flannel.

“They’re just raccoons!” she cried and launched a pillow at his back. Paul quickly slipped into the hallway and slammed the door behind him.

“You’re a fucking raccoon!” he shot back from the relative safety of the cheap plywood. He tried not to notice the lights flick on under the kid’s doors as he stormed downstairs.

The dog was already waiting for him at the sliding door, and the two stepped out into the cold night air. Paul’s flashlight was military grade, but still barely cut through the void separating his back porch from the treeline. For a few minutes he stood in silence as the beam played uselessly over the pines, and he suddenly grew very hot at the thought of the little masked bastards laughing down at him. He waited for the dog to finish his business on the lawn, then turned back inside.

Paul’s wife was cradling their youngest in the kitchen when he stomped in. He stared past her as he made for the pantry.

“Paul—” she began.

“Do we have any tuna left? I swear we had a tin of tuna in here,” Paul mused as he rummaged noisily through a bin of canned soups and vegetables.

“Can you listen?” she hissed as she stroked her son’s nodding head, “it’s every night with you now, I could care less if you want to freeze to death over some rodents but you can’t just wake up the whole damn house with your Elmer Fudd bullshit!”

Unfazed, Paul walked out of the pantry with a tin of cod and strode to the

coat rack to retrieve a small bolt-action rifle where it hung by its strap. He squinted as he drew back the bolt to inspect the breach.

“If you so much as fire a single shot I’m leaving with the kids, and I’m taking your mutt and your fucking insulin too,” she jabbed a finger at him like she hoped it might strike him dead. The child squirmed restlessly in her arms.

Paul stepped back out onto the porch.

“Paul—” her voice had softened, and he looked back in spite of himself.

“Just come back to bed, baby,” her voice cracked.

Paul knit his brow and scowled, staring off into the night as words welled up within him and dissolved at the tip of his tongue like sugar cubes. His iron grip on the rifle relaxed as a calm fell across his face. He met his wife’s gaze one last time, then spat on the wooden slats of the porch and walked out into the trees.

At the base of the largest pine, Paul cracked the can of fish with a swiss army knife and dumped the contents into the unkempt grass. He turned back to the house; the windows were dark now, the kitchen abandoned. Strutting back to the porch he unfolded a lawn chair underneath the corrugated awning, slung the rifle across his knees, and sank into the old chair. In the sudden tranquillity he soon felt the tension drain from his limbs, heavy in the bulky confines of his coat, and within a few minutes he began to drift off.

Paul awoke the next morning to dewdrops breaking on the bridge of his nose. He jolted upright and doubled over to grab the rifle from where it had rolled off his lap onto the wet lawn. His fingers were bright red and clumsy in the morning frost, and he struggled to stick them through the trigger guard.

The raccoons were still there—four of them, two adults and two kits, late for

the season. It was the first time Paul had seen them in daylight. They were hunched at the foot of the large pine, pawing around for chunks of cod in the damp grass. Paul watched as the mother salvaged some meat and delicately apportioned it to her restless young—her small black paws so like human hands. Paul swung the rifle around and the chair groaned under his shifting weight. The raccoons froze at the sound, then rose to face him—all fraught curiosity beneath their matching black masks. His fingers burned on the bitter metal of the rifle. All Paul could hear was the steady drip of dew as the first shafts of morning pierced through the canopy. The house behind him was silent. Paul moved to raise the rifle and found he had grown very old, and his hands would not move.

Visual

Sheila Van Delft
Acrylic on leaves,
various sizes
2020

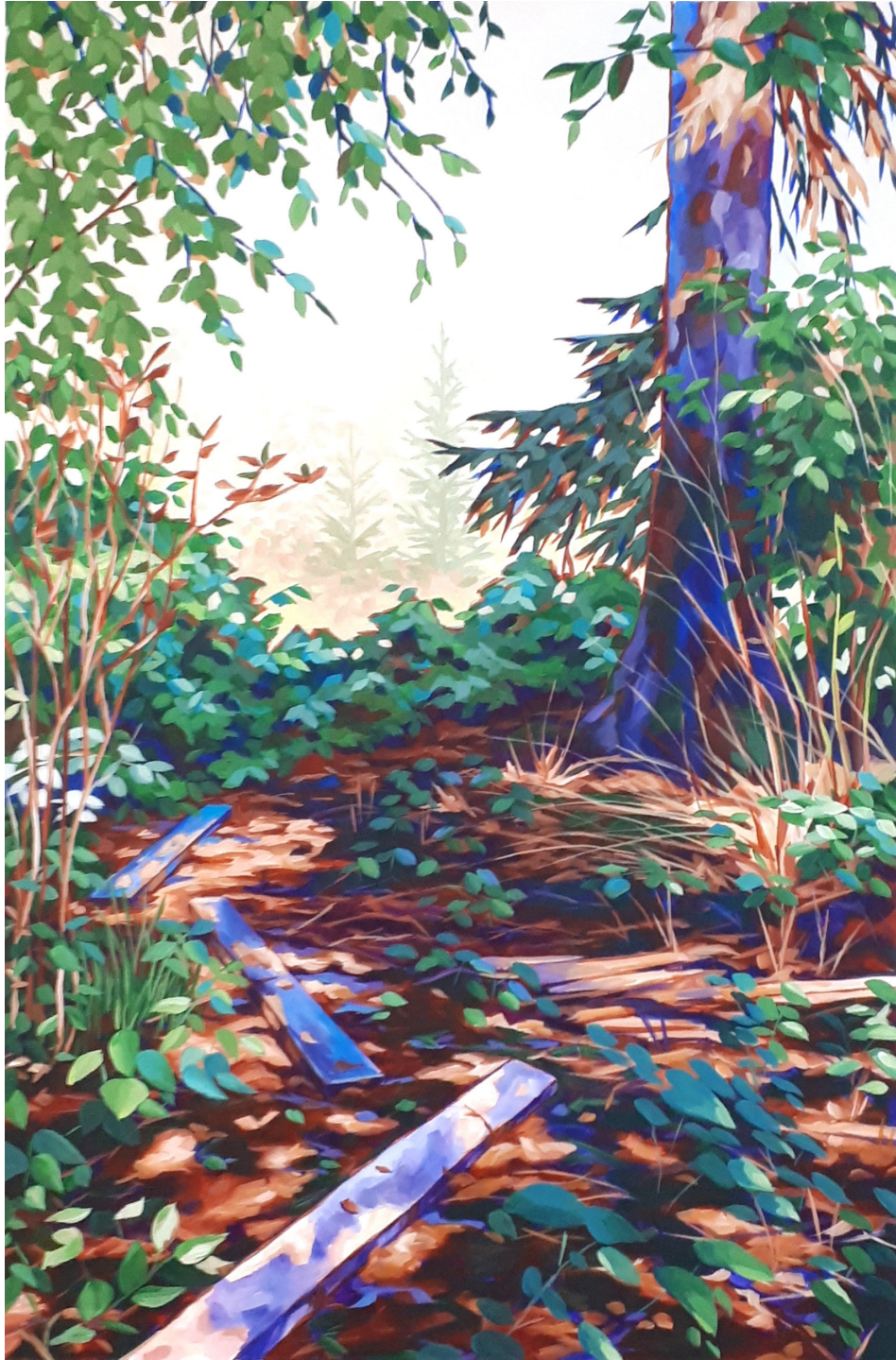
Painted Leaves



Visual

Sheila Van Delft
Acrylic paint on canvas
31" x 47"

It Was Supposed to be a Path Through the Woods



In poverty - Mother and child

She is looking into the endless space,
dried eyes sitting deep in their sockets. The pupils want to jump out into the space in search
of a remedy. Many feet ahead –
two eyes that seem will fall out any minute.

She has pale, almost white skin and a thin face. Her cheekbones protruding, the jaw pushing
forward, teeth showing with yellow bleeding gums, skin dried out and wrinkled far beyond her
age.

She's squatting on the floor, holding a baby on her lap. Her mouth is dry and bitter in taste.

The child's chest bones are out like his mother's, hands thin like pencils hanging on the sides,
eyes motionless, mouth wide open, flies move around his face.

She takes her thin, squashed breast out of her dress and pushes it into her baby's mouth, but
neither the breast holds any milk, nor does the child have the energy to suck.

The two globs of her eyes turn in their sockets aimlessly. She stares at the endless space,
witnessing life dripping out of her child's body minute by minute.

There is no movement, no feelings, no tears to spare.

After months of hunger and homelessness, she has no voice to scream or a breath to pray,
All sounds in her are broken and silenced.

Her heart is dry and blank.

She continues to stare at no place, no space, as groups of people and cars pass by her like a
speeding train.

They watch them gasping for the last breath as though they are street furniture.

No bells ring in their head, and no curtains fall off from their eyes. No drums start beating in
their hearts.

She sits there with her baby – the baby the extension of her, in body, in pain, in destiny.

The two of them will die soon at this address:

**Corner of apathy,
Street of negligence,
City of tyranny.
Zip Code: Poverty Death X 1000's.**

a new breed of bloodbath

the topsoil of this age
is saturated with blood and tears
kids drown their sorrows in mp3s
or solve them with mp5s
alongside other children
a new world with a new mindset
where it takes taking your own life
for them to know
you had *depression* depression
a trip to the hospital
for them to know
that you were *anxious* anxious
a new breed of bloodbath
unconscious apathy
out of touch
and worst of all
the unspoken evil
the inner battle with oneself
but of course
your angel is fine i'm sure

Visual

Olivia Ingram
Digital Photography
2021

Public Service Announcement



Power Outage

The angry wind sweeps through our neighbourhood
It roars at our houses like the big bad wolf
Pounding to get in
Leaves of green, gold, and bronze
Levitate off the ground
a cyclone,
Safely, in my house, the room goes dark
Like in the *City of Ember*.
I pour hot chocolate mix
Into a cup with elegant black lace printed on the rim.
A fence with black and white flowers
Like a photograph from the '50s
The body of the cup of a horn
With a detailed royal blue blossom
Dancing in monochromatic shadows.

I pour in the hot water
Chunks of powder rise to the surface
With one wooden chopstick, I stir
A chocolate whirlpool
I wish I could dive into and relax
Bubbles collect at the edge.

I recall a time in grade 5 when our class watched *Elf*
And sipped hot chocolate with mini marshmallows
Sugary white pillows in a cocoa sea
Steam rises
I clutch the warm cup in my hands
Taking a gentle sip; it's hot
Sweetness mingles at my tastebuds
Like the magical cyclone of leaves outside
Blinded to the colours
I open my eyes
the darkness collapsed above us all;
the world became a monochromatic shadow.

Visual

Ernst Michel Perdriel
Mosaic with Mixed Media
9.5" x 8.5"

Clef du Success



I Love You, Selma

They sing half the way there, Selma slapping on the steering wheel and Ina tapping on the dashboard. “*You’re simply the best, better than all the rest!*” They love Tina Turner. Selma has a better voice than Ina, and she can hit the high notes. Ina sings it in a monotone, but she has spirit.

After they stop at a drive-thru an hour southeast of Montreal, they’re quiet for a few minutes, sipping their coffees. The snow’s coming down hard now, and Selma grips the wheel tightly with the hand that’s not holding the coffee. Selma turns the wipers on. It’s like they’re driving through outer space. The snowflakes hitting the windshield are a million stars against the darkening sky.

Ina has some blue sour candies in her bag and puts a few in her mouth. One gets stuck over her front teeth. She turns to Selma and asks innocently, “Anything on my teeth?”

“Ew, how can you eat those with your coffee?”

“It’s a delicacy,” she’d wanted Selma to smile, but Selma doesn’t smile.

After a moment, Ina asks who’s going to be there. Selma says it’s a group of four people from work, some single people and a couple, “You keep asking me the same thing.”

Selma puts the music back on. “*Tear us apart, baby, I would rather be dead.*” Selma puts her coffee into the holder between the seats and sings with her hand on her chest.

Ina watches her for a moment and then turns to squint out the window, “Maybe

you should use both hands on the wheel. It looks slippery.”

“Okay, geez,” Selma says after a pause and blows a stream of air through her lips. She turns the music off and then drives in silence, both hands on the wheel.

When they get there, the winter daylight’s nearly gone. The cottage, which is more like a house, is up the hill from the lake. One of Selma’s work friends has rented it for the weekend. It’s large and fairly modern, with a sliding glass door and a giant window facing the lake. If they want to go out on the frozen lake, they have to go down the road and follow a narrow path between two cottages down to the shore.

The lake’s so immense that the ice is loud, making the sound of a double bass droning on the bottom strings. It’s a long lake, starting in Quebec and ending in Vermont. In the summer you can take a boat and cross the border that way. In the winter, you could probably cross on the frozen lake itself, but it would take hours.

Selma leads the way into the house. They go in the back way, knocking on the glass door and then sliding it open. There are four people there, just like Selma said. Two men are snuggling on the couch, an obvious couple. They wave and don’t get up. Then, there are two other men who come out from the kitchen with beers, presumably the single ones. They introduce themselves to Ina as David and Hamed. David’s tall and skinny, and Hamed’s shorter and more stocky. Selma gives everyone a hug, and Ina waves. When no one’s looking, Selma squeezes Ina’s hand and nods her head towards Hamed. Selma must have a thing for him.

Is that why we came this weekend? Ina feels a pang of jealousy.

After dinner, they play Boulette. The game involves pulling out scrunched up balls of paper on which the names of famous people are written. Then, whoever’s turn it is, has to make their team guess as fast as possible who it is, first by using sentences, and then, in the next rounds, gestures, and finally just sounds. The last round always has everyone laughing.

Ina tries to get her team to guess Leonard Cohen by humming “Suzanne.” Since she can never find a tune, it sounds awful. It’s also an odd choice of songs, being one of his less recognizable ones. Ina does it for Selma, so she’ll laugh. She loves Selma’s laugh. David’s sitting next to Selma, and, as she giggles, he raises his arm and puts it around her, squeezing her to him. Ina catches Selma’s eye. For just a moment, Selma looks afraid and then annoyed. Her forehead wrinkles and her lips get all small. Ina’s seen that face before. Sometimes, Selma looks at her that way.

Selma softly elbows David, and he straightens up and takes his arm away. His cheeks get red spots and his eyes blink a lot. He catches Ina watching and takes a drink of his beer, staring her in the eyes. He seems angry. Or maybe Ina’s angry.

Ina stands up and wipes chip crumbs off her pants and grabs her glass. It’s almost empty. She goes to the kitchen. She’s been sitting on her knees for a while, and now she wobbles when she walks.

Hamed follows her into the kitchen. She fills her glass with gin and soda. He’s leaning on the counter not saying anything. She stirs the drink with her finger. She can hear Selma laughing in the other room. She drinks the whole glass just standing there, looking at Hamed.

He taps his fingers on the counter as if he’s waiting for something. Then, he walks over and presses into her from behind and puts his mouth on her ear, “I like you,” his breath is very hot and smells of something sweet and orange. It’s been a long time since anyone touched her in that way. Maybe no one had ever touched her that way. For a moment, she’s kind of flattered. The floor’s sticky on her socks in a way that makes her nauseated and it’s too hot. She wants to get outside.

She puts on her jacket and boots by the back door and he does the same. Selma gives her a look and moves her index finger ever so slightly in Hamed’s direction and lowers her eyebrows. Ina shrugs. Selma shakes her head and mouths, “*Don’t.*”

Outside, the wind hits her in the face and her own breath burns her eyes. They walk through the deep snow to the road, their boots crashing through the crispy surface into the knee-deep powder below. Then, they follow the tire tracks down to the little path between two cottages. The lights in the cottages are out and there are no cars in the driveways.

At the bottom of the path, they reach the lake. The air feels different in the big open space, more free, more piercing. They step out tentatively onto the ice. It moves a little under their weight, wobbling. Hamed jumps back onto the shore. Ina walks out further and then stomps to show him that it's solid. He slides out again, this time faster, and shuffles quickly out to where she is. He smiles, "I've never done this before."

The ice creaks under their feet like two pieces of squeaky wood rubbing together. The whole lake seems to vibrate. It's getting colder. It's stopped snowing and the sky's clear. There's no moon so all they can see is the shape of the other shore ahead of them, black on an already black horizon. There are stars in the sky, but without the moon, they're less glittery. There must be some clouds because there are big blank spots above them where there are no stars at all. To their right, the lake disappears completely into the hollow darkness, and way down that way is the United States.

They walk for a few minutes, and then he takes her hand and pulls her mitten off. The cold air hits her bare skin and it stings immediately. He still has his glove on and he pulls her hand into his coat sleeve. His finger's scratch her palm, digging little circles into her skin. She shivers.

He pulls on her wrist and she stumbles out in front of him. They're facing each other now, two feet apart. His lips are parted, and his beard is icy. He runs his hand up the front of her jacket along the zipper and when he gets to the top he slowly pulls it down and opens it. Her heart's beating fast.

"I don't know..." she starts to say. Then his lips are on hers and that orange taste is in her mouth. He reaches inside her jacket, feeling around quickly, as if she's taken

something from him and he wants it back.

She pulls away. This isn't what she wanted. Selma will be so angry.

Suddenly, there's a crash and the sound of water. She turns around and it feels like she's moving through glue, the air is suddenly thick.

Everything's black except for the white of the snow covering the surface. She can't see him. She looks so hard it feels like her eyeballs are going to pop out of her head.

For a moment, she wants to run away. But then she crawls to where it's wet and water's coming out. The ice dips down and wobbles. She feels around for him, and for just a moment, the tiniest of seconds, she thinks she feels his fingers. Skinny and slippery, already stiff. Her fingers are in his palm, her nails around his wrist, and then it's gone. Maybe it was just a fish, maybe some kind of lake creature coming up to shake her hand and say, "Hello."

Her arms are up to the elbows in the murky water and her cheek is pressed against the wet ice. Snow's in her eyes and mouth. She can't see anything. She may never see again. She's going in. The water's pulling her, but it will be the same as taking a summer swim. She'll skinny dip under the stars like she used to do with Selma when they were teenagers. Everything will be okay.

There's a part of her that's saying something else. It's soft at first, and then it wails inside her head: *Don't go in*. Something terrible is happening.

What have I done?

Somehow, she's moving backwards now towards the shore. She's some kind of ice snake. She's slithering, not feeling the cold anymore. The ice moves under her and the sound of the bass is getting louder and louder. Her head's vibrating. Her ears are going to explode. Hamed's screaming under her, making the whole lake shake. She's afraid of this new power.

Near the shore, the ice bobs on the water and when she steps on it, it cracks. She runs as fast as she can, faster than she's ever run. Maybe so fast her feet don't even touch the water. She's Jesus astonishing everyone by walking on water. Or, Moses parting the seas. Her feet thump into the snow and she's made it to solid ground.

She's a rabbit now, running up the path between the cottages. She arrives at the road. She can't breathe anymore. Her legs are frozen. He's in the lake. She yells it, but it comes out as wind. The house is ahead. *Is that the house?* It's different from this angle.

Ina falls on her knees. Maybe she's under the ice too, and this is what it feels like to never go home. She wants to weep. She's crawling now. She's an earthworm. *Where is my voice?*

She hears Selma whispering in her ear, "Get up," she says, "get up," she sounds raspy and tired, as if it's the middle of the night and she didn't want to be woken up.

Maybe it is the middle of the night. Ina's so tired. All she wants to do is go to sleep and the snow's so soft and peaceful. It's a miracle.

She's going up the backstairs of the house. Selma will help her. She loves Selma more than anything. Selma will know exactly what to do. Selma, her love. She presses against the door, putting her forehead on the glass. The door opens and she's on the ground. It's so bright. Everyone's there. But not Hamed.

She remembers, "Help," her cry is so tiny, like a bug's, "he's in the lake," they're running around now. Someone's on the phone and someone's putting on their jacket.

She can sleep now. She dreams that it's summer and she and Selma are ten. They're sitting on the dock at Selma's uncle's cottage. Their feet and ankles are in the water. They're eating purple grapes, laughing their heads off because the skin of the fruit's covering their teeth. The water's warm and soft against her feet. Like someone's cheek. Ina leans over and kisses Selma on the lips and it's so sweet and smooth. Selma pushes her gently and turns away. Like she always does.

Ina wakes up and Selma's lying with her in a big bed. Selma isn't sleeping. Her face is wet and she's making whimpering noises. It's still dark outside. Selma must notice she's awake because suddenly she raises her arm and hits Ina hard across the cheek. Then there are loud voices and the door to the room opens. It's suddenly very bright and paramedics are all around her.

It's fall. She's walking down Beaubien when she sees Selma. Selma's wearing her favourite blue jacket and is holding a coffee. They're the only ones on the block. Selma must see her because she starts walking slower, her eyes down. Her body seems stiff. When they reach each other, Selma takes another step as if she's going to pass, but she stops instead. She raises her head and they stare at each other in the eyes. Her eyes look like the sea in a storm. But, then Selma looks away, up the street to where she's going.

"How are you?" Ina asks. She hasn't seen Selma since that night. Since he died. At first, she sent her tons of texts, but Selma only answered some. First, short responses: "Why did you even go with him out on the lake?" Then just words. "Why?" Then nothing. Ina could never find an answer. It was always Selma that she wanted. That night, maybe she'd liked that Hamed wanted her. Maybe she'd wanted to hurt Selma. Selma never picked up when Ina phoned. After a while, Ina had stopped trying.

Selma kicks some bright yellow leaves on the ground and flicks the lid of her coffee up and down. Then, Selma's face starts to shake, starting near her mouth and moving its way up to her eyes.

"Why did you do it?" her voice is a hiss. Like a kettle that's too hot to pour, "because I liked him? You had to take him from me," Selma hits her index finger and middle finger into her own temple, "you're so crazy."

"He just fell through the ice. It was an accident. I tried to help him," Ina tries to reach for Selma, but Selma steps back, "I swear it, Selma," Ina whispers. But she isn't

even sure anymore. That night was so long ago and it was so dark and cold. It's hard to remember anything. Her memory's jumbled and when she closes her eyes, even for a moment, she just sees animals running through the snow.

"I don't want to know you anymore," Selma says. Just like that.

Selma walks away quickly as if she's gliding on ice. As if her feet aren't even touching the ground.

Ina says, "Please," but Selma's already turned a corner. Ina closes her eyes and for the millionth time this year, she sees the snow coming towards her fast, like she's flying through outer space, and everything's still fine.

Visual

Makayla Rose Goldsmith

Mixed materials

18" x 24"

2020

What is God in 2020?



Salvation

The caterpillar
does not think

Every cell of it
inches onward to its end,

conspiring like the words
of some preordained sentence

tucked inside its tomb-womb
not thinking

I am a caterpillar
doomed to die a butterfly

Quite naturally you know
that nothing lasts forever

& it's worth considering
the butterfly does not think

Caught in a deity's net
the butterfly sheds its wings,

shrivels into itself
& disappears

Visual

Jesse Matas
Typewriter/Marker on Paper
8.5" x 8.5"
2018

Lunch

[redacted] lunch [redacted]
[redacted] can cut through [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] (this time) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
and this is precisely why it is so stupefying that certain humans [redacted]
[redacted] shorten [redacted]
their own lunchtimes [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Bios

Mark Laliberte is an artist-writer-designer-curator with an MFA from the University of Guelph. He has exhibited extensively in galleries across Canada and internationally, curates the experimental comics site 4panel.ca, and edits the hybrid art/lit mag CAROUSEL. He has had poems and pageworks appear in publications big and small, including Ink Brick, Poetry, prairie fire, Prefix Photo, subTerrain and Vallum. Recent publications include asemanticasymmetry (Anstruther Press), BookBook (above/ground) and Explosive Comic (Swimmers Group). Laliberte is also a member of MA|DE, a collaborative writing partnership, whose debut chapbook, Test Centre, was recently released by ZED Press.

Liam Fleming is a fourth year General Studies major who hates online learning. The unending stream of vague emails from classmates and professors he may or may not know has been greatly distressing for him. Poetry is currently the only effective way he has found to accurately share how he feels with others and apologizes for it far too often.

Austin Ruyter, aged 25, is a poet, musician, and space-alien from the not-too-distant galaxy of Surrey, BC. He is an English and Creative Writing student at KPU in his final year of studies. In his spare time, he enjoys searching out the mysteries of existence, practising Zen meditation, and pretending to be enlightened.

Makayla Rose Goldsmith completed a certificate in fine arts back in January at KPU and plans to continue her education to become a teacher. She went through 20 years of misdiagnosis with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities and never fully understanding her art. In February 2021 she became incredibly malnourished, dehydrated and fatigued, had intense pain and vomiting. She landed in hospital where she was diagnosed with Crohns; an intestinal inflammatory disease. Since, all her creative endeavours have started to make sense as her body had been screaming for help for two decades through her work. She now shares her story through social media in hopes of helping others. Instagram @makaylagoldsmith

Dominic McLean: I am an undeclared student in his 2nd year at KPU. Through my post-secondary education, I have been able to re-evaluate my relationship with art--writing included--and I find myself enjoying the work for the first time in a long time. One day I hope to publish a book that will capture the hearts and imaginations of kids as so many books once did for me.

Sheila Van Delft received a Diploma in Graphic and Visual Design from Kwantlen Polytechnic University in 1987 and is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Fine Arts Program, majoring in Visual Arts, fourth year. Her art practice includes murals, portraits, illustrations, and commissioned artwork. Sheila works primarily with acrylics on canvas and has recently been creating work to express her feelings of Home.

Shelby Baertl: I am a second year student at KPU with a major in Creative Writing and a minor in Psychology. I currently live in Cloverdale, BC, and I love coffee, swords, cats, and playing the guitar, as well as annoying my friends and family with bad jokes. My favourite prose genres to write in are dystopian, horror, and fantasy, but no matter what I'm writing I usually try to add a little humour. I also like to write poetry. My goal is to write and publish at least one novel before I die.

Renée Cohen is a freelance writer and artist from Canada. Winner of the The Fieldstone Review's Banner Art Competition in 2019, Renée's artwork has been featured on the cover of On SPEC magazine, inside the pages of Red Planet Magazine, Understorey Magazine's Nature Issue, Jet Fuel Review, Sonic Boom Journal India, 3Elements Review, Flash Frontier New Zealand, Headlight 22 Anthology, Aji Magazine, Gulf Stream Magazine and elsewhere.

Parvaneh Farhangpour has a Ph.D. in Curriculum Development from the University of Pretoria, South Africa. She lived in South Africa for 33 years. She lectured at a Teacher Training college and at the University of Venda. She has published several papers in international scholarly journals and co-authored eight textbooks for high school learners. She also created a life skills program (Youth Enrichment Programme) which was widely used in South Africa and neighbouring countries for over a decade. She returned to Canada in 2018. From a young age, she has enjoyed writing as a means of connecting to her spirit.

Olivia Ingram is an urban settler, academic, and poet interested in people and their relationships to each other and/in the places they inhabit. Her work focuses on how the construction, tensions, aesthetics, and language of spaces are advanced in the current moment of geophysical capitalism.

Jenny Sun is a first year student in the creative writing program at KPU. She enjoys writing poetry and prose on genres such as dystopian worlds, environmental issues, mental health, and the things that she sees in her everyday life. On her free time, Jenny enjoys going on walks in the park, drawing comics, and watching TV.

Ernst Perdriel is an African descendant and was born in Montreal (Quebec, Canada). He is a multi-field artist (visual art, photography, writing - French), designer and horticulturist. He participates in solo and group exhibitions in visual arts since 1995. Perdriel has contributed in numerous publications since 1992 as a writer, illustrator, artist, photographer and in self-publishing. His works have appeared in Sunspot Literary Journal, Meat for Tea: The Valley Review, Photo Solution Magazine, Into the Void, The Healing Muse, Iris Literary Journal, 3Elements Literary Review and others.

Rachel Deutsch has worked for over fifteen years in the field of social work, particularly with people who are struggling with trauma, addictions, and the justice system. Social work fits well with writing. It's all about listening to stories and exploring how to retell them in ways that are different, clearer, and, if needed, more gentle. Rachel Deutsch is finishing her first novel about three generations of a Jewish Montreal family. She lives in Montreal with her two young children and partner.

Jesse Matas is a father, husband, poet, musician, visual artist and peace scholar. His poetry can be found in Contemporary Verse 2, The Fourth River, The New Quarterly and EVENT, The t mz Review, among other journals. He has recorded four full length albums and has toured in eleven countries. He is from Treaty 1 territory and lives on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations of the Grand River. He is a current candidate for Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Waterloo.



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