

SUMMER 2019 Issue 18

pump MAGAZINE

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Mara Satellite

Mara, her builders called her, flew
through the stratosphere in 2058
on an explosion of semi-solid fuel
in a tube labelled "AT&T."
She settled into orbit for 3 years
in a slow pirouette about Earth,
beamed our messages from household
to corporation and back.
She danced for 3 years
before another satellite grasped her
too quick,
too tight.

On contact,
her bolts, screws, and steel scattered
from satellite to satellite, sheared
through silicone sheets, multiplied
into a high-speed shower of shrapnel—
a whirlwind that ripped
communication relays apart.
The International Space Station
died after a month.

Six astronauts went with it.

Blame shuffled from company
to company while radio lines cut
in mangled, electronic cries. Today, 2063,
shards of satellites fly like bricks
through a window, make a dead
Dyson sphere around Earth,
run band-saws that bar
our jail cell.

Visual

Reggie
Graham
2018
Mixed Media

Betraying the Seasons



Split

*"If you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it from yourself."
— George Orwell, 1984*

My parents never could agree on anything. When I was born, I was baptized twice. Once at the Catholic church in Prince George, with my dad's Italian family, and once at the Danish Lutheran church in Burnaby with my mother's side of the family. The fact that they split up about eight years later came as a shock to no one. I am the product of two utterly incompatible people who made the questionable decision to settle down and start a family.

* * *

I am eight years old. Mom sits me down at the kitchen table.

"You know, Laura, I was married to someone else before I met your father," she tells me.

Your father. Ever since the divorce, my parents only ever refer to each other as 'my father' or 'my mother.' I guess it's because I'm the only reason they still have to talk to each other.

"I know," I reply. "Dad told me."

"Oh, *of course*, he did," she says scornfully. "What did he say?"

"He said his name was Bob." Dad also called her a gold-digging whore, but I figure I should leave that part out.

"Right. Well, the thing is, Bob was Jewish."

"Okay. So?"

"Well, when I married him, I converted. That means I became Jewish, too."

This takes a moment for me to process. "But how come you didn't tell us?" I finally ask.

"I stopped practicing when I met your father. But now, I want to start going to synagogue again. And I want you and Peter to come, too."

"Okay," I said. "But why?"

"I have wanted to be Jewish my whole life. I didn't convert for Bob, I did it for me."

"No—I mean, why did you stop being Jewish when you met Dad?"

She looks at me seriously. "Because according to Jewish law, if I'm Jewish, so are you and your brother."

"We are?"

"Yes. But your nonno, he doesn't like Jews."

"He doesn't?"

“You know what he said, Laura? He said Hitler had the right idea.”

My mind is racing. *Hitler is evil. He wanted to kill all the Jews. Does Nonno want to kill Jews, too? He seems so nice.*

“Oh.” I don’t know what else to say. A knot has formed in my stomach. *My nonno?*

“So that’s why you shouldn’t mention it to your father,” my mom continues. “Not yet. I’ll tell him when I’m ready. Besides, it’s none of their business. They can still take you to church. But from now on, we’re going to synagogue.”

I am twenty-one. I have been hired to work as a Unit Leader at Camp Hatikvah, a Jewish summer camp outside Kelowna. The other staff and I have spent two weeks preparing for this day—the first day of camp. As per tradition, we stand at the gate and wave as the buses pull up. The doors open, and there are shrieks of excitement as friends, siblings, and cousins reunite with their favourite leaders.

But none of the campers approach me. I smile, try to look as friendly as possible, but I know I stand out as a new face among the rest of the camp staff. Most had been going to this camp all their lives, just like their parents—and even grandparents—before them. A few nights later, I am chatting with some of my campers before lights-out.

“Where did you go to camp?” one girl asks me.

“I didn’t.”

“You didn’t?” All the girls are staring at me with the same shocked look on their faces. Another girl asks hesitantly, “So...why do you work here then?”

I take a moment to consider my answer. “Because I like it here.”

I am eight. My mormor and morfar are visiting from Denmark. In preparations for the traditional New Year’s Eve dinner, we take a family trip to Costco. My grandparents, Mom, Dad and my four-year-old brother Peter all pile into the minivan. Mormor, my grandmother, always loves going to Costco. She wears a lot of scarves, calls napkins serviettes, and smells fancy. She has a hint of an English accent from the years she and Morfar spent living in England.

“There’s nothing like this in Denmark,” she says, and takes Peter and me by the hand as we begin our hunt for every sample station we can find.

I am sixteen months old. My father is using his fancy new video camera. In the corner, the date reads 12/23/93. We are at my grandparents' house in Denmark. There, in the living room, are my aunt and uncle with my mother. I am playing with my cousin Elisabeth on the floor. We are wearing matching red Christmas dresses that my mormor sewed for us. The Christmas tree is decorated with garlands of Danish flags and nisse—tiny, handmade elves made of acorns—are perched in every corner of the room.

“Let’s sing some Christmas songs around the tree,” my aunt suggests, “while we wait for dinner to be ready.”

Mom takes my hand as I toddle toward the tree. She looks back at my father with the camera. “Frank,” she says. “Come join us.”

My father doesn’t answer. Mom glances at Mormor and Morfar, then gives a look to the camera. Everyone has taken their places around the Christmas tree. She holds one hand out, keeping the circle open. “Come on,” she says. She stares at the camera. *Can’t you at least try?*

“It’s okay,” my father answers, a hint of annoyance in his voice.

Mom gives up and takes my cousin’s hand. My father stays back and records, while the rest of us dance around the Christmas tree, singing a Danish tune:

*Now it’s Christmas again
And now it’s Christmas again
Does Christmas last ‘til Easter?
No! Because in between comes Lent.*

I am ten. It’s Christmas Eve. My brother and I have just spent the last eight days celebrating Hanukkah with Mom, eating *latkes* (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (deep-fried doughnuts with raspberry filling). We went to synagogue and chanted prayers in Hebrew; I’ve memorized them, but I don’t understand them. Now, two days later, we are in Prince George, attending the Italian midnight Mass service at the Catholic church with my nonno and nonna.

I read through the book of hymns and do my best to follow along. I realize, as I sing the words, that I don’t understand this any more than I do the Hebrew words in the *siddur*. Suddenly, the priest says something, and people start shuffling out of their seats towards the altar. My nonna looks at me.

“Laow-ra,” she says, in broken English, “you come with-a Nonna, *si?*”

I look at my dad. He nods and tilts his head. *Go.*

Nonna smiles and takes my hand, leading me to the lineup that has formed at the altar. The priest and another man are handing out little crackers and thimble-sized cups of wine. As we approach the priest, Nonna gets on her knees and crosses herself. I do the same.

“Questo è il corpo di Cristo,” he says. I nod, pretending to understand. He holds out the cracker. I try to take it from his hand, but he pulls it back.

“Stick out your tongue,” whispers a lady next to me.

I do, and the priest puts it on my tongue. I feel it melt in my mouth, tasteless. Then I shuffle along on my knees to where the next man is standing with a thimble of wine.

“Questo è il sangue di Cristo,” he says. I nod again. I open my mouth and wait, but the man laughs. “It’s okay. You can do it yourself.”

Embarrassed, I drink it quickly and follow my grandmother back to the pews. My father smiles back proudly. As I take my place next to him, he whispers, “I think you made Nonna very happy.”

“But what were they saying?” I whisper back.

“Those crackers symbolize the body of Christ,” he explains. “And the wine symbolizes his blood.”

I try to hide my disgust, examining my father’s face to see if he’s joking. “But...isn’t that cannibalism?” I ask.

Dad laughs. “It’s just crackers and grape juice.”

Later that night, I find myself unable to sleep. Not because I’m excited, or waiting to hear Santa’s sleigh on the roof (besides, I’m starting to notice how much Santa’s writing resembles my dad’s). Instead, I am wondering if the body and blood of Christ is kosher. Something tells me it’s probably not.

I am twenty-four. I am on a program called Birthright—a free ten-day trip to Israel for Jewish youth who have never visited before. I am one of forty people around my age, most of whom are from Toronto and already know each other from summer camp, synagogue, or Jewish day school. Every night, we have group activities. Tonight, we are discussing what it means to be a ‘good Jew.’ I learn that many people, like myself, don’t know if they believe in God, but cherish the traditions and values that Judaism offers.

“What about remembering the Holocaust?” asks our leader, Jules. “Do you consider that an important part of being Jewish?”

“Yes,” someone says. “My grandparents are Holocaust survivors.”

“Mine, too,” someone else replies.

“That’s one thing that we all have in common,” says Jules. “Our ancestors have been persecuted for millennia. And perhaps common suffering is something that keeps us united.”

I think of *my* ancestors. On one side, I have Vikings—violent conquerors. On the other, Romans. More violent conquerors. Not a lot of persecution in my blood. I think of the level of privilege my mother had to simply choose to be Jewish. Suddenly, I feel ashamed. Fraudulent. *Why should I be allowed to go to Israel for free? I haven’t suffered. My ancestors didn’t suffer. My grandfather voted for fucking Mussolini. Who do I think I am?*

While I’m pondering this, the conversation moves to our parents.

“What about your parents, Laura?” asks Jules.

I feel a tingle in my armpits as beads of sweat emerge from my pores. “Well,” I begin, “my dad’s Catholic, but my mom is Jewish. She wasn’t raised religious, but when she found out her father was Jewish, she decided to explore her roots.”

“Interesting,” says Jules. “So, your grandfather is a Holocaust survivor, too?”

“Uh—I’m not sure,” I lie, feeling my heart beat faster. “He died a few years ago.”

I am eight years old. We have finished shopping for New Year’s dinner, and Mom is pushing a very full cart of groceries through the Costco parking lot. When we reach the car, my mother loads my little brother into his car seat while my dad and grandparents fill the trunk. I clamber into the backseat of the minivan next to my brother, and wait for the others to join.

After a while, the trunk door is closed, but everyone is still outside the car. *What’s taking so long?* When I look outside, I see my dad’s face. I know something’s wrong.

“Stay here,” I tell my brother. “Don’t get out.”

“Why?” Peter asks. Typical four-year-old.

“Because if you stay in your seat, I’ll play *Toy Story* with you when we get home.”

“Promise?” he asks.

“I promise.” And with that, I crawl out of the car. I go around to the back and find my father choking my mother against a white sedan.

I am nine. It's a warm summer evening in Denmark. The doves are *coo-cooing* in the poplar trees, and the smell of fragrant gladiolas fills the air. We have just finished a delicious dinner of fried eel (a Danish delicacy), potatoes, and Mormor's famous creamed spinach. The adults are speaking Danish, but I can't quite follow the conversation. However, I know better than to leave the table. I know we're having my favourite dessert: *rød grød med fløde*, which is a classic Danish dish of strawberry compote, drizzled with cream and sugar. Besides, it would be bad manners. And my grandparents hate bad manners.

But as the adults chatter away, I feel myself beginning to nod off. Plate empty, belly full, I put my elbow on the table to support my drooping head.

My mom, seeing this, nudges me. "Laura. *Elbows.*" She gives me a stern look.

Morfar notices. "Oh, Laow-ra," he says in his thick Danish accent, looking playfully scandalized. "Your father's family may put their elbows on the table, but they can't help it. They're Italians. From the *South*," he adds, as though that explains everything. "But *you—you* know better than that." He gives me a charming wink.

I tell myself he didn't mean it. *He's just old*, I think. *Old people are all a little racist, right?* But, still, my cheeks grow warm with shame.

I am twelve. We are driving home from synagogue in Vancouver, where we have just watched a girl my age perform her bat mitzvah, the female coming-of-age ceremony.

"Mom, am I going to have a bat mitzvah?" I ask.

"I didn't know you wanted to," says Mom. "I'm so glad. I didn't want to pressure you."

"I do want to," I respond. "But what about Dad?"

My mom takes a moment to answer. "I guess we'll just have to tell him."

When we get home, my mom hands me the phone. "Here. Call your father. Put him on speaker phone. I'll sit right here."

Heart in my throat, I dial my dad's number. I take a deep breath as I listen to it ring.

"Hello?"

"Hi, Dad. Is this a bad time?"

"No, what is it?"

"I—I just wanted to tell you..." I start, but the words get caught in my throat.

"Tell me what?"

"I...I mean, Mom's Jewish." I wait for a response. When it doesn't come, I continue.

"Mom's Jewish and we've been going to synagogue and I want to have my bat mitzvah."

After a long silence, my dad finally speaks, his voice cold. "Let me talk to your mother."

"I'm here, Frank," Mom pipes in.

"What the *fuck* have you been teaching my kids?" he yells into the phone.

"I told you Bob was Jewish," she says calmly, "but I also converted. And now that I don't have to worry about your bigoted parents, I'm practicing my religion."

"Since when?" Dad asks furiously.

"Since you moved out."

"*Four years?!*" my dad bellows. "For four years, you've been brainwashing the kids behind my back? Jesus Christ, you're a manipulative bitch."

"I *want* to be Jewish," I interrupt.

"Laura, you might think that," he answers, "but that's because your witch of a mother has been doing everything she can to take you from me. Your mother is sick in the head, Laura. One day, you'll see that."

And with that, he hangs up, leaving Mom and me sitting at the table in silence.

I am fifteen. Three years late. I am standing at the *bima* with the rabbi, wearing the *talit*, or prayer shawl, that Mom bought me for this day, my head covered with a small cap, or kippa. I have been practicing my Torah portion for the last year, and I am jittery with nerves.

The rabbi places the Torah scroll on the bima. I take the corner of my shawl, touch the Torah with it, then bring it to my lips and kiss it. I take a deep breath as I begin my first *aliyah*. Literally translated, the word means 'to elevate.' Reading from the Torah is an honour reserved for adults.

"*Barchu et Adonai ha-m'vorach*," I begin.

"*Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorach l'olam va-ed*," the congregation responds. Suddenly, I don't feel nervous anymore. The words flow effortlessly, the familiar tune feels comforting. As I chant the words, a ray of sunshine peeks through the clouds and sheds a warm light over me.

When I finish, I look into the crowd. I see my mother wipe a tear from her eye, and I am filled with pride. *If only Dad could see me now.*

I am eight. I am standing in the Costco parking lot, watching in horror as my dad's hands squeeze tighter around Mom's neck. Her face turns red, then purple. People are staring. My mom's arms flail frantically, hitting and scratching my dad's face. Mormor is already

on the phone with the police. Her scarf has fallen off and mascara is streaming down her cheeks.

Suddenly, my seventy-year-old morfar lunges from behind the other car. He swings his left fist, and it lands with a thud on my dad's mouth. Dad's head swings around; he is knocked off his feet and I watch him crash into the minivan face-first before he lands on the ground. He lays there for a moment, disoriented, holding his mouth. When he removes his hand, I see a gash on his upper lip. He sits up. There's blood everywhere—on his hands, on the car, dripping into his mouth and on his shirt.

Mom's face slowly returns to a normal colour as she rubs her neck, which is covered in red stripes from my dad's fingers.

"Oh my god." She looks at my dad on the ground. "*Far!*" Mom screams at my grandfather. "What did you do to him?"

"You saw what I did," Morfar says defensively. "I had to get him off you, Lisbet. He was going to kill you!" He is breathing heavily, clutching his chest. His gold wedding band is stained red with my father's blood.

"Mogens," my mormor says gently. "The police are coming. Let's go wait in the car. Don't give yourself another heart attack," she adds, leading him to the car.

I am still standing there, unsure of what to do. I look at my dad, still on the ground. With his swollen lip, his face covered in blood, he looks less like my father and more like something from a horror movie. I look at my mother, still catching her breath. The red marks on her neck are already starting to bruise. In this moment, I see her—not as my mother, but as a real person. I feel her humiliation. For the first time, I see her as fragile. Breakable. Human. I go to her.

I wrap my arms around her waist and squeeze her tight. I say the only thing I can think of to make her feel better.

"Mommy, I love you so much. Everything's going to be okay."

"Oh, Laura," my mother says, her voice breaking. "I'm so sorry. I'm so, so sorry."

I don't say anything. As I feel her arms wrap around my shoulders, I know very well that she's not the one who should be saying sorry.

I am twenty-five. I am sitting in my room at my mother's house, finishing my final assignment for my class: Writing From The Self. I have spent months delving into my past, recalling my darkest memories, trying to make sense of it all.

I text my father: Brunch on Sunday? :) I can't do dinner this week—it's Hanukkah.

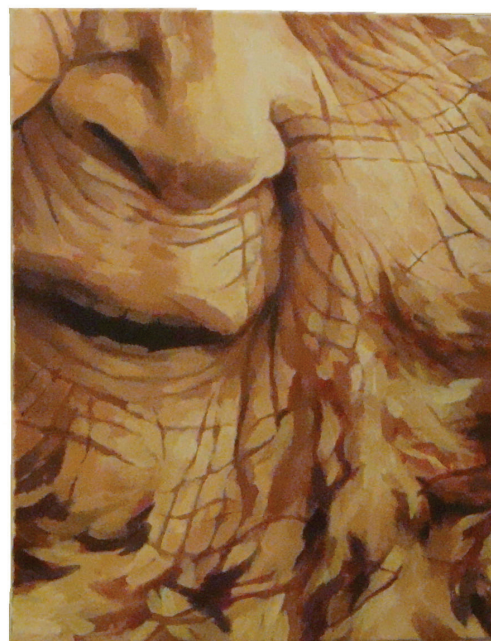
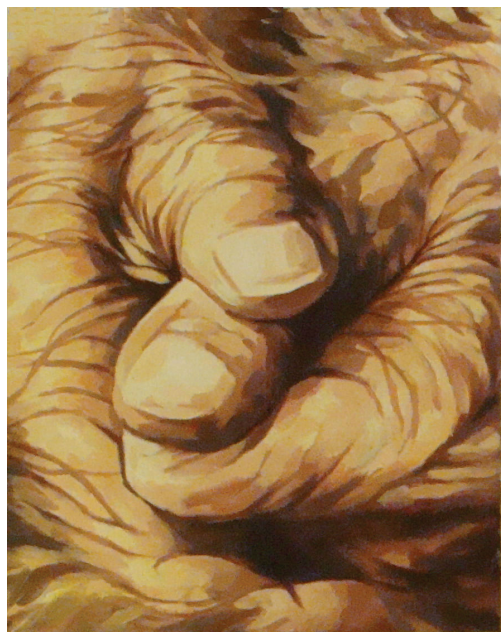
The truth is, my story isn't finished yet. I am still dealing with the aftermath of my parents' divorce; still grappling with my own identity and faith. But the very act of reliving these memories has given me a new perspective. I realize now, that in some ways, I am lucky. I'm lucky to have been exposed to different cultures. I'm lucky to have had the chance to choose what I believe in. And I'm lucky to have found the inner strength to grow from my experiences.

These days, my dad has learned to accept my involvement in the Jewish community. I pushed him away for years, feeling justified in my anger towards him. But he waited for me. He took steps to change. He *did* apologize. And the rest, I suppose, remains to be seen.

Visual

Sheila Van Delft
2009
Quadriptych
Acrylic on
Canvas
16" x 20"

Grandmother



Poetry

Keana Tighe

Short Talk on Makeup

after Anne Carson

When I was eighteen, my mother told me
I should wear makeup more often. She said
it made me look pretty. Not Prettier. Just Pretty.

Fleshed Skin

I want to sink into your skin,
explore the flesh of your skin.

Your bare bruises ripened,
yellow, blackened contusions atop your skin.

Small, fragmented ridges cut like glass,
your cold body craving the warmth of my skin.

Drifting into the tenderness of touch,
the kindness felt from skin on skin.

Scraps, cuts and burns set deep within their wounds,
I crave the endless touch of your destructed skin.

My body, this damaged capsule.
Oh Janelle, he's captured you in your raw skin.

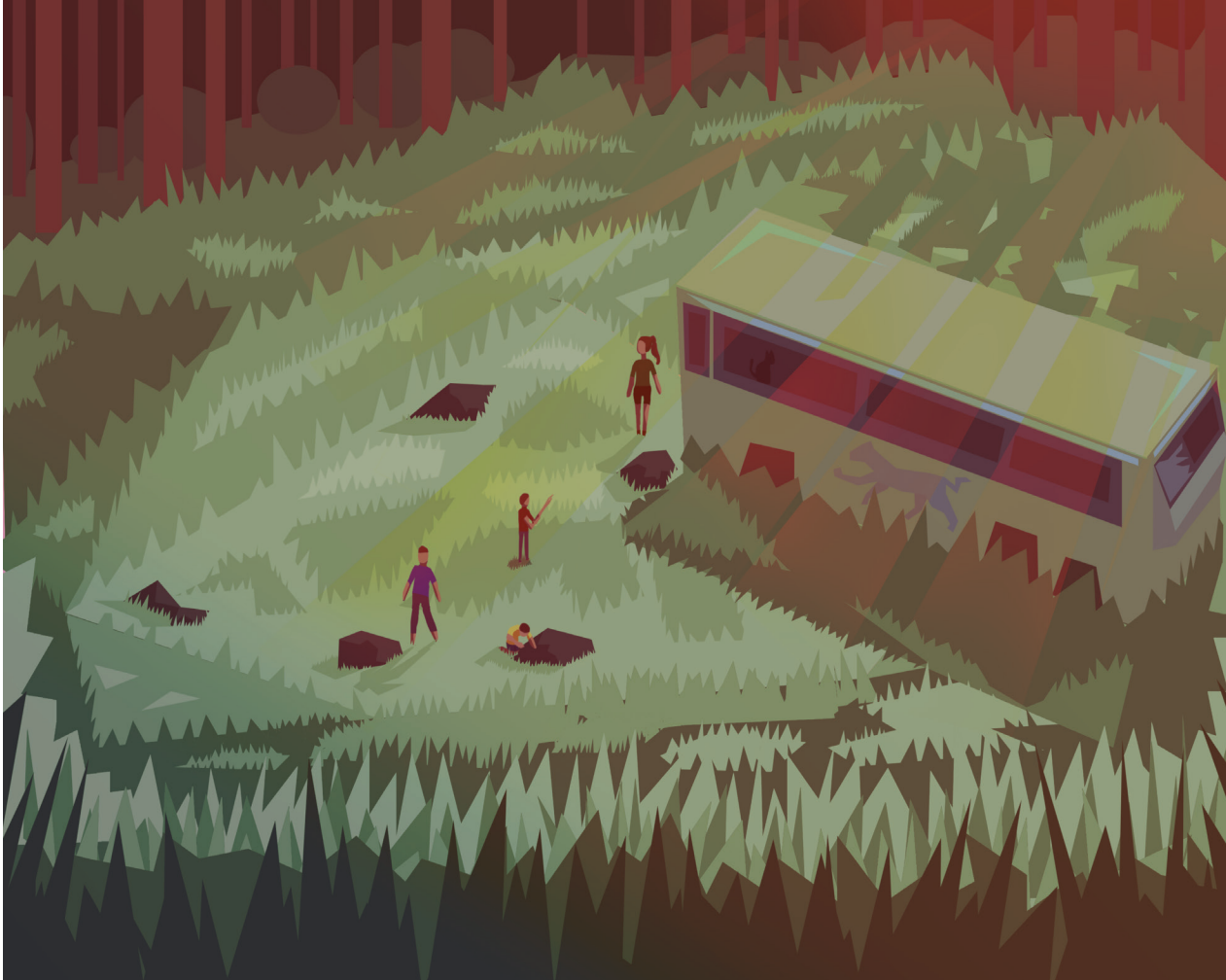
Visual

James Weis
2019
Digital
18" x 14.40"

Acres Winter



Acres Summer



Spectrum:

6 Emerging Artists was this year's Bachelor of Fine Arts Graduation Exhibition featuring the work of graduating artists David Broderick, Cayley Carlson, Shandis Harrison, Angela Wells, Eva Yang, and Sasha Zaim. The students displayed their work in both the Spruce Atrium and gallery. The work dynamically showcased the skills developed in the Fine Arts Department, ranging widely in both form and content. The artists used their final showcase to depict their human experiences, allowing the audience to witness a spectrum of emotion through creativity.

pulp MAG would like to congratulate the artists on their exceptional achievement of graduation and wish them well in their future artistic endeavors.





The Myth of Lua's Memory

i) Mud Bay (preface)

fill in the gaps. there's a word for it. *lacuna*: best used to describe holes in memory or a hollow cavity in bones...

my mind skips like a stone, bounces off the sun-struck surface of ocean, and a bird – probably a seagull – dives in and shatters it. hold the moment, resist the urge to take out my phone to photograph it, in case my mind erases it. even though I'm afraid to forget, there are some things I can't.

a heron stands in the same place we started, each step it takes a slow, meditative motion, an unconscious critique of time. we don't know what time is made of and we still try to measure it empirically, even though it is beyond that. we use light years to measure distances we cannot fully comprehend. can light years measure the gaps between my memories and yours?

great blue heron. great blue whale. blue is nearly always great.

and it has something to do with water.

I begin my life in water: amniotic fluid swirling, protecting, and when it breaks, the story begins.

although, the beginning, middle, and end, have already happened, are happening, and will happen again. like water, time is a constant cycle of fluctuating states, a spiral of energy converting. never destroyed. never created. but always in flux.

has everything to do with water.

my mother gave birth to my youngest sister in a wading pool in the middle of her living room. as the years pass, as each orbit around the sun seems to speed up, I realize that it is was as close to the beginning of time as she could get.

ii) Frigg's Day

the human body is 65% water; every single cell requires it to function normally, every sodium-potassium pump, every action, reaction, requires a well of water stored in our microscopic building blocks.

this is where it starts: a girl meets a boy at the mall in a small town, school giving way to drunk summer nights, highway drives to nowhere in particular, the Prairie sky both blue and gold at the same time.

the girl looks older than she really is: dark lipstick, large hooped earrings, tattoos and a lip piercing. a laugh that fills the food court.

the boy notices from afar, is friends with her friends. he is graduating next year, she is not, but she doesn't tell him that. they make the summer count.

and then she counts the weeks until the blood orange moon in her stomach is full.

iii) Moon's Day

oranges are 87% water, over 20% more than humans. the girl gives birth to a fish, possibly a trout. her baby scales glow rainbow, but only her head is fish-shaped. the rest of her body resembles human: two arms, two legs, crooked, but functional. the mother sleeps for two days, only notices something is different about her daughter when she notices how heavy she is; the doctor sticks a glass bowl full of water from the river below the hospital over the baby's head.

her name is Lua and this is how she fills in the blanks.

...

"alright everyone, we'll go in a circle and say our names and an interesting fact."

"I'm Lua and I was born a month early."

"what's that on your head?"

"they're my fortune-telling glasses. they help me see the future."

"did you know that you're a fish?"

"did you know that your cat Harriett will run away and get smushed by an ambulance?"

...

"how was school Lua?"

"oh, are we playing the silent game? you know daddy's not as good at it as you are."

.
. .
. .
. .

“did you tell a fortune again?”

“Lua...”

iv) Deer Lake and Third Grade

here is Lua’s real interesting fact: daffodils line the river where she was born, signalling the beginning of spring. Ancient Greeks tell a story about Narcissus staring at his reflection in the lake until he withers away. the gods turn him into a daffodil. sometimes Lua wants to wither away. instead, she rides her bike to the river and tears all the bulbs out.

no one can really tell the future. the trick is observation; listen well, store the information for later, surprise people who do not have ears.

...

“hi, I’m Ms. Johnson, and you must be Lua’s...brother?”

“father.”

Lua wears two different coloured Converse: blue on the right, yellow on the left. Ms. Johnson introduces herself while Lua makes green with her swinging feet.

“yes, of course. well, as you know, I called you here because I wanted to discuss Lua’s behaviour in class.”

bright green duck heads, shining blue under sunlight, wet with autumn hunger. they have to leave soon.

“she’s not in trouble. I just want to know how she knew Greyson’s cat was going to...die.”

Lua looks up at her dad’s rectangular face, his spiky black hair, silently asks him not to tell her. the ducks on her feet flap their wings. her father smiles without moving his mouth.

“Ms. Johnson, you know how kids are. Lua has a huge imagination, and it was just a lucky guess that her story turned out to be true.”

“but she knew the cat’s name. a year ago. exactly a year ago she said that to him. as the principal, I have a responsibility to keep the students safe.”

“what are you suggesting?”

his rectangular head grows red as Ms. Johnson’s worm-shaped lips form words that sound like salt on a slug, that suggest a guard dog watching behind a chain link fence, its teeth bared, a growl at the back of its throat. Lua’s father looks at her, remembers the day she was born too soon, and swallows the red down. this is not about him.

it has everything to do with water.

“with all due respect Ms. Johnson, I think you’re losing your goddamn mind. maybe you should see a doctor.”

the principal never calls Lua, or her father, into the office again.

meanwhile, Lua continues to tell fortunes on the playground.

v) Boundary Bay

cumulus clouds line the boundaries of the ocean bowl with Lua at the center; an upside-down eye, everything is blue as she tells the pink-haired girl beside her that she will turn into a rock one day.

“how do you know?”

“I just do.”

“rocks aren’t living things.”

“why not?”

“well, they can’t breathe, they don’t grow, they aren’t made of cells, I don’t know.”

“they can time travel.”

for her sixteenth birthday, Lua’s mother sent her a bag full of stones: blue lace agate, a chunk of amethyst, obsidian, and green quartz. tied around her neck, the bag of stones hums quietly, storing warmth and ocean shimmer for the days when Lua wants to escape her own skin.

from her sun-bleached log, she watches a gull pick apart a crab. one red claw, metallic *clink* when the gull flings it across the shore. red and white wires litter the sand from all the broken robot crabs and they too will turn into stone one day. Lua sees it clearly through her fish-bowl lens, captures the moment on a disposable camera.

“people still use those things?”

click-click as Lua winds it up again and points it at the girl’s wind-struck face.

“this is how we time travel. but rocks just sit there and let water and wind do all the work.”

in the eastern horizon, a faint first-quarter moon rises like smoke, lifting the ocean towards it.

vi) A photograph: pink ribbons and a kiss that burns through glass

magenta roars through Lua’s hands as she and Juno walk through gateways of fire: autumn on the west coast is just a reflection of smoggy summer skies.

“where are we going Lua?”

“home.”

Lua does not take Juno home. they walk along a river that serpentine its way through maples, birches, and cottonwoods, dappled with firs and cedars. in the burbling creek below the wooden bridge they stand on, a silver salmon corpse floats on the surface.

bloated and missing its eyes, it does not see the fish-headed girl on the bridge.

“home,” whispers Lua.

only about 2% of salmon hatched live into adulthood. on the last leg of its journey, the salmon stops eating. when it finally reaches its natal stream and lays eggs or disperses sperm, life ends in order for it to begin – Lua wonders if her mother’s life ended when hers began.

“you can’t think like that Lua; you’re supposed to be here.”

...

“tell me about the future.”

“I can’t.”

the silver corpse floats downstream, around a bend, and out of sight.

vii) Saturnalia

for Lua's first Christmas, her parents fill the living room with gifts: a plastic basketball hoop, at least five different Barbie dolls, boxes upon boxes of brand name clothes, and a new fish bowl. they don't realize that this is also the last Christmas they will spend together.

Lua's mother disappears slowly at first:

sits in her car for five minutes before coming into the house after work; snoozes her alarm every ten minutes – first, for only half an hour, then an hour, then an hour and a half; does not check on Lua when she cries in the middle of the night; comes home later and later from work, at first calling Lua's father to say she has a meeting, and then stops calling; stays out all weekend, returns with a new face doused in cigarettes and vanilla.

Lua's father holds her close to his chest, tries to calm her with his heartbeat when her mother eventually stops coming home. dandelion heads turn silver. the red river swells. meanwhile, Lua observes, storing the information for later.

viii) Vernal Equinox

“anyone sitting here?”

Lua is twelve years old, reading *Twilight* during indoor-recess. the girl who asked the question does not wait for an answer – she pulls out the chair from the desk in front of Lua.

“you want one?”

...

...

“how's the book?”

at this, Lua looks up, leaving Edward in Bella's room for the hazel whirlpools of Juno's eyes, and takes the cookie Juno placed on a napkin earlier.

“good. did you bake these?”

Juno's curls come alive, as if each strand is a wave of light. “as a veteran new-kid, I've learned cookies are the key to friendship.”

before Lua can stop it, sunlit words burst from her mouth, "I can tell the future."

"oh cool! what's mine?"

again, pink thoughts work their way into speech: "you're going to be my best friend."

Lua did not tell her how they would fall in and out of love several times, or that there were holes in both of their memories.

ix) A life composed of disposable photos in a shoebox

daffodils are not the same as dandelions. Lua looks in the mirror and does not see either of her parents in her face: too much space between her wide brown eyes, which are nearly at the side of her head; ears too big, unfurled like fins; and rainbow scales all over her body. she does not know where she came from.

...

at six years old, Lua dresses as a cat for her first-grade class's rendition of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas." though the costume barely fits over her head and its glass bowl, she prances happily across the stage when it's her cue. her father click-clicks and flashes a camera, captures Lua's smile before it disappears when she notices there's an empty chair beside him.

now dash away! dash away! dash away, all!

all Lua wrote in her letter to Santa that year was for her mother to come to her play, even if she was just a cat in the background.

just a cat in the background.

her head becomes a sugar-plum, fills with helium as she stares at the chair, dances away as her classmates chant:

dash away, all!

and she forgets who is supposed to be sitting there in the first place.

x) Waning crescent moon

afternoon washes the small living room in dusty light. Lua walks into her apartment and finds her mother sitting on the floor, Styrofoam take-out boxes full of sushi sprawled out on the coffee table.

“surprise!”

visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads...

“I can’t believe you’re ten already! where did time go?”

Lua wants to ask her where *she* went all those years ago, but instead she runs to her mother and hugs her as if there isn’t a gap in her memories, as if time between then and now is not hollowed-out bone.

despite holes in its path, water always finds water.

...

daffodils do not stay in bloom forever – eventually, the yellow trumpets lose their voices. at the airport surrounded by people holding each other as if they’ll never hold each other again, Lua’s mother gives her a blue birthday card:

“I love you Lua, you are my heart.”

then why are you leaving again? / “I love you too, Mommy.”

both of their eyes are water, mud swirling as they try to hold their insides together.

...

at home, Lua opens the blue card and her entire bedroom is the colour of winter sky when she walks to school in the morning. her mother’s raspy cigarette and vanilla voice whispers from the card:

please don’t ever forget that I don’t forget you. always remember that I do love you. sometimes love and doing what is best is the hardest thing to do.

Lua tries hard not to add too much water to her room, but it’s too late: it’s all the way up to the ceiling. she takes the glass bowl off of her head for the first time and finally feels like she can breathe without drowning.

—

No Pill For Afterwards

Blue whiskers, a mouse in the chewed-out corner of the backdoor—
hinges rusting, and a keyhole pushed wider, metal jagged.

Copper and crimson, dusty stones; the hearth can't contain fire
when there is nothing left to burn.

The only things living here are spiders, their scarlet hour glasses ticking.
Their webs, the strongest substance, can be easily pulled apart.

Tile cracked underfoot, reaches orange tendril hands towards
the locked door.

Late light begins, the sun slips from the clouds' grasp
and dust spins in the air, somehow unaffected by it all.

There is no pill for after you.

Nothing to remove the feeling of the cold tiles from my bones.
Nothing to bleach this stain, this shadow.

Nothing for the metallic taste of absence.

But in the pinking evening, everything changes colour; walls once blue,
now violet—and under the door, I swear I see

a cut of golden light.

Reggie Graham
2018
Mixed Media

Man Up, Man Down



Stitch And Story

In early morning frost-stiff air, a black cat leaves
a rat on my doorstep.

In the evening, my mother waits for her children to come home,
our empty shoes filed along the porch.

These moments between knowledge and myth are like a smear
of greyblack on cement.

It's somewhere between racoon and sweater, spilled out on the highway—
tufts of fur falling like snow.

I dream of these too—blame the racoon, the shoes, and the rat for the
tales
I write when the sky is hazy.

To tell fiction is to stitch yourself in, until you can't tell the thread
from your own body anymore.

This new thing awakens, kicks up dirt, sprouts tails, and snaps
bones back together again.

Will it eat the creator whole, or stay
tumbled across the road?

Love and the Moon

a found poem from R.L. Stevenson's Treasure Island

Scarred, livid white
in the high, he hung all evening—
look up every day
he came back,
it was the want of company.

He had taken me aside one day
and promised me silver
if I would only keep my eye open for

the moment he appeared.

He would stare me down—
how that haunted my dreams.

On stormy nights I would see him in
a thousand forms
a kind of creature.

Visual

Taylor Hudson
2018
Black and White
Film
8" x 11"

Self Portrait Series 1 (*selections*)





Blaze through me

like an overdose of electricity
recreate those sinister
intoxicating
waves down my spine
rekindle those ashes
that once burned bright

find my card
the lucky one
the jackpot at the casino

cover me in white
a mountain of snow
inhale the deviated powder

blast a rail
let the train come forth
hit my body
with a quiet thrill
light off fireworks in my mind
scorch every fuse
leave me numb
blacked out like tar
and forgotten

How to Reject Someone You Love

Option 1:

Sit with them in private; a bedroom is ideal. Light candles around the room for romantic feel, no more than the number of heartbeats they've stolen from your chest. Advised maximum of eight to avoid fire hazards. Spill your feelings to them, the ones about yourself, like muddy sludge crawling out an industrial drain. How you don't care for your voice, the way it slurs like a drooling milkshake held upside-down in the summer. How you hate the asymmetrical freckles on your cheeks—seven on one, six on the other. How you want to travel more but fear the plane might shake you from the sky like a wild horse. Mention your favourite show, how fans made it better. Be as enthusiastic as possible. Talk about your past—embellish every embarrassment, detail every blush. Be careful not to say you like them: an extinguished wick can light through the smoke it weeps.

Option 2:

Do nothing.

Bios

Angela Eszter Wells

Angela Eszter Wells avoids the word ‘abstract’ when describing her large canvas acrylic paintings. Like the works of contemporary artists Linda Forde, Elliott Green, Gordon Hughes, and Nicole Katsura, Wells’ paintings with their multiple layers of translucent colours and expressive movement give a sense of familiarity within the chaotic layers. Energized brushwork resemble the gestural movements of handwriting, and translucent layers using brush and palette knives create a familiar immersive environment inspired by the multiple forms of communications via social media.

Charayah Romo

Charayah Romo is a second year student studying Creative Writing at KPU. Though the majority of her work has been fiction in the past, she has recently been experimenting with poetry. When she isn’t at school, studying, or working, Charayah enjoys spending time with her family, taking her dog Romeo on walks, drawing and playing the piano.

D. Travis Lee

Travis is a poet and writer completing his 4th year in the Creative Writing BA program. A lover of both science and fiction, his work aims to bring a unique—sometimes humorous, sometimes fantastical—perspective to issues both big and personal, with a particular focus on the lines connecting and dividing people and things.

James Weiss

James Weiss is a third year BFA student at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. His medium of choice is digital, but he also has some experience with traditional materials, preferring watercolour and ink. Themes of nature and fantasy are an integral part of his process and inspiration.

Janelle Swift

I’m a journalism major in third year. I chose a minor in creative writing to feed my craving and passion for poetry. I project my abstract thoughts and feelings into my work whether it’s a feeling I am able to conquer or not, writing is the muse.

Keana Tighe

Keana is a third-year student pursuing a double major in both English and creative writing. She enjoys writing poetry as well as short fiction.

Laura Soda

She is currently a student at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in British Columbia, where she is completing a BA in Creative Writing with an English minor. Once finished, she plans to pursue a career as a high school teacher, but not before fulfilling her lifelong dream to travel the world. When she’s not at school, at work, or asleep, you’ll find her either writing, reading, singing or playing with her dog.

An abstract painting featuring a complex, swirling composition of colors including deep reds, purples, blues, and yellows. The brushstrokes are expressive and layered, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is a rich, textured visual field.

pulp
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Summer 2019
Issue 18

SUMMER 2019 Issue 18