

What made you choose this piece for Pulp?

It was a piece I wrote in class! Guess I figured it should show up first in the place it was born! We had an assignment to write down a bunch of individual lines on separate little strips of paper, then swap them around with each other to create a sort of “Frankenstein’s monster” prose poem. I had a bit of a mad scientist moment with the lines I chose and liked them better together than apart, so I snapped a picture of them all and later they became the first lines!

I think I also just have an inherent trust of all of y’all working at the mag; I know my work’s in good hands and that you know where it’s coming from.

Is there anything in particular that you're proud of about this piece, or that you learned while creating it?

I think writing Beach Grove Blues was one of the first times poetry really clicked for me. It felt like an untangling in many ways, or maybe a better way to put it is that the poem is a translation of that tangle.

I was getting a little bogged down at first about how much rhyme I was using, but the effect it had, at least in my mind, was a kind of driving, blunt-force staccato; it made me feel powerless and unsettled - angry - which was what I was going for. I’m definitely proud of how it sounds, how the language molds itself to the internal place it came from.

Where did your inspiration for this piece come from? What is the piece’s “story”?

Oh, boy! Long story, (and uh, content warning for animal violence, I guess) but the gist of it is that I was coming home from a volunteer gig I had at the bird sanctuary in Ladner, and saw a robin get hit by a car. He bounced off the car in the oncoming lane, and into mine. I had to pull over into the gas station and cry and fucking call my mom, haha. It sucked.

I ended up going back, tucking the bird’s body in a little Tim Hortons bag, and burying it in a park by the shore in Tsawwassen. Just seemed like the thing to be done.

When we got the assignment to write that prose poem, the first image that popped into my head was that poor little guy. I just felt this rage and sadness at the quotidian violence of what had happened, and it bubbled over into other, deeper grievings.

I have friends and family who deal with addiction, mental illness, abuse, etc. The idea of that robin, animated by the sorrowful wrath of the land around it, like a harrowing counterpoint to Poe’s raven, just seemed to be the perfect expressive vessel, I suppose.

The poem’s about a lot, but that’s the crux of where it came from. Rage and horror at everyday, unending brutality.

What messages/themes do you want viewers to pull from this piece?

I suppose I’ve already answered that a little, but if there’s one thing I think I want people to get from the poem, it’s that history invariably informs and executes itself in the present. The

“afterbirth” of our bad decisions, our violence, is currently washing ashore. It might be a cliché, but it’s a cliché we don’t seem to get through our thick fucking skulls, myself included. So, if we want the world to be a better place, if we want to give people better reasons, we have to put the laundry out to dry tonight. We have to invoke the best parts of our histories, together.

In “Beach Grove Blues,” the dead robin seems to be a recurring symbol that appears several times throughout the piece. Is there any metaphorical significance to this that you’d like to comment on?

Yeah! I mean he’s kind of a foil for Poe’s raven: “grave and stern decorum”, all that. I always thought the poor corvid got kind of a bad rap. I mean, obviously the notion of death is terrifying, but I was also kind of struck by the gothic horror of existence without it - a place without endings, where cycles repeat and repeat without hope of ceasing.

Hence: “Evermore!”

Given what the poem’s about (addiction, cycles of abuse), I thought maybe the raven deserved to be redeemed just a little bit. Some things should end.

Your poem takes advantage of the prose poetry form by playing with sentence structure and arrangement. Was there any reason you chose to write this piece in prose form instead of verse form?

There’s a technique in prose poetry called “gap-gardening”, which is essentially just jumping from place to place in weird, creative ways. You might be in Home Depot in one sentence, and then in a spaceship with Derrida the next. The task is to create interesting, subtextual links between completely different images by placing them close together. I knew I wanted to get freaky with the imagery, so a prose poem felt like a natural fit.

How long have you been creative?

Not too long, honestly! I wanted to be a writer when I was very young, but I basically never wrote or gave creative pursuits any attention at all until I was twenty-two. I wish I’d started sooner, but it’s been really gratifying to finally be doing what my heart’s always been set on.

What does your creative process or practice usually look like? In what ways has it changed during your artistic journey?

Sit down, listen to Death Cab for Cutie until I feel really, sickeningly blue, and then open a Word doc.

Haha, the real answer is it varies. Sometimes it’s like that, and sometimes I’m just out at the park watching the ducks, or waiting for my car at the MIDAS, or in the middle of pruning someone’s hydrangea. It’s usually a line or an image, or a feeling, or wishing I could talk to someone and not being able to.

I used to struggle to sit down and get myself to do it, but now I just write instead of pacing around my room having imaginary conversations. I guess I just talk to myself on the page rather than out loud, now, and funnel the thoughts through the lens of a poem rather than a dialogue.

What sorts of things inspire you?

Fuck. Uh. So much. I just figured out that Kyoto and I Know The End weren't the only good songs off Phoebe Bridgers' 2020 record so that's been a massive dub cuz I love her. I recently read House of Leaves and man was that incredible. Top 5 books of all time, for sure. Apparently people online are pretty lukewarm about Johnny's portions of the novel but those people all suck, so... What else? Been listening to a lot of Death Cab lately, some Deftones, SZA, Brand New...
Saw the Barbie movie. Slay.

Have you ever been published before/where can we find your work?

I have! Right here in Pulp, actually, in the Summer 2022 issue! Keep an eye out for more stuff here and elsewhere, I have a feeling once the sugar-crash wears off from this holiday weekend I'm gonna go crazy on submissions.

Do you plan on continuing your creative pursuits into the future? If so, what does the next project look like for you?

Absolutely! I have a chapbook I'm nearing completion of called Kernel of the Harbour Moon that I'm hoping to have finished and maybe start shopping around this year, and a bigger, full length collection called Flower Boy that's deep in the works! No idea when that'll be done, but keep an eye out!