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Phil Hall: Cover Image
“Anatomy #2” by Andrew Topel (USA)

“Illumination” by Andrew Topel (USA)
Editorial:

Dedicated to the memory of our fellow travellers.
They have departed, but their voices live on.

“Sorrows soar freely, with unbound feathered wings. When blue, I contemplate the world from above.”
“Skumjas ir brīvas, un tām ir putnu brīvie spārni. Tapt, kad man ir skumji, es skatos uz cilvēkiem no anglas.” — Imants Ziedonis [Trans. KJ].


Photo: Jānis Deinats Photo: Pearl Pirie Photo: LETA

This issue of Rampike features flights of literary expression that contemplate the interactive qualities of inspired text and impassioned imagination. These expressions fuse a range of innovative writing strategies. One of our early contributors, Raymond Federman, of the New York Fiction Collective once edited a body of essays titled Surfiction addressing writing that liberates itself from typographical bondage. The pieces assembled here, wing beyond the surface of print conventions, providing un-bound expressions through printer’s ink. Here we see topographies of thought grappling with the flux and chaos of the 21st Century. The writing here demonstrates Bakhtin’s dialogism, Foucault’s provisionalities of “truth,” and Cixous’s gender politics. Let’s call them Sur-teksts, in response to Bev Daurio and Richard Truhlar’s Teksteditions. In this issue of Rampike, we are delighted to feature new fiction by Canada’s poet laureate, George Bowering, plus, Joe Haske in interview with author, theorist and editor-in-chief of Fiction International, Hal Jaffe, as well as a fresh interview with recent Governor’s General’s award winning poet, Phil Hall. Herein, we are pleased to present the poetics of Richard Kostelanetz, Jill Darling, Louise Bak, Nathan Dueck, along with the visual poetics of Andrew Topel, Aaron Daigle, S.S. Prasad, Jürgen Olbrich, Stephen Brown, Nam June Paik, Gerry Shikatani, and Jean-Claude Gagnon, while Jon Flieger delivers new short fiction. In addition, we are delighted to include a cluster of writers from the bpNichol Writers Workshop which gathers at Coach House Press, as assembled by Victor Coleman and Michael Boughn, featuring the energized poetics of Robert Anderson, Michael Boughn, Laine Bourassa, Zack Buck, David Peter Clark, Victor Coleman, Tyler Crick, Oliver Cusimano, Caleb R. Ellis, Kelly Semkiw, Jonathan Pappo, and Andrew McEwan. We trust that this wide scope of Sur-tekstual flights will amuse and amaze you, even as it extends your cultural horizons. - K. Jirgens, Editor.
ADELE
George Bowering

It was still early but the café was jammed with people in overcoats so that the plate glass window in front was no longer transparent with the moisture. All the tables and all the booths and the stools at the counter were full except the one table beside the front door, where the little old woman sat with her tea and some advertising brochures. She sat there every morning at this time, angrily reading the colorful offers of stoves and tires and television sets.

No one ever said good morning to her because it looked as if she could not hear a voice coming from the real world. She occasionally poured more water into her teacup, and angrily shoved a brochure to the bottom of the small pile in the middle of the table. Even on mornings when there were people standing outside waiting to get into the café, no one ever tried to sit at the table with her.

He was not used to being up so early, but this morning he had to go and talk to some kids in a nearby high school, so he was sitting with his buddy Willy and two strangers at a booth near the front. Lorna had just brought their cereal and boiled eggs and coffee, and Willy had already scooped two mouthfuls of Barley Blimps.

“Last week she threw rocks at the front window of a bus,” Willy said.
“Why?”
“For her the bus represents the city. The city and the province and the country.”
“She could be right,” he said.
“Luckily, she could not throw hard enough to do any damage. Half the stones did not reach the windows, and the rest bounced off.”
“What does she have against the city?”
“She has no money. It looks to her as if the city has lots and lots of money.”
They had plenty of time before they had to get to Willy’s school. They dawdled over their coffee while the people sharing their booth gathered up their overcoats and left. They were replaced by a young couple who knew enough not to bother trying to make conversation with the coffee drinkers. They must have been regulars at the café. Lorna the waitress poured refills absentmindedly. They looked at the old woman with her brochures.

“Her teabag is all used up,” said Willy. “She’s drinking warm water.”
“What difference does it make to such an old body?”
“Tea might just be her only nourishment.”
The old lady used her spoon to press down on the teabag. Lorna gave her a new one and some hot water.

“She’s here every morning,” said Willy. “I don’t think I have ever arrived when she was not already here.”
“Is there always such a crowd? Don’t the waitresses need that table, or at least part of it?”
“Would you like to sit with her?”
“Does she keep them with her?”
“What? What are you talking about?”
“Her rocks. For throwing at the bus?”
The old woman was sitting perfectly straight. She had spilled a little milky tea into her saucer and now she was sipping from the saucer. If the place had not been so crowded with talking people, they would probably have heard her slurping the tea.

“It is as if they owe her something,” he said. “It looks like an old story that goes a long way back.”
“It always is,” said Willy. “Isn’t it?”
“Well, sometimes you are clear about the story.”
“Clarity is subjective,” said Willy.
“Did you make that up? That is a very deep paradox,” he said.

“Thank you,” said Willy.
They often talked to each other this way. They had been childhood friends and now Willy was a teacher in the east end. He was a bachelor. His friend thought that he was a lot smarter than most teachers, but probably that was a common thought among friends of teachers.

“When do we have to be there?”

“Don’t worry. It’s a five-minute walk. I haven’t been late to school ever in my life,” said Willy.

“I remember you in high school. What a suck you were.”

“I was our class valedictorian.”

“After all the effort I put into leading you astray.”

“You dad was a teacher. You had to act up,” said Willy.

“They said I would wind up a nobody. Here I am forty years later sitting with you in an east end greasy spoon.”

“What do you think she was like in school?”

“She was probably the most popular girl in her class. I hope so.”

“Are you being sentimental or vengeful?”

The old woman gathered her brochures into a neat pile. She pushed her cup and saucer up against the little metal pot. Then she stood up slowly and pushed her chair in. People were waiting to get her table. She picked up her brochures and her cheap old purse and walked slowly to the door. Four young people leapt at her table and sat down.

“Where does she go now?”

“You mean where is she going at the present time? Or where does she habitually go?” asked Willy.

He made a fist and held it in front of his old friend’s nose.

“I have never followed her from the café because this is when I walk over to school.”

“This means that you choose academic life over actual street life.”

“No, I choose to put food on my table.”

“So you have a table that is not in this café?”

They went outside and there was a light rainfall. He looked enquiringly at Willy, who replied by walking eastward, toward the school.

“It is true that I often eat dinner in that café,” he said. “At night I don’t really have time to cook because I have lessons to plan and tests to grade.”

“You have never thought that you would rather be throwing stones at buses, I suppose.”

“No, hombre, as you so often remind me, I am a lifetime school valedictorian. I don’t even carry stones.”

They liked to drop Spanish words in to their talk because they had taken Spanish together at university. When they were students they would spend whole days in Spanish.

“Did I piss you off a little there?”

They were under some trees now so the light rain did not reach them. Willy did not turn to him and smile, but he did not seem to be angry at him either.

“No. I am just getting into my schoolteacher mode.”

“Is there anything I need to know about these kids?” he asked.

“Nada. Nada y pues nada,” said Willy. Then he winked at his old friend.

♦ ♦ ♦

Canada’s first Poet Laureate, novelist, poet, editor, professor, historian and tireless supporter of fellow writers, GEORGE BOWERING is author of more than 80 books of poetry, fiction, autobiography, biography and youth fiction. His writing has been translated into French, Spanish, Italian, German, Chinese and Romanian. Two time Governor General’s award winner (for poetry and fiction), his recently released memoir Pinboy (ISBN 9781897151938) is published by Cormorant Press (2012).
INTERVIEW WITH HAL JAFFE
by Joseph Haske

HAROLD JAFFE is the author of nine fiction or "docufiction" collections, three novels, and a collection of creative non-fiction. His books include Beyond the Techno-Cave: A Guerrilla Writer's Guide to Post-Millennial Culture (forthcoming); Terror-dot-Gov (2005); 15 Serial Killers (2003), False Positive, 2002), and Sex for the Millennium (1999), among many others. He has received two NEA's, a California Arts Council grant, a NY CAPS grant, and two Fulbrights (to India & the Czech Republic). Jaffe is editor-in-chief of Fiction International and Professor of Literature and Creative Writing at San Diego State University. His recent collection, Revolutionary Brain: Essays & Quasi-Essays was released by Guide Dog Books (Bowie, MD, USA 2012). Rampike is delighted to present Hal Jaffe in interview with author and editor, Joseph Haske.

Joseph Haske: You refer to the texts in Revolutionary Brain as "essays and quasi-essays." I've read some of these texts previously in various journals where you have referred to them as "docufiction." Could you describe your take on genre distinctions? Why do you classify these texts as "essays and quasi-essays," as opposed to fiction? How does genre and the mixing of genre inform the structure and style of the texts in this "essay" collection?

Harold Jaffe: Official culture is seemingly comprised of multiple discourses: news, sports talk, tech talk, political rhetoric, prayer breakfast talk, health talk, art talk, etc. In fact these are all blandishments, versions of entertainment for profit, intended to further insulate Americans from what remains of problematic real time.

Mimesis does not strictly mean photographing the time and place you inhabit. Nonetheless, we're all fastened to our dying culture, and some of us at least feel compelled to inscribe it. In Revolutionary Brain I am aping official culture to plunder it. Hence, I interface ostensible genres, so that there is no hard and fast distinction between prose, verse, fiction, non-fiction, theory, everyday bullshitting; and I am montaging these seemingly different genres to tease out their ideological subtexts.

By montage I mean that I pile sometimes incongruous seeming images and tropes one upon the other as, say, Eisenstein does in Battleship Potemkin, or October, to mimic the hugger-mugger information overload in the culture; but like Eisenstein, my intention is dialectical, namely to dramatize the cultural transformation of so-called information and manifold discourse into entertainment for profit.

Readers and reviewers have asked questions about the lengthy porn site list which I title "Revolution Post-Mill." With the triumph of technology, lists (or catalogs) are among our principal discourses. To verify, just scan any MSN site. The most obscure data are now recoverable, and with all of that condensed "information" the appearance is of substantiality. Of course it is just another version of entertainment-consumerism. You will observe a list on ESPN, such as how many Dominican baseball infielders younger than 26 eat a carne burrito between the seventh inning stretch and the top of the ninth. The list, appearing more than it is, takes 90 seconds, then comes a seven minute commercial break.

Revolutionary Brain is filled with lists and partial lists and catalogs. Note Animals, Weep, Iso, Crisis Art. But the porn site list, much of which I "treat", works especially in contrast to the opening "list" of humans on death row in Texas permitted 3 minutes to recite their last words then be executed. Each of these lists is officially prohibited, except that the porn list is prohibited deliberately to be trespassed. With young people sexing (then “sexting”) they are in...
effect insulated from doing much else, which is what official culture wants, even as it condemns the enormous multi-billion dollar pornography industry.

JH: You begin *Revolutionary Brain* with one of those lists, “Death in Texas” and conclude with the other, the pornography list, “Revolution Post Mill.” You have frequently explored the concept of eros/thanatos or thanatos/eros in your work, so one might infer that something similar is at play with the placement of these two texts in *Revolutionary Brain*. By ending with “Revolutionary Post Mill,” an eros of sorts, are you conveying ironic optimism? A sincere optimism? Is our society/culture worth salvaging? What is the revolution you propose through the juxtaposition of the various types of discourse you assemble in *Revolutionary Brain*?

HJ: The literal ending of the volume is not “Revolution Post-Mill” but the third brief “Things to Do,” this one featuring Joseph Roth’s enunciation “The world worth living in is doomed. The world that will follow deserves no decent inhabitants.”

The contrast between “Death in Texas” and “Revolution Post-Mill” is meant to exemplify the degradation of ethical dissent. Online pornography, like sex-selling commercials, is alleged to be taboo, but is actually there for our delectation. As I write above: With young people having bionic sex they are in effect insulated from doing much else; this is what official culture wants, even as it nominally condemns pornography, which is sponsored in good part by the corporate sector. Like Nazis, sharks, crocodiles, and serial killers, online porn sites are condemned even as they are consumed.

On the other hand, the dissent of the poor is nipped at the bud, with the three minutes the Mexican-American and African-American inmates are given to utter their last words on death row in Texas. What the inmates end up saying is anything but trivial, but naturally they will be unheard. I’ve given them the right to become visible and speak.

The culture-consumption porn sites also function as another venue to smuggle racism and sexism into the public forum, disguised as erotic ecstasies. I’ve “treated” the porn site listings so that they are manically rhythmic, exhibiting a kind of lurid elegance.

I am attempting to represent revolution’s public misrepresentations. With the world perishing from global warming a new and improved institutional ruthlessness has been loosed. We see it in the genocidal wars, one after another, and in the “extraordinary rendition” (torture) camps spread throughout the globe. We see it in the unapologetic avarice and cruelty of “public servants.” We see it in the scapegoating of Muslims. We see it in the militarization of urban space, so that peaceful protesters are pushed far away from their righteous target, then ignored or lied about in the corporate media. It could be that a somewhat different approach to ethical dissent and revolution is necessary. What the lineaments of this response will be is not yet clear; though the online interventions by Anonymous and other dissident groups that employ advanced technology have made some impact. Anonymous has devised an up-to-the-nanosecond tactic to expropriate the expropriators, but one imagines that most of the Anonymous infidels are young, even very young, so it is difficult to predict its outcome.

JH: Given the historically significant role of literature in prompting social change, do you believe that contemporary literature will ultimately yield progress in a “culture of ten-year-olds,” as one voice refers to our society in your text, “Animals?” What is the potential of literature for inciting revolution in a time when the masses are primarily influenced by visual effect and digital media? Is art itself in crisis, in danger of extinction, when official culture is trending toward the “practical” in mainstream culture and in our educational system?

HJ: The distinction between serious and frivolous art has been eroded. Read aloud a passage from Yeats then a passage from some contemporary versifier and many Americans will prefer the versifier. A similar erosion has taken place in visual art, music, and film. Art, where it is considered at all, is defined otherwise than it was. “Intellectual” to many people signifies adroitness in technology, with little or nothing to do with art, philosophy, history, language, etc.

Serious art, which has always existed at the margins of American culture, has lost its charge. Disheartening but inevitable given the devolution we are living through. I prefer to think of
art-making in the Buddhist sense of “right occupation.” If you are an artist, you create. What happens to your art is almost entirely out of your hands. Social activist art wants at the very least to bear witness. Like secreting a poetic message into a bottle during a tsunami on a used-up planet.

JH: In your essay, “Crisis Art,” someone remarks that “crisis art has an energy and focus which more than compensate for its relative lack of refinement.” Do you agree with this sentiment? Does activism always trump esthetics? If so, to what extent? Your work is certainly layered: philosophically complex, linguistically nuanced and ripe with figurative possibilities, despite the relative accessibility of its diction. The texts in this collection go beyond a mere journalistic approach to your activism, wouldn’t you say?

HJ: In “Crisis Art” I was anticipating the usual interrogation of socially activist art, namely that it is dependent on a proximate cause, without which it will cease to vibrate. My response is that the vibration may continue even as the proximate cause fades because of the urgency, passion and in certain instances collective energy of the art in question. Think of Act Up’s response to the AIDS crisis in which institutional culture was cruelly and ignorantly demonizing all homosexual men in the mid 80s and early 90s. Act Up and its artistic wing, Gran Fury, fought back with posters, flyers, installations, physical interventions, and art folios such as the remarkable Quilt Project. Fifty years after, this is art-making that will be looked at differently but will still retain its charge to a considerable degree. The same applies to other socially active responses, such as the posters (affiches) created by French students during May’ 68. I have a collection of them which I occasionally display to friends. They were created mostly by youthful amateurs, but the collective urgency and empowered esthetics remain alive and vibrant.

JH: One aspect of your work that proves consistently impressive is your transition between texts. How does one subject lead to another in this book? Can you tell us more about the volume design of Revolutionary Brain and explain the thought process behind the book’s general organization?

HJ: As I mention, I mean to ape culture’s hugger-mugger info excess designed to insulate humans from bleak real time while reducing virtually every datum to yet another profit-particle of the entertainment industry. The texts in Revolutionary Brain are fluid and here and there repetitive so that the reader isn’t always quite sure what s/he is reading or why, except that it is part of the volume.

The six very brief texts I set between the 13 primary texts are sometimes only obliquely related so that the interested reader is compelled to stretch. The epigraph to the volume from Julia Kristeva is “as abject—so the sacred,” and through one stratagem or another I attempt to give voice to the objectified, the vilified, the made-invisible, both in the primary and brief texts. That is, my montages (as I call them) ape culture’s manic blandishments-for-profit but turn it on its head. I write above that my intention is dialectical, namely to dramatize the cultural transformation of endless “information” and reputedly serious discourse into entertainment-consumerism. Elsewhere I’ve written that I swallow the poison to expel it as interrogation, interrogative art. As I mention re my pornographic “discourse,” there is always in Revolutionary Brain an esthetic component which attempts to structure the chaos, even if the esthetic is deliberately manic or dissonant or, what I like to think of (after GM Hopkins) as a kind of sprung rhythm.

My single-sentence paragraphs work similarly. Sometimes they read like prose narrative, other times like interrogation, still other times like a species of verse or drama or cultural theory. The single sentences give me the leverage to veer widely and zap the reader with a counter-official culture discourse. The ideal of course is to shock the reader into recognition, or, if not that, just to shock. Anything to get past the sheepish numbness that characterizes our “global village” at this watershed in planet earth’s history. And when the indentured creature finally emits its baaa, I want it to be loud and listened to, even heard.

♦ ♦ ♦

FOR MORE INFO ON HAL JAFFE’S RECENT RELEASES PLEASE VISIT:
HOMOGRAPHIES
Richard Kostelanetz

Dedicated to the memory of Theodore Roethke
One prerequisite that makes these statements “poetic”
is that they must be read at least twice.
[From a book to be published by Black Scat late in 2013]

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE BEGINNING.

ARCHITECTURE STRUCTURES STRUCTURES.

WITH ONLY ONE WORD I GAVE MY WORD.

ONE MAN’S CHAOS ISN’T CHAOS TO ANOTHER.

WHATEVER’S TRUE IS TRUE.

YET WORST IS AN IDIOT’S IDIOT.

STRIVE I TO BE A SMART WRITER’S SMART WRITER.

EXCUSE MY LATEST EXCUSE.

SAY NO TO NO.

PRINT PRINT.

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ is a U.S. artist, author and critic living and working in New York. His detailed book-length compilation, A Dictionary of the Avant Garde (2nd Edition), is published by Routledge (N.Y.), and his Three Poems: Bassacksenglish, Monopoems, Coming(s) Together was released by NYQ Books in 2011; ISBN-10: 1935520490
Messing With The Plague: Phil Hall
An interview with Karl Jirgens

Phil Hall won the Governor General’s Award for his book Killdeer (2011). He also won the Trillium Book Award (2012), and was short-listed for the Canadian Griffin Prize (2012). Hall holds a graduate degree from the University of Windsor. His many accomplishments include service as the literary editor of This Magazine, and publisher of Flat Singles Press.

KJ: You began your writing practice in Windsor, & this year you served as Writer-in-Residence at the University of Windsor. It’s quite a homecoming after winning several major literary prizes. How does it feel to return to your old hometown?

PH: Samuel Johnson says everyone wants to be thought well of in his hometown. I picked Windsor initially because it was the furthest away from my actual hometown. What most impressed me in 1972: the plumbing & the University’s library. We had an outhouse. When I walked into the MacDonald Hall residence bathrooms & saw the rows of sinks & showers, I thought I’d died & gone to heaven. The Bobcaygeon Library was small: it had a fireplace, & a buffalo head—the books were battered Victorian.

Photo credit: Maria del Carmen Suescun Pozas

I’ve been back to Windsor a few times since I left in 1979, but never long enough to get a fresh sense of the place. Now it feels like an island, half an island, because Detroit's alien commerce-wall cuts it in half at the river. (Perth, Australia has the same feel, the Indian Ocean on one side, & a desert between that city & the rest of the country.) I like islands—they help a writer individuate. While Writer-in-Residence, I walked to the Underground Railway church in Sandwich, drove by the house where the French healer lived (7th son of a 7th son). I watched a crew & a big claw-shovel dismantle the Windsor Star press rollers. At the casino, I saw a sculpture of Caesar that looks suspiciously like Liberace. Windsor's more interesting now than I remember it being...

KJ: Killdeer speaks of influential literary figures such as Margaret Laurence, Bronwen Wallace, Eugene McNamara, among many others. Could you mention a few key ways in which these writers & friends helped shape your approach to writing?

PH: I am beholden to many people—for their patience, mostly. Laurence treated me as if I were real when I was hungry for legitimacy. I loved Bron Wallace: she was braver than me, a better writer too, a better human. Eugene McNamara never said what he might have: Kid, go back to Bobcaygeon & work in the bank, for these poems you’ve written are painfully awful. Instead, he taught me how a word can be used as one stone in a dry stonewall, & also as a grace note at the same time.

I’ll add a few names that aren’t mentioned in Killdeer. Joyce Carol Oates & Ray Smith—both were very kind to me when they taught at the University of Windsor. I learned much in Oates’s graduate seminar on James Joyce & D H Lawrence. Alistair McLeod & I have always seen eye-to-eye, it seems, without having to say so, one eye shut, winking & grinning. Tom Dilworth, who still teaches in the English Department at Windsor, has shared his passion for David Jones with me over the years, & this has proven a deep well of influence. Marty Gervais published my first Canadian book, Homes. Early on, he invited me to do book reviews of poetry for the Windsor Star. He continues to tell me the strangest stories...

KJ: Killdeer is a series of essay-poems. In cinematic terms, they feature long pan-shots or narratives inter-cut with shorter close-ups. How do you balance these two modes of seeing & depicting?
**PH:** The metaphor (& the actuality) that I was using instead of film when writing these—was of the structure of old fiddle tunes. The pan-shots in film are the long bowings in which narrative is let loose, or at least the promise of the comfort of a story. The close-ups are the variations—the finger-pluck of a string, or a moment of playing the fiddle behind one's head—that disrupt the comfort by overstretching or lingering or repeating—or by me grunting like a pig as I fiddle...

**KJ:** The narrative aspect of the book tells stories, & features a long journey that indirectly becomes a portrait of the artist as a young man. What is your perspective on narration as it enters into your writing?

**PH:** As I suggest above, narrative is insidious. (For instance, we have both brought James Joyce into the conversation, & thereby the Icarus myth.) To start with, each word has an etymology that is a story of its own. Then, it is almost impossible to put even two words together without calling forth a narrative. The lynchpin of Ron Silliman's “new sentence” is the fact that random sentencing drags the broken body of *once upon a time* along with it anyway. We, as readers, put the parts together—they may be the parts of different animals, different stories, but what we assemble still wants to *live happily ever after.*

For a poetics that hopes to not be swept along in a current of casual referents, narrative is the plague—but a plague that is touted as the virtuous norm in all our culture. We love the plague. I like to mess with—work at odds to—the plague: if I say “once,” the reader settles back; if I then say “snort” the reader sits forward uncomfortably...

Jerking the reader around. To avoid *subject:* that's a start. No more family poems! After this decision, each word is a weird creature, the dictionary a zoo.

**KJ:** Journey & meditation are motifs evident in ancient Asian poetic forms, for instance Basho's poetic travelogue, *Narrow Road to the Deep North.* Much of your writing features a meditative travelogue.

**PH:** I did recognize my book of poems, *Trouble Sleeping,* as a *haibun,* which is the Japanese form that Basho uses for *Narrow Road to the Deep North.* Yes. Prose telling followed by arrivals of poetic revelation.

**KJ:** Your writing often features radical juxtapositions of ideas & images. Do you think there is a connection between your “killdeer” motif & this juxtapositional technique, as a distraction from one thing to another, in the spirit of what Wallace Stevens called the slight-of-hand man?

**PH:** Of course. When kids are being sexually abused at home, they set fire to the school. When the killdeer pretends it has a broken wing, it is protecting its nest. When a poet realizes that the end-stop line is a form of lying by parceling experience into epigraphs, she begins to weave her tangential thoughts into the mix of the stanza. Complexity is more honest than simplicity. I am honest in a hurdy-gurdy buck-&-wing way. By slight-of-hand to arrive at *light-of-hand*...

**KJ:** You have spoken about the rural surreal, & about the influence of writer/artists such as Max Jacob. Could you elaborate on your sense of the rural surreal?

**PH:** Well, to say my poems are “surrural” is a good quick way to make a joke & get two ideas across at once. I am inspired by Blake's sense of “a rural pen.” He talks of *staining* the water clear. To me this means that to mess with clarity can result in a deeper clarity. I live in the countryside now, near Perth. Ontario. I have woods around me, a lake below. This doesn't mean my poems have to imitate the Edwardians. Many very strange poems live up side roads, & dwell in intricate language there! My neighbours are not bucolic clichés.

Yes. Max Jacob is a hero of mine. A contradictory soul, his prose poems are little laboratories of the uncanny. He said to a young poet: *What does it mean?* is the reproach you make to a poet who has failed to move you.
KJ: Often your writing deals with morphemic—& what one might call “molecular”—aspects of writing, how the stem broken from an “h” renders the letter as an “n”, or how “though” can shift to “thought” & back. Could you say a bit about alphabet & language themselves, & how they affect &/or shape your expression?

PH: In Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era* we learn that Henri Gaudier-Brzeska could read Chinese ideograms without knowing Chinese, that his sculptor's mind understood them intuitively. To come to a word in our own language as if we did not know it—is a poetic goal. To repeat a word will sometimes do this: after awhile, it becomes loosened from its referent. Words are shapes (groupings of alphabet choices, each letter a shape of its own) as well as sounds. I like to look into words to find what other words are there, & to think of what such sightings might add to my relations with words. For instance, how “there” contains “here” always gives me pause. In Canada, bp Nichol has shown us this way of proceeding…

It is not play, though it may begin there, for rearranging the letters of words may invoke the deeper names of the hearth gods who sustain us. Like atoms, but kinder, words, if broken: heat & a needed push...Kinder & smaller & slower—the metaphor breaks down—it is atrocious — what a fool I am to have blundered into that disaster-story! Slower. Go slower, without metaphor. I like to think that *poem* backwards in *mope*...

KJ: There is music in your writing. When you make your poems, do you use any particular method as you integrate the scoustic & visual aspects of the texts?

PH: Bricolage is my method: collage & montage, a tinkering, a placing of words or lines near others that were written separately, to see how they resonate near each other.

Stan Dragland & I like to call ourselves “shed artists.” He makes old sheds into works of art, and by my collecting I turn wherever I live into an art-shed. We also build oddities out of what has been “shed”—discards, junk, salvage...My poems are the same way; his fine essays are the same way. Our shoes are full of marbles, our hats full of rusty spigots.

Music & form. I find that music gets stuck at form, wherever I have set a little rule for myself, that each stanza will have the same number of lines, that each line will be a certain length, & these are rules that happen during the making, without a decision coming consciously down to the page, form wants in, like story. But music has a better form, it sends story awry. To notice what rules are governing choice, & then break them—here it comes like the mail-boat—the better-try, which is *music-form*!

KJ: What are your latest book projects?

PH: A new book of mine was published this year from BookThug, called *The Small Nouns Crying Faith*. The title is a phrase by George Oppen.

*A rural pen travels down Remnant Road to turn woe into artifact*. That old story. In which much flirting with—& subverting of—narrative (plague) may be found…
3 POEMS by Phil Hall

Festivities

Oh I missed Fountain Pen Day!

*

For awhile—a couple years ago—I was working on a series of poems about imaginary Special Days

Somewhat in imitation of Calvino's *Invisible Cities*

My favourite was *Day Day*—all of the festivities for this one—were transparencies—they fit right over the day & were unseen

Also—this line—*No one remembered it was Balcony Day*

Seems so sad—that line—to me—even now

*

Once a year there was a day—*by which*—anything you wanted to keep had to be taken off your balcony

Then—on that day—Balcony Day—anything that was still left out there—disappeared

All of the balconies—all of the high-rises—in all of the target areas—suddenly empty

What a feeling of lightness—& readiness for fresh marketing

Cashier Co-operatives would send up flares from their roof-decks

*As if ice had broken in a river*—enthused the laureates

Sales soared

*

But if a person were standing on a balcony at midnight come Balcony Day—*poof*—gone

*So balcony become a common form of suicide—annual group suicide*

It was good to clear away the dead-profit junk every 12 months—but how could the State stop these suicides by its consumers

So—all advertising for Balcony Day was suppressed

And each year—*clearing day*—as it was now called in internal reports—was scheduled for a different—undisclosed—day

*

That helped—but still there were many who—sick of shopping—stood on balconies every night—at the tick of midnight

Hoping this was the day
One spring Fred ate only cherries
then for awhile it was carrots
he bought an industrial juicer & his skin turned yellow
he went to his food co-op's solstice party nude
as a squash personified this cost him a relationship
(later the Okanagan joists overalls a bear)
after Rothenberg & The Four Horsemen at the Western Front
Barry said come along to Warren Tallman's
Goodchild snuck into Linda's new place after midnight
& into her rented room (mattress on floor she wasn't there)
to take his Raven manuscript back
he arranged gladiolas & all her shoes
into a mandala on the floor it was creepy he was creepy
all of the hottest women worked at Rape Relief
but you had to join Men Against Rape
& take radical therapy workshops & do fund-raising
you had to understand that you were a potential rapist
bissett gave me a stick of Astro gum
Gordon ate what Fred ate was tonsuring early
& played the flute eventually he took a woman-friend too
& taught her to care as deeply as he did about
the angle the carrots were cut at

Kinds of Poetry

1.
2. I miss it.
3. I have had it!
4. I deserve it all.
5. Big hitching post / little church...
6. eye tea
7.
(1 & 7 are not the same)
Convergent evolution; hattip Joe and Sandra.

Neutrinos run away from home.

My father's schizophrenia.

Found during tribute to the porcelain god. Not the one on the shelf.

Could you say better?


When in Rome have sex in baths.

Seaside tea with Shelley.

My D.N.A. is claustrophobic.

Do differently if I could.

Put on my headstone.

Apostolic.

cf. my first poems.
THE CHARGE OF THE EXPORMIDABLE MOOSE

La Charge de l’orignal épormyable (The Charge of the Expormidable Moose) was written by Claude Gauvreau in 1956. It was first produced in the original French in Montreal in 1970 and received its English language premiere in the spring of 2013 in a translation by Ray Ellenwood, published by Exile Editions, produced by One Little Goat Theatre Company and directed by Adam Seelig at the Tarragon Extra Space in Toronto. The cast included Hume Baugh (Letasse-Cromagnon), David Christo (Lontil-Déparey), Lindsey Clark (Laura Pa), Sochi Fried (Dydrame Daduve), Ben Irvine (Mycroft Mixeudeim), Lindsay Owen Pierre (Becket-Bobo) and Jessica Salgueiro (Marie-Jeanne Commode).

Set in a vaguely institutional communal home, The Charge of the Expormidable Moose revolves around a poet who is envied, plagiarized, mocked and ultimately sacrificed by his fellow housemates — or are they fellow inmates? Playful, provocative, powerfully unsettling, it is a drama that confirms Gauvreau’s stature as "a giant" (Le Devoir).

Revered in Quebec as a visionary poet-playwright, Claude Gauvreau (1925-1971) was a member of Montreal’s revolutionary artistic movement known as Les Automatistes. His complete works are published in a volume of over 1,500 pages comprised of 26 short dramas, three full length plays and numerous creative texts, and his innovative use of language, which he described as "explorean," tested the very limits of lyricism. Gauvreau’s life came to an early end in 1971, the year after The Charge of the Expormidable Moose was first produced in French.

ADAM SEELIG is a poet, playwright, stage director, and the founder of One Little Goat Theatre Company in Toronto (www.OneLittleGoat.org), with which he has premiered works by poet-playwrights Yehuda Amichai, Thomas Bernhard, Jon Fosse, Claude Gauvreau, Luigi Pirandello and himself. Seelig is the author of Every Day in the Morning (slow), a fully continuous concrete-lyric-drop-poem-novella (New Star Books, shortlisted for the 2011 ReLit Award), and his plays include All Is Almost Still (New York 2004), Antigone: Insurgency (Toronto 2007), Talking Masks: Oedipussy (Toronto 2009, published by BookThug) and Like the First Time (2011, published by BookThug). Seelig’s writings have appeared in various journals, including World Literature Today, Open Letter and Poetry. He is the recipient of a Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship for drama, and of a Stanford University Golden Award for his study of Samuel Beckett's original manuscripts (published in Modern Drama). Born and raised in Vancouver, Seelig has also lived in northern California, New York, England and Israel.

FLEXIBLE IMPOSSIBILITIES:
On The Charge of the Expormidable Moose
Director’s Statement by Adam Seelig

When I first read Claude Gauvreau’s The Charge of the Expormidable Moose (La Charge de l’orignal épormyable, 1956) — an experience that left me amazed and disturbed, exhausted and exhilarated; in short, awestruck — I thought of its affinities with the absurdity of Ionesco (Rhinoceros seemed an analogous title) and the cruelty of Artaud, but not so much Beckett, because this play was maximal and, for all its strangeness, surprisingly linear, taking on the tone and trajectory of an over-the-top spiritually-Nietzschean post-Dada Passion Play, with the envied and ultimately sacrificed poet Mycroft Mixeudeim, the play’s eponymous ‘moose,’ serving as Christ-figure, a victim so perfect that he seemed to conform to textbook
descriptions of the ideal scapegoat who is destined to act out a number of contradictory roles and incarnate them in himself. He is an enemy who is adopted; he takes the place of the man in whose honour he will be killed; he is an in-law and an outcast; he is honoured and reviled, a scapegoat and a hero; he is intimidated but, if he shows fear, is thought unworthy of the death that awaits him. By acting out these primarily social roles, he becomes a complete human being, exemplifying the contradictions that society creates: an impossible situation, which can only end in his death. The impossibility is exaggerated when he is charged, by ritual, with the powers and attributes of the culture-hero: he becomes the representative of the other world living in the centre of this one, a Janus figure too sacred to live with (Francis Huxley’s *Affable Savages* quoted in René Girard’s *Violence and the Sacred* though Mycroft’s condition (and conditioning à la Pavlov, banging doors open with his head every time a woman screams) reveals his tormentors’ insecurities as much as it does his own suffering, as is often the case with bullying, to use today’s word for it, and a current example in which Tom, the new kid at school — a boy who also happened to have long blond hair and feminine features — upped the fear level of other boys in the ninth-grade class. One, a boy named Greg, was accused of being attracted to Tom. Greg’s tormentors chalked the boys’ names together in a heart on the school’s front sidewalk and whispered “faggot” whenever they passed him in the halls. One day they put a stick of butter in Greg’s locker — butter being the preferred lubricant for anal intercourse in their worldview — and from that point on, they would just walk by him and whisper “butter.” The ringleaders of this harassment were boys who were experimenting sexually themselves, engaging in group mutual masturbation activities. Their harassment of Greg was an effort to vigorously defend themselves against their own homosexual panic and the fact that they even noticed that the new boy was attractive — and what did that suggest about them? (Kindlon & Thompson’s *Raising Cain*) thus the mere presence of someone different, someone special, someone gifted — the poet — threatens to expose the mediocrity and elishquish that govern ‘normal’ members of society, who, as represented by the insidiously well-meaning ‘gang-of-four’ in *Moose* (the flirtatious Laura Pa, the moralizing Marie-Jeanne Commode, the door-controlling Becket-Bobo and the plagiarizing ring-leader Lontil-Déparey), can’t help but poke and prod this special person, playing pranks that start out somewhat spontaneously (in Act One) and gradually become more systematic (at dinner in Act Two) and intense (with the sexual shadow play of Act Three) and finally climaxing with the introduction of a sadist-executioner (Letasse-Cromagnon in Act Four), fleshing out Montaigne’s statement that the first cruelties are exercised for themselves thence springs the fear of a just revenge, which afterwards produces a series of new cruelties, to obliterate one another (*Cowardice the Mother of Cruelty*) and chilling anyone who encounters this play not only because it peels away the hypocritical façade of good intentions that mask our primal cruelty (“You’re not honest when you make people suffer,” Letasse scolds the gang-of-four, exposing them for the sadists they truly are, “you wrap yourselves in noble pretexts”) but also because it’s a horrifying reminder that social cohesion depends on a scapegoat, accounting for one billion Catholics, for example, unified around a sacrifice who suffered less for our sins (which sounds too tame) as for our hatred, our demons, freeing us of the ape-shit animal inside, though today’s Jesuses are more likely relegated to psychiatric institutions where their unsettling presence can be safely ignored or cannibalized or ritualized as in *Marat/Sade*, a play that bears strong resemblance to *Moose*, and perhaps “where there is a work of art, there is no madness” (Gauvreau, in light of his own institutionalization, was well aware of Foucault’s axiom) yet where there’s madness there’s been much art, from Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* to Witkiewicz’s *Madman and the Nun* to Cortázar’s *Hopscotch* to Mingus’ *Beneath the Underdog*, art and artists often finding themselves in the asylum, which can sometimes serve as an “asylum of purity” (to borrow the title of Gauvreau’s first full-length play), a sanctuary of sorts, and if Milton’s devil “can make a heaven of hell,” then perhaps we could transform the isolated group home of *Moose*, “surrounded by dense, untamed nature,” into a kind of sacred space where Mycroft’s life would end on the ‘altar’ of the stage, and so Jackie (Chau, the set designer) and I wrapped our heads around the religiosity of this play that emerged from Montreal’s vehemently anti-clerical artistic movement, Les Automatistes, of which Gauvreau was a founding member when he and fellow artists signed the landmark *Refus Global* manifesto in 1948, and before long Jackie and I arrived at the Rothko Chapel as a paradigm for a church of uncompromising artistry, and Gauvreau’s art is nothing if not uncompromising, having Mycroft, near death, declare that we must exhibit acts of such complete audacity, even those who suppress them will have to admit that an inch of freedom has been won for the whole world so Rothko-like panels played into the set along with Feldman’s *Rothko Chapel* playing into the sound design (by Thomas Ryder Payne), and Thomas, knowing how much I loathe...
so-called background music, foregrounded a number of Feldman motifs, which, with a wondrous balance of fullness and spaciousness that’s almost medieval in sound, became part of the fabric of the play itself, as did the deceptively light opening of Schubert’s posthumous Sonata in B-Flat, which accompanied Mycroft’s three revealing monologues, for which we built a church-like ‘confessional’ he could look and speak through (the actual stage directions call for a mirror he looks at and speaks to), and coincidentally, Francoise Sullivan, the last living member of Les Automatistes, was at the time exhibiting her own meditative colour panels in Toronto, so her work played into the set too, but our colours inclined to lighter shades to reflect the whimsy of *Moose*, a superficial whimsy thinly veiling the true darkness of the environment (hauntingly lit by Laird MacDonald), a candy coating that made Gauvreau’s corrupted world all the more subversive, and it’s hard to believe, amid the underlying horror of this play, how outrageously playful it is such that even a scene of protracted torment can result in Mycroft miming “the actions of an eloquent orator who gradually turns into a grasshopper,” which is funny as hell, and hard to play, but a serious pleasure for actors and audience alike, and such serious pleasure takes the discipline and dynamism of sport (this is what Brecht meant when comparing theatre to boxing), “you have to be an athlete to keep a woman,” Letasse declares, and the same applies to performing *Moose* with all its game-playing manipulations from the gang-of-four running Mycroft through doors to Letasse forcing him to roller-skate, so sweatbands found their way onto our athlete-actors, followed quickly by tennis fashions (with particular affection for the short-skirts-and-shorts era of Chris Evert and John McEnroe), followed in turn by golf clubs, those instruments of leisure that, in the wrong hands, can become instruments of torture, and just as “sheer boredom can explain a lot of things” including the perverse maltreatment of Mycroft by his peers, so too can the eerily cozy mores of a country club, which our set was beginning to suggest, until that most violent piece of equipment, the hockey stick, appears (the actual stage directions call for a sword), cutting through any remaining vestige of civility when the gang-of-four wield it to kill — really crucify, manically, ecstatically and triumphantly crucify — Mycroft at last, with death-by-hockey-stick reaching simultaneous heights of horror and hilarity for an almost farcical catharsis, an absurd apotheosis, and I marvel when artists can create, as Gauvreau clearly did, moments of such joyous release from such intense suffering, since Gauvreau was no stranger to suffering, spending years in and out of psychiatric care until his death — by accident? — at 45, and while “people who say others like to suffer are judging something they don’t understand,” Gauvreau still found the absurd in it all, the sheer ridiculousness of living life’s vicissitudes such that he could dramatically convert Muriel Guilbault — his love and muse whose suicide in 1952 was one of the most anguishing events of his life — into the admittedly absurd-sounding “daughter of Ebenezer Mopp,” much as the names of all seven characters in *Moose* suggest the ridiculous and surreal, from Mycroft Mixeudeim to Dyrame Daduve (whose name in English carries hopeful sounds of a “daydream”) to the gang-of-four tormentors to the sadist Letasse-Cromagnon (rendered more ridiculous in our anglo production as Lettuce-Cromagnon), and after reading all this for the first time — after the gang had run Mycroft ragged, after Dydrame and Mycroft fall into a love so pure it defies all irony, and after Lettuce kills Dydrame and Mycroft kills Lettuce and the gang slaughter Mycroft and dance around his corpse, an atavistic ritual that reminded me of Matisse’s circular Dance, the age-old thrill of a born and the unleashed savagery of Lord of the Flies — having read all this, I wondered where this extraordinary play had been all my life, scandalized it had never been performed outside of Quebec and never in English, and feeling it had to be done, I was immediately grateful for Ray Ellenwood’s outstanding translation given how challenging Gauvreau’s fits of “explorean” language can be, and I also kept Pirandello in mind, knowing that theatre is not archaeology. The text remains intact for those who want to read it at home for personal pleasure; those who want to enjoy themselves will go to the theatre, where the text will be presented cleansed of withered parts and unfashionable terms, and adapted to contemporary taste. The work of art in the theatre is no longer the work of a writer… but an act of life to be created moment by moment on the stage and together with the spectators and with rights and blessings from Ray and Janine (Carreau, visual artist and Gauvreau family), I searched intensely for the actors because nothing is more important than the actors, who are the play, and they were nothing short of superb, and all these thoughts and intentions and interactions were engaging, but when time comes to play, the trick is to forget them, much as Coltrane would free himself of the scales he practiced daily, and that’s what I did on the first day of rehearsal, I forgot all this as best I could because the director with too strict a ‘vision’ plays with figures in a dollhouse but the ‘visionless’ director, the open director I aim to be, walks into the room to see what will happen. Adam Seelig, September, 2013

Left to right: Jessica Salgueiro, David Christo, Ben Irvine, Lindsay Owen Pierre, Lindsey Clark in One Little Goat’s *The Charge of the Expormidable Moose* by Claude Gauvreau directed by Adam Seelig, Tarragon Theatre, Toronto (Photo: Yuri Dojc).
PUTTING A CHARGE IN TRANSLATION
On The Charge of the Expormidable Moose
Translator's Statement by Ray Ellenwood

One of the great pleasures of seeing a major play by Claude Gauvreau produced, at last, in English, outside Quebec, was to hear the reaction of French-speaking people who knew his work. They were eager to talk translation. For example, Gaëtan Charlebois, who publishes an eclectic, on-line newsletter devoted to theatre called The Charlebois Post, asked for an email interview based on the following observation: "Of all the plays I have read produced in this country, I cannot imagine a more difficult task than translating this one. Tell us about your process." And a well-informed radio host named Line Boily, inviting me to speak on her French-language programme, had intelligent and pointed questions about my handling of the names of Gauvreau's characters. What follows are reflections on, and responses to, their generous curiosity.

In the first place, they began with an understanding of Gauvreau as a special case. I suspect that a major roadblock for English-Canadian theatre people has been his resolute non-realism. It's not that his plays don't have relevance to the "real world" (La charge is about gratuitous, vaguely institutional, sexually charged, violent sadism -- what could be more topical?), but their plots, their characters, and especially their language have a disorienting, extravagant quality. For example, Mycroft Mixeudeim, the suffering protagonist in La charge, bursts through locked doors, head foremost, in response to anguished, fake screams for help from his tormentors, and much of the play revolves around the verbal and physical contortions they wring from him. To give some idea of the strangeness of this universe, here is a passage of dialogue among Mycroft's tormentors:

Impersonal itchings are dancing on rope, molecules of skin yawn and sigh,
it's almost a downpour of tensions, of embryo-swellings, of titillations, of
nut-meg pricklings, of small cascades of pepper-rakes . . .

DYDRAME DADUVE: The hour of morose reflection may have come . . .

LONTIL-DÉPAREY: The canvas of sensations rises over a landscape of
brownish filaments . . .

BECKET-BOBO: The soft of suspended time resembles a steam of thigh . . .

LONTIL-DÉPAREY: It's the instant of evil, wily, perverted, clandestine, clamp-jawed men . . .

BECKET-BOBO: Needlers, nit-pickers, devourers, chew-slops, rapacious woodpeckers, it's the hour of the great invitation to shudder, isn't that right,
Marie-Jeanne Commode?

MARIE-JEANNE COMMODE: Ymmmmhhmmmm.

First of all, concerning the names. They are a mouthful, a fusion of familiar and outlandish, and the question is, what to do with them? For the printed version of my translation, I decided to leave them unchanged, but I had the luxury of an explanatory footnote that went something like this: Dydrame Daduve and Mycroft Mixeudeim (the only sympathetic characters in the play) have the most "abstract" names. Other names appear to be moving in the direction of puns, or some kind of significance, though never in the "Mistress Quickly" tradition. For example, LONTIL-DÉPAREY might suggest "l'ont-ils déparé" (have they marred or spoiled him/her/it?); LAURA PA might suggest "laura pas" (won't have or get him/her/it); BECKET-BOBO might suggest "becquer bobo" (kiss a hurt and make it better). But all of this is nebulous, so I decided that imposing some kind of English-sounding equivalent for the names was not appropriate. I saw a difference between such "abstract" names and the typically French-Canadian names in Michel Tremblay's Les belles-sœurs that were left unchanged (unfortunately, I thought, because they clashed with the Scottish dialogue) in the Glaswegian translation, The Guid Sisters, by Bill Findlay and Martin Bowman. Now, having seen my translation on the stage, I'm not so sure of my own decision. The theatre audience doesn't have access to my footnote (which may have been a cop out, in any case). One Little Goat's actors handled Gauvreau's inventive names without missing a beat, but still, I felt something awkward. Maybe I should have tried WILNA HAVIM for LAURA PA; or maybe I should have talked with the actors about the possibility of finding anglicized names for their characters, names that would roll more easily off their tongues. Who can give me an English
equivalent for MYCROFT MIXEUDÉIM? Theoretically, the more Gauvreau lets his syllables run free, the less the translator need feel restricted. But there's always that tyranny of the source text, the nagging fear I might have missed something that calls for an echo in my version.

As for the translation of the exchange quoted above, it actually doesn't present enormous problems. Whether in French or English, it's disorienting qualities are familiar to those who know Gauvreau's work: apparently disconnected responses, irrational connections, multiple portmanteau words, examples of what he called the "transformational" image. We might be surprised and bemused to read a phrase like "une averse de tiraillements, d'embryons-gonflements, de chatouillements, de muscades picotements, de casclettes de piments-râteaux" (see Becket-Bobo's first intervention above) but from the translator's point of view, it's relatively easy to find more-or-less equivalent words in a straight-forward, cumulative syntax. A "soft of suspended time" and a "steam of thigh" may not be common on Toronto's rather conservative stages, but similar things have been seen before in the world of poetic, surrealist-oriented drama, and they certainly are not a translation problem.

The process is not quite so simple when we are confronted with the linguistic construct Gauvreau called his "explorational image" (l'image explorienne). As he explained: "Traces of known abstract words, shaped into a bold unconscious jumble, produce the explorational image [which is] involved whenever the elements forming new, singular elements are no longer discernable by any analytic operation." And he went on to insist, "In my texts, the constant mixing together and interlacing of everyday words and explorational words is one of the more frequent causes of the stupefaction some readers feel. It's also the more recognized part of my footprint." In a way that Artaud (for example) never did, Gauvreau introduces passages of this kind of phonetic, glossolalic language into the body of his longer plays meant for mainstream production. Here is a small section from Mycroft Mixeudeim's last words:

The armies of purifying desire, intangible panorama of an intuitive precursion.
Fedralbor turiptulif, muse's hornpipe clutching the cosmos. Libualdivan, stretback cammuef; the elixir of the archangels fleeces in the depths of the crests. Aqueous liberty-ripples . . .

[Les armées du désir purifiant, panorama intangible d'une précursion intuitive.
Fédralbor turipitulif, corne de muse agrippée au cosmos. Libualdivane, drétôdô cammuef, l'élixir des archanges toisonne au fond des crêtes. Liberté-rides aqueuses.]

The first sentence doesn't pose any great problem, since the only invention comes with "précursion," for which the various possible associations (precursor, excursion, precariously, etc.) are readily available in English -- so I just drop the accent. "Fédralbor turipitulif" is not so easy. Obviously, I didn't even try an "analytic operation" -- Gauvreau said it would be fruitless anyway. But maybe I shouldn't have taken him at his word. What about "Fédralbor"? Should I have played around with "federal" and "board/border" rather than just dropping the accent again and retaining a phonetic construct? With "corne de muse" I recognized the play on "cornemuse" (bagpipe, horn, muse) and tried to suggest it. With "libualdivane," again I simply did an anglification, leaving it up to my reader to explore, perhaps, "libido" and "divan." My "stretback" is based on what I see as root elements: "dret" (droit -- straight) and "lôdô" (le dos -- back). Generally speaking, having now heard the play in English several times, my solutions often strike me as not only suspect, but timid -- suspect because they are timid. Isn't it the lot of the translator (or any writer) to be constantly second-guessing early decisions? In fact, The Charge has few really difficult passages (Mycroft's last speech was actually left out of the One Little Goat production in favour of a couple of more audacious Gauvreau texts). Considering that the bulk of the translation work is taken up by stage directions, descriptions, and normal dialogue, there were not many problems, and the actors seemed to find my work usable.

Paradoxically, it was Gauvreau's earlier plays that caused me most trouble as a translator. I'm thinking of Entrailles (Entrain), a collection of twenty-six, short "dramatic objects" he began writing as a teenager, between 1944 and 1946. They range from fanciful, expressionistic pieces, quite easy to render in English, to a one-page text that begins with a title, "Fatigue et réalité sans soupçon" (Trustful Fatigue and Reality) and ends with "rideau" (curtain), but otherwise comprises nineteen lines of mainly explorational images. Here are the first five lines:

21
I confess I left this entire thing untranslated (except for the title), followed by a note explaining that I did so, "because there are so few specific words suggested by its sound-clusters. Some exceptions are 'pensée' (thought), 'cousine-germaine' (first cousin, female) and 'Chapelle automatique' (automatic chapel). The last may be a reference to the 'Automatistes' group, which was sometimes referred to, mostly by critics, as a chapel or sect." A few years later, Stephen Cain published his "Homophonic Translation" of the same text, no doubt in response to my having avoided the issue, suggesting at least one possible solution. Here are his first lines:

Keys you lease, Kyries cost, laid in knights jab our
View; lay into cows bitch or nits enable a coup.
Venice cheers: *L'chaim*, carry-outs click out.
Sand-nestled veils of Mount Karnak reveal
Karen-Anne, Benny's sore cellar, and mats.*

I especially like his translation of "Chapelle automatique" at the very end as "the chap's an auto magnate." Though I might occasionally question Dr. Cain's pronunciation, I can't fault many of his phonetic associations, since my attempts would hardly be any more logical or reliable. For those who want to be more serious about the matter, I would recommend Cain's later, very perceptive, structural analysis of "Trustful Fatigue and Reality" as a primarily sonic, carefully structured performance piece -- placing it within a history of avant-garde poetic experiments. Had that analysis been available to me when I was working on *Les Entrailles*, I might not have resorted to the translator's most egregious sin: evasion by footnote.\(^9\)

Ray Ellenwood, July, 2013

**NOTES:**

1) The independent, courageous One Little Goat theatre company, under the direction of Adam Seelig, produced *The Charge of the Expormidable Moose*, my translation of *La charge de l'orignal épormyable*, at the Tarragon Extra Space from May 10 to 26, 2013. For a sample of my lengthy, strident campagne to have Gauvreau noticed by English-Canadian theatre, see "Who's Afraid of Claude Gauvreau," *Border Crossings* 29.1 (May 2010), 56-59.

2) http://www.charpo-canada.com/2013/05/in-word-ray-ellenwood.

3) This was for "Champ libre" on CJBC, May 15. The interview was posted, at least for a moment, at http://www.radio-canada.ca/emissions/champ_libre/2012-2013.

4) For the most detailed account available in English of Claude Gauvreau's language theories, see my translation of passages from his letters to Jean-Claude Dussault in *The Lucid Clusters: Poetics of Claude Gauvreau*, Calgary: NO PRESS, 2011 (unpaginated).

5) Op cit.

6) Linda Gaboriau, probably Canada's most prolific translator of playscripts, once told me she usually collaborates with actors even in the early stages of her translations. My work was purely textual, done years before there was any interest expressed by a theatre company, but I can see how more early interactions with actors might have been helpful and entertaining in the case of *The Charge*.

7) A few were published in Gauvreau's lifetime, notably in the Automatist manifesto *Refus global*, and some were even performed. The full collection has not been published in a separate volume in French. It is available only in Gauvreau's 1500-page *Œuvres créatrices complètes* (Montréal: Parti pris, 1977). The plays may be found in English, in one volume, in my translation, *Entrails* (Toronto: Exile Editions, 1991).


9) See *Exile, the Literary Quarterly*, 32.4 (2008), 22-23.


For further info visit: TheExileWriters.com
2 Poems from: *GEOGRAPHY OF SYNTAX*
Jill Darling

1. answers will vary

the sentence becomes more complex  
continues to progress  
is removed from the reality of the limitless.

what one is meaning to say, or diagram this:

how *jackie did what yesterday was not easy*.

that is to say, i can rearrange you at my own discretion.

some would prefer the structure further exampled by the questionable grammatics of the following:

kids fell the when backward bus stopped the.

fill in each or neither blank, for each or neither part of speech.

or, you may write complex sentences of your own and diagram them.

clearly, the intention is of the utmost or, something directly on another side of linear.

the eye of the words I am sewing

the entire body at once

2.

one could argue, as i feel inclined at the moment, that the abstract is not open but merely abstract. or the closed is not sealed against rain but something more didactic. or, a person in every shade of blue on a wednesday might favor the inception of the obvious. i on the other hand, in wanting to get away from the usual, move away from the image, a red smear on the front and back sides of a page, toward something more like this very example of the associated nature of nothing in particular. yet, for every action there is an equal or at least opposite or something not necessarily intended, which will carry with it an array of associative words and other constructs.

(she proclaimed in a husky voice, the grey haze and the cigarettes never helping anything whatsoever.)

**JILL DARLING** has a Ph.D. in Twentieth Century American Literature and Culture from Wayne State University. She has had two poetry collections published: *Solve For* (BlazeVOX, ebooks) and *begin with may: a series of moments* (Finishing Line Press). Her manuscript, *A Geography of Syntax* was recently chosen as a finalist for the Omnidawn Poetry Prize.
CECI N’EST PAS SURREALISM: A MUSICAL
Gary Barwin

My Marxist unconscious is bigger than your Capitalist conscientious objectivism. What can ‘Surrealism’ mean today? Since things have changed since the fields were only magnetic. Thingness has changed. The self. The individual. The author. Language. The virtual world. The real. The body.

Plus ça change, the paintings stay the same. The frames have changed. Memes change. Memory also.

Magritte’s pipe-that-isn’t-a-pipe now comes in a package with warning labels. Images of diseased mouths from new Buñuel films.

*Yeah, parataxis walks into a bar. A fish.
Breton says, “the speed of thought is no greater than that of words, and hence does not exceed the flow of either tongue or pen.”

Think fast: do we think faster now? Speed itself is faster. And complicit. Did words get slower or faster? Don’t talk to me about tongues and pens. I’ve got continuous partial attention and I feel like a Teletubby with a screen in my belly. How does thought ∩ word?

Warhol world-famously appropriating McLuhan: "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes," but we approach the speed of light and time itself slows. There is no future and the fifteen minutes lasts beyond a lifetime.

Psychic gastroschists: we are born with our unconscious on the outside. Mind and body are one. Or one and a half. We’ve outsourced.

Exquisite corpus callosum. What’s left is right. Everything old is you again.

*The author is dead but has ‘he’ taken Surrealism with him? Did he fire his post-industrial pre-Socratic soft ghost in the machine gun into the crowd that was himself and that was another and walk off into some green screen?
The author seeing the back of his/her own head in the mirror. Or the readers(). Help, I’m melting, says the author malfunction. The Surrealism of the author defunction.


Exquisite clouds: crowd sourcircular. The collective Surrealist games of the current semantosphere.

*Where did my language go? A long walk off a short Sapir wharf.
Languages making spectacles of themselves, no longer transparent. a see-(you)-through mode of accessing. Our pith helmets on, we explore the unconscious of language – its own automatic writing, its urges, impulses, language’s slow blinking id.

Wittgenstein reminds us that the world is everything that is the lower case. Or kept in a glass upper middle case.

*How do language and literature enrage the public? A piece of paper with nothing on it has definite social value. If you print a Surrealist poem on it, is this value is lost?
The granddaughter of Borges’ Pierre Menard worked until she could re-create Breton and Soupault’s *Les Champs Magnétiques* through automatic writing on her iPad.

*Juxta(global)positioning systems are go. Collage and juxtaposition have changed. Surprising is surprisingly different. Simultaneous simulacra simulcast.

Christian Bok’s *Xenotext Experiment*: Beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of the bacteria *Deinococcus radiodurans* and a poem.

DNA is an Oulipo technique.

Non sequiturs are parataxis. The New Sentence walks into a bar. A fish.

Zeno text. The distance between things is never bridged. Or was never there.

*Hey, where did my unconscious go?
Don’t need your id, my culture has its own id, idependent from the mind
We live in the dream state of language, of culture, of media. Do we still wait for bread in the song lines, amusing ourselves to sleep in the American dream time?
What is Surrealism, post-unconsciousness?
“In the past things were either in your head (subjective, imaginary, fantasy) or else they were part of the outside world—cold, hard, concrete materialistic reality. If you want to look at it in terms of poetry, there was Surrealism and objectivism. Now there’s the veil of the virtual in between. The old opposition between inner and outer doesn’t quite capture it, especially as it contains elements of both. It’s real but not concrete.” (Elaine Equi.)

* What does the unconscious of language look like?
derek beaulieu’s encephaloglyphic flatland, or the alphasynaptic flux of his Prose of the Trans-Canada?
Perhaps Donato Mancini’s “Subjecthood and the Light Verb”, its gothic dendritic twists, its brainy calligraphico-cortical folds and its self-reflexive play with the self-reflexive self. The rosette of language crucified on its own bootstrap.

* Beautiful as the chance meeting on an ancient moving glacier of an executive of neon death and a Dorset squatting near where once, Al Purdy imagined trilobites, swamps and the last great reptile hissing.


* Bizspeak: five traits common to ‘disruptive innovators’: “questioning, experimenting, observing, associating and networking.” (Dyer) The iPhone is a “recombinant mash-up.” (Kao cited in Lohr)

* The automatic writing of systems.
Zen Surreal.
Is Cagean indeterminacy Surreal?
I Ching so I scratch: David W. McFadden Surreal?
A Cagean structuring of his long poems, line and stanza length determined by the I Ching, filled with the genius of the moment?
Make a hat out of time, then pull words from it.

* Surrealism and Bok’s Eunoia, Steve Venright’s spoonerisms?
An arbitrary constraint:
Roonerspisms
The vocalic structure of the lexicon contained within one iteration of the English language – a particular dictionary.
‘Arbitrary’ constraints steer the conscious mind away from normative associations, provides a proscenium page where we watch it grapple with the normative physics of the language.
The unconscious of the language.
Language is always ‘pataphysical. It is always an imaginary solution.
Received language is automatic writing. media is automatic writing. cyber-reality and the virtual are automatic.

* Stuart Ross and other cognates of the crumbling balcony of the Canadian Surreal: the ‘Surreal’ connections often ironized, self-aware language games, exploring the cultural meaning of objects, feelings, and expression. Surrealism now itself ‘pataphysical, a rhetorical strategy, a literary device among others. Meta-surrealism. ‘Pata-surrealism.
Christopher Dewdney: the perfect Surrealist act is firing a fossil into a crowded rock. The paleolithic is political. Time is erotic. A chance meeting. A Cenozoic hand in a Mesozoic glove. The dissecting water table. What does supra-human time/language/consciousness mean for Surrealism?
And in the wake of a (rawlings) wide lepidopteral slumber?
To sleep, purchase to dream.

* The perfect Surrealist act is firing a real machine gun into a virtual crowd of people. Or vice versa.
Firing the sentence “the perfect Surrealist act is firing a machine gun into a crowd of people” into cyberspace. Or vice versa. Broadstreaming it.

We live in the operatic age of the cyborg: history, culture, language, the unconscious, the conscious are all prosthetic.

* My other reality is reality.

Surreal (Fifth) Estate: making reality a reality. Reality? What a concept?
What is the real?
What real does ‘realism’ reflect? How would we know if something is 21st century ‘real’? For reals.
What would quantum Surrealism look like? What wouldn’t it? It wouldn’t what? And at the same time.

Beautiful as the chance meeting in 22-dimensions of Duchamps’ Étant donnés and Schrödinger’s cat.
A superstring realism of D-branes, black p-branes and Neveu–Schwarz 5-branes, the ‘purely informative style’ (Breton) of Spacetime trousers,

* Canada doesn’t need melting clocks, we have glaciers melting. Time doesn’t turn out to be persistent, but pesky in the Noöcene. The dream like the ozone layer thins. It things.

* David W. McFadden once suggested that I write a musical about the history of Surrealism.
Ceci n’est pas un musical.
Ceci n’est pas un pipe dream ou un pape.
Ceci n’est pas Surrealisme.

Works Cited

GARY BARWIN is a poet, fiction writer, composer, multimedia artist, and performer. His books include mostly recently, Franzlations [the imaginary Kafka parables] [with Craig Conley & Hugh Thomas; New Star]. He received a PhD in Music Composition from SUNY at Buffalo. His website is: garybarwin.com
TALKING CIRCUITS by S.S. Prasad

Village Barber:

Nanny:

Neck:
SS Prasad is an author, theorist, computer technology specialist, and foreign correspondent living and working in India.
PONYTAIL IN A GOODWILL BIN:
An Interview with Catherine Heard
by Linda Steer

Canadian artist, CATHERINE HEARD’s art has been exhibited in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and Europe. In this interview with Linda Steer, Heard discusses the connections between her work and Surrealism (Aug. 9, 2011).

Linda Steer: In thinking through your work as Surrealist I’ve been wondering about the anachronistic application of what seems to be a historical term to contemporary art. As an historian, this is an important distinction for me. And I’ve just finished writing a book on photography and Surrealism, so I’ve been thinking a lot about what Surrealism is. Perhaps we can distinguish between historical Surrealism, the movement started in France around 1924 and developed by André Breton and others, and the practice of Surrealism by those who use Surrealist ideas in their work. I think one could easily read contemporary work through Surrealist issues, and there is a precedent for this, notably in the resurrection and framing of Surrealism by writers associated with the journal October in the 1990s. One of the basic premises of Surrealism, of course, is an attempt to get to the unconscious, to evade the psychic censor and bring the worlds of the dream and the real closer together. I think there are Surrealist practices that have had a significant legacy in the 20th century, and that is how we can think about Surrealism today.

Catherine Heard: I would tend to agree that it draws on the history of Surrealism or that it uses Surrealist practices, rather than being Surrealist. I would even hesitate to say that I consciously thought very much about Surrealism, especially in the very early stages of the work, when I was working at art school. [Heard went to OCAD in the 1980s] The first person to make the connection was Matthew Teitelbaum, who contacted me in 1993. He had seen some of my work and he was curating a show about Surrealism and women. I don’t know what happened -- either the show didn’t happen or my work wasn’t selected for it—but I remember him calling me and at the time being kind of…I had just never made that connection.

LS: So you were surprised that he thought of your work as Surrealist?

CH: Yes, but subsequently a number of people have made the connection, including Mary Ann Caws. When she published her book on Surrealism for Phaidon she included a photo of one of my works.

(Caws used a photograph of Heard’s installation, Sleep, 2002, in Surrealism, a book she edited for Phaidon’s Themes and Movements series in 2004. The book argues for the continued influence and legacy of Surrealism in contemporary art. - LS)
Shirley Madill also included my work in Mask and Metamorphosis, a show she curated at the Art Gallery of Hamilton that contextualized a group of Canadian women artists’ work as Surrealist. She compared it to Meret Oppenheim’s Fur Glove, which the gallery had on loan.

[Oppenheim’s Fur Gloves with Wooden Fingers, 1936, like her Objet (Le dîner en fourrure),1936, is the quintessential Surrealist object: made of found materials, provocative, and dreamlike. Mask and Metamorphosis was held in 2002. - LS]

LS: Since Caws and others have framed your work as Surrealist, have you been thinking more literally about the connection between your work and Surrealism? How has this influenced your work?

CH: I think it reinforced the connection. But I would say it did take me a long time to…. and I still don’t think about it much, consciously. I think, looking, back at my work, at what I was doing, even if it wasn’t consciously tapping into Surrealism, that the connections were there. A very early piece called Confessional was based on a dream diary, and subsequently Sleep… they were both installation pieces and they are bookends to each other because they both deal with the idea of dream and sleep and that kind of imagery, but were made about ten years apart. Confessional when I had only been out of art school for a few years, and Sleep when I was a more mature artist.

[Confessional, 1996, included two sewn figures, two photographic images and one tape loop. The first figure, a conjoined twin, was made from the artist’s great grandmother’s wedding dress. A large-scale photograph of the same dress was hung on the wall. The second figure, an infant with trisomy 13, a genetic disorder, was made from a christening dress and displayed over a lightbox-mounted transparency that depicted the dress. In the tape loop a voice recited images taken from Heard’s dreams along with phrases inspired by books that offer guides to dream interpretation. In a similar fashion, Sleep, 2002, depicted various misshapen figures or heads placed on furniture or on the floor. The work is Surrealist in subject matter, for it is an exploration of the territory of dreams and sleep; in appearance, which, in these two works, oscillates between the visceral and the ethereal; and in genre, for, like Oppenheim’s Fur Gloves with Wooden Fingers, these are objects that rely, in part, on found materials. They are also Surrealist objects in the way in which André Breton theorized such works of art. While Breton’s thinking changed over time, the Surrealist object, be it a photograph, a constructed sculpture or a poem, always had a connection to objective chance, which includes the “fortuitous meeting of two distant realities on an inappropriate plane.” (Breton, “Surrealist Situation of the Object”, 275). Here, we might think of the meeting of a fur glove and wooden fingers, or of a Christening dress and a conjoined twin. - LS]

LS: Right. That is a very direct connection. Using dreams in art, there’s that, both in method and in content.

CH: In the 1990s, I showed with Nether Mind, an artist collective in Toronto that made a conscious connection to Surrealism.

[Nether Mind was an artist collective that exhibited site-specific work in Toronto in the 1990s. Their last exhibition was in 1995. They reformed in 2012 for a series of exhibitions in Canada and the US, including one at St. Anne’s Anglican Church in Toronto, which was very well received. - LS]

The artists made works about the body but that made reference to the labyrinth of the body and the body is related to architecture. We discussed the spaces that the collective showed in as a kind of architecture of the body.

[In their manifesto, Nether Mind took a Surrealist tone, claiming that the relationship of the work to the exhibition space was one between body and unconscious mind: “…metaphorically the dark, labyrinthine spaces chosen for the exhibitions function as the bowels of the building and symbolically house the subconscious mind.” - LS]

The work in the shows used body-related imagery. That collective particularly tapped into ideas of Surrealism. So, I was aware of a Surrealist history, but I don’t think I was aware of how strongly that history had influenced me until later.
LS: So, how do you think that you ended up doing Surrealist-type work, or using Surrealist ideas? For instance, all the work you’ve done with dolls, which...well I’m thinking about Hans Bellmer, or even the Surrealist attraction to mannequins. Or the work with mutants, deformed human form...that, to me, is also very Surreal.

CH: It’s funny, there was also a parallel interest in my earlier work in Freudian psychology and in feminist re-readings of Freud. I’m thinking particularly about the piece called *Freud’s Bride*, which is the dress embroidered with a man’s head turned vertically on it. The image of the man was based on a book of colour photographs of Victorian wax medical models.

*[Freud’s Bride, 1996, consists of a wedding dress embroidered with a man’s mouth, teeth and the area around his mouth, including a moustache. The mouth seems to break through the skin of the dress, right at the level where the wearer’s genitals would be. - LS]*

When I went through art school, many of the instructors had very strong connections to Abstract Expressionism because of their age when they went through art school. I wonder if the Surrealist influences of automatism somehow filtered down to the students. Early on, I did have the appreciation of the way that the subconscious can be utilized to bring out abstract or non-objective imagery. I think that impulse was there at a very early stage even though it wasn’t necessarily conscious.

**Freud’s Bride, 1996. Wedding dress, embroidery.**

LS: But your work looks very different than Abstract Expressionist painting, and other non-objective work, such as what the Automatistes were doing in Quebec. Although if we think back to what André Breton wrote about painting -- he identified those two streams, or ways of creating Surrealist imagery: by representing the dream either literally in a kind of narrative form (like Salvador Dalí) or intuitively and abstractly (like Joan Miró).

CH: What I would’ve been aware of, and I did go to galleries as a child, was Surrealist painting. I wasn’t so much aware of the Surrealist method.

LS: Aside from how Surrealist work looks, and there really is no Surrealist style per se, there is also that relationship between the personal and the political. And, the Surrealists were, of course, doing real political work with the PCF, etc., but the work is also extremely personal as it deals with the unconscious. I tend to think about it as... well, I’ve been writing about Surrealism’s unconscious, if we can call it that, and what is hidden in the movement, such as gender politics. Another way we can think about it is looking out towards a collective unconscious, where there is a political aspect, or inward towards a personal unconscious, where issues arise in the work that the artist might not be aware of. Do you think your work has a connection to something larger? Are there political aspects to your work?

CH: Certainly the early work did, as I was reading Freud through feminism. I began using a lot of materials that referenced the female body, like human hair. And the original dolls also were intended to be political, although I think they were misread, along with other work, both visually and intellectually. This was when I was a very young artist and I had the conviction that I could influence people’s ideas by providing a didactic edge in the work. The visual misreading was very interesting.

LS: What happened?

CH: The work that was shown at the Power Plant, embroidered female reproductive systems based on Vesalius.

*[Andreas Vesalius was an early modern physician and scholar of anatomy. He wrote De humani corporis fabrica (On the Fabric of the Human Body) in 1543. - LS]*
They all look like male anatomy. I embroidered them with human hair. When the show was reviewed, three of the four reviewers thought that they were images of penises, even though the information the gallery provided in the brochure and the catalogue said that these were images of female reproductive systems. People still misread them. I realized that trying to make a work that was that didactic and clear was kind of pointless anyway. People are going to read it through their own lens.

[This series, Untitled, 1993, displayed cotton panels embroidered with human hair stretched across frames that were mounted on legs, as in a traditional tapestry frame. The work can then be seen from both sides, with the embroidered image on the recto and the hair hanging down on the verso, making the material apparent. Taken from Vesalius’s images, which, in keeping with 16th century theories, saw vaginas as kind of inverted, internal penis. - LS]

**CH:** So much of Surrealism did evolve around games and play and even the idea of using the subconscious implies a kind of play because you are relying more on impulsivity rather than things that are clearly drawn out.

In the case of the dolls, in my mind, they were about feminism and the patriarchal understanding of the female body as being inferior to the male. In retrospect, it was the viewer’s strong visceral reaction that was interesting, and which I began to consciously explore in subsequent works.

**LS:** And you aren’t censoring yourself in the way that we do consciously or unconsciously all the time.

**CH:** Yes, and the little id sculptures that I’ve been making for a long time, the little hairy dolls, that kind of maniacal grinning creature, what I’m envisioning is this kind of hairy, dark little male devil with an erect penis that lives inside the virginal maiden.

[In Freud’s topography of the psyche, the id is the unconscious mind, the locus of repressed material from our own experiences, as well as broader, shared material that was never experienced, yet has been repressed, such as instincts and drives. We can only access the id indirectly, through dreams, slips of the tongue, the experience of the uncanny (the return of the repressed), etc. In a sense, the id represents the known unknown. As an attempt to represent the un-representable, Heard’s id sculptures are at once playful (they are mischievous, cute little monsters) and dread-inducing (they are dark, deformed, made of hair, not quite visible, and they lurk) - LS].

I’m thinking specifically of William Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *Lives of Saints* and that push and pull between the male and the female. I think what Blake talks about in *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is the life force and that idea that it is an uncontrolled force.

[Blake was a favourite of the Surrealists, along with other poets and artists of the Romantic period, for they were seen to challenge the rationalism of the Enlightenment - LS]

**CH:** It is the creative force and it is unpredictable, but it is also the thing that plays, that makes jokes…the Freudian slip.
LS: Let’s talk more about hair. I first encountered your work in a site-specific group show at Hart House called \textit{hic}.

\textit{[Hic, the Hart House Installation Collective, was another collective with which Heard was associated. They curated the installation and performance works of 18 artists at Hart House, University of Toronto, in 2006. - LS]}

There were these heads hanging by their hair in a neo-gothic staircase, in fact, all they were was hair with glass eyes and little teeth. My response was one of complete and utter dread, which is, of course, the uncanny. But then I got closer and there are these little eyes and these teeth and all this human hair. They are monsters and yet they are cute.

CH: I don’t know if you got close enough to realize that they were hung by braided quilts and some of them had tongues of the same material with text embroidered on them.

LS: What did the text say?

CH: The names of the Seven Deadly Sins. And I often do that with works, where there is some kind of hidden element that you will only see if you spend a lot of time with it.

LS: Why do you do this? It’s like a secret.

CH: It’s a secret, but it’s also a little gift to the person who spends time with the work. But, often it’s also a key that makes the meaning of the work change. So in the works at Hart House, called \textit{Beasts}, I was thinking about the Gothic castle, the appearance of the building, and the monster in fairy tales. The “secret” text was like the cautionary key to the fairy tale. Fairy tales often were not just stories, but were warnings to children. Some of them were horrific, such Heinrich Hoffmann’s collection of stories, \textit{Struwwelpeter}. In one poem a tailor cuts off children’s thumbs if they suck them.

LS: So the stories are uncanny. Like Hoffmann’s \textit{Der Sandmann}, which Freud wrote about in his essay on the uncanny.

CH: And, the hair itself has this very Surreal aspect. It is a very mutable symbol.

LS: Tell me about that.

CH: Especially for women. It is attached to beauty and sexuality, power, the beautiful woman as temptress, but then this is reversed when it is taken off the body. It becomes this disgusting, revolting, abject thing. Its appearance can shift from glossy and smooth to a snarl of knots. It evokes the fear of women’s sexuality and the history of female oppression.

LS: This is a material you use in a lot of your work.

CH: I’ve been using since art school. In recent work, called \textit{Arabesque}, I’ve been making calligraphy with hair and then photographing it. I’ve also been playing around with hair, putting it I different situations and photographing it…it’s a project still in the development stage.

LS: Ok, where do you get the hair?

CH: The initial hair I got was when I was in art school. I found it at a Goodwill store.

LS: Oh my!

CH: Yes, I remember having that kind of uncanny shock when I found it. It wasn’t even braided. It was a ponytail. Black hair shot through with a bit of gray. Because of the way it was tied…you could tell that someone had just tied their hair and hacked off a ponytail. I think I paid $2 for it. I’ve used it over the years, rationing it out. When I started making more work with hair, such as the embroidery, I just bought it from other sources. I did one piece with my own hair -- one of the early embroidery works. The text, taken from a 19th century
pseudo-scientist named said: “Men will never feel like women, nor women like men”. But he
didn’t mean that in a psychological sense. He meant it in the sense that women’s brains are
smaller!


didn’t mean that in a psychological sense. He meant it in the sense that women’s brains are
smaller!

“(Men will never feel like women, nor women like men” preceded the installation of the second Untitled (after
Vesalius) hair embroidery at the Power Plant, 1992. This first hair piece was shown at Gallery 76 in an
exhibition by the Blanket Collective. The words were taken from J.G. Spurzheim’s 1833 book on phrenology.
The French Surrealists were also interested in phrenology and other pseudo-sciences that developed during the
18th through early 20th century. - LS]

LS: I’m still thinking about finding that ponytail in the bin at the goodwill.

CH: And when we look back on things, things that seem inconsequential, that frisson of
having that reaction of disgust, horror and excitement simultaneously, probably imprinted that
material on me in a different way than maybe if I’d grown up with a hank of hair in my drawer
when I was a child.

LS: Or even if you had said: “I want to work with hair; I’ll go find some hair.” It’s the cendrier
cendrillon, coming across an object, an object of desire, which has significant meaning, but its
meaning is only available upon its discovery…the magical object that answers all the questions,
but you don’t necessarily know what the questions are until you find it. André Breton wrote
about it in Mad Love. He had become obsessed with the phrase cendrier cendrillon, or Cinderella
ashtray, and had asked Giacometti to make him a slipper-shaped ashtray out of gray glass. But
Breton forgot about it and Giacometti never made it. One day the two were in the St Ouen
flea market, one of the Surrealists’s favourite sites in Paris, one of the sites of the marvellous,
and Breton found a metal spoon that had a slipper on the end, but, he also realized the entire
spoon was shaped like a slipper. He realized this was the object of his dreams, and an object
of erotic desire. He didn’t find what he expected to find. The object didn’t look as he had
expected, but when he found it, he knew that was what he had been looking for. This was, of
course, objective chance, and Breton saw this as a way of circumventing social norms and
accessing the dream world (i.e. a route to Surreality). The meaning of the hair, maybe, wasn’t
apparent until you found this ponytail. You weren’t looking for it, but when you found it, it
took on all kinds of meanings.

CH: It’s interesting. Because we’ve been talking of hair, I’ve been thinking of teeth. I made
that set of porcelain wisdom teeth. Those were cast from my own teeth, which had been
sitting in a drawer for 20 years. They’re parallel to hair in the sense that they’re part of the
body.

LS: And they don’t decay.

CH: And they change when you take them out of the body. As an object they are also
mutable.

LS: So they sat in a drawer for 20 years. How did they end up becoming art?

CH: I was working on that sculpture that cries honey and another that is crowned by candles
and will eventually be obscured by wax. Votive was about pilgrimage, people going to see
relics, which are usually bones. And commonly in pilgrimages there would be something that
people could take away from the sites they visited, traditionally a pilgrimage coin, but
sometimes for the wealthy something of greater value, a fragment of the true cross, perhaps. I
like the idea of a false relic. The teeth were something people could take away from the
exhibition, but they had to steal them.

LS: How was that set up?

CH: Well, it’s been shown a couple of times and set up differently, but the favourite way was
when it was shown in France. They built a little curved niche into the wall and they sat in a
pile on a glass shelf that was lit from underneath. People could take them as they were leaving
the installation. There was another piece in the exhibition that visually cued viewers use
scissors to cut a scrap of their clothing or hair (or to take a small object out of their pocket)
and use a small hammer to pin it onto a tall wax pillar. Once people had made this interaction within the installation, and performed this action, I think it made them more liable to take something in return. To make them less afraid to transgress the boundary of touch, which is forbidden in most gallery situations.

LS: That’s interesting when thinking about the history of relics and how many were stolen.

CH: Yes, and also, they usually are fake anyway. If you put all the pieces of the “true cross” together apocryphally people say it would be larger than Noah’s ark. In Lisieux, when I did a residency in Normandy, I became fascinated by Saint-Thérèse, a relatively modern saint, who died in the late 19th century of tuberculosis. Her finger bone is on display in a church in Bayeux, done up like a relic, and to think that someone dug her up so recently… the fetishization of body parts.

Votive, 2006. – See also: http://www.catherineheard.com/votivecatherineheard.html

LS: Oh, Catholicism! And Surrealism is a very Catholic art movement in many ways, with its focus on mystery and on the body. Even though it critiqued Catholicism (and I’m thinking here of a photograph that appeared in La Révolution Surrealiste entitled “Our Collaborator Benjamin Peret Harassing a Priest”) it retained some elements of it because it began in that early 20th century French culture.

LS: What about your most recent work? The collaboration you are doing with Martin Bourgeois, the dentist? That, to me, is very interesting. The process is fascinating, and the results are beautiful, but it also makes me think about Surrealism because it is about what we can and cannot see…back to the idea of the unconscious in art. You are trying to reveal what is hidden.

CH: It has an unpredictable aspect and is a counter-intuitive way of working, building from the inside out, and the outside, the surface of the object becomes unimportant, and like the body (and the mind), what is most critical is concealed. I’ve been playing with different processes, making sculptures of heads with things hidden in them, and then scanning them in a dental CAT scan to make an image. The image is not created by light and dark as are traditional image, but by relative density. So, material that is dense appears white. Metal and glass both show up as white; even thought they look quite different to the human eye, they are both very dense – which is what the machine sees. The process is fickle. It’s different because it forces me to not think that much about what the surface of the object looks like, and also to not expect it to be perfect, because the process is resistant to perfection. It is very chance oriented, as one is never entirely certain how a particular material will read in the particular configuration of each sculpture. It’s kind of like the Surrealist 2-d processes that rely on chance, such as décalomanie, or frottage.

(Both décalomanie and frottage were Surrealist painting techniques valued for their reliance on chance. While both had existed before Surrealism, they were develop and used extensively by Surrealists. Frottage, is a technique that relies on putting paper over a surface and rubbing a drawing tool of some sort, such as a pencil, over it to create an image. It is considered automatic, i.e. it surpasses the conscious mind, for the creator does not know what image she or he will achieve. Décalomanie is similar in that it relies on chance and the final result is not predictable. The artist spreads paint on paper and then covers the wet paint with another sheet of paper. The two sheets are pressed together and then pulled apart to create an image. Surrealist artist Max Ernst, for example, used both these techniques - LS.)

LS: Yes, and I’m thinking also of some of the work that Lee Miller and Man Ray did with photography. Solarization. Like the CAT scan work, the process was fickle and partly unpredictable, and it gave that element of chance to photography.
[As the story goes, Lee Miller discovered solarization when she felt something crawl across her foot when she and Man Ray were in the darkroom. She quickly turned on the light, accidentally exposing the film she was developing, thereby reversing some of the highlights and shadows. Ray and Miller both worked on perfecting the technique. Techniques such as this were valued because they allowed for mistakes, discovery and chance; they got away from the objectivity of photography and allowed, perhaps, entry into the unconscious mind. The images were not as mediated by the conscious mind as straight photographs. They allowed the unknown to creep into the image.- LS]

CH: It is actually very much like that: you know what you photographed and you know what the process does, but you don’t know what the finished product will look like. This series is in a very early stage, but it will become a larger project for the Art Gallery of Hamilton. I might have access to some larger machines at a local hospital that is participating in project. The pieces that I’m doing currently are limited in size because of the size of the dental equipment. It only scans something the size of the jaw area.

LS: So if you get access to a larger CAT scan machine you could scan full bodies or larger heads.

CH: I’d like to be able to scan larger sculptures -- full bodies -- that are loosely based around the idea of how we imagine the inside of our bodies to be. It’s very difficult to envision our bodies on the inside. It would be interesting to get people to draw what they think their bodies look like on the inside and work from that. I’ve looked at a lot of medieval scientific illustrations of the inside of bodies and they are very interesting: overly simplified, parts left out. Most of us only have a rudimentary or medieval understanding of what the inside of our bodies look like.

LS: If you got people to draw for you, to show what they thought the inside of their bodies looked like, would you make sculptures based on that?

CH: Not based very tightly, but loosely based on what people drew.

LS: The drawings would be for gathering information. What about viewers? What do you want people to get out of your work? We talked earlier about political ideals and about how they can be mixed up….

CH: As I get older I am less concerned with what I want people to get from it. I know that people will get something from it and I can sometimes predict what part of a work will provoke people. When I’m making the work I’m not thinking very much about the viewer most of the time, except maybe at the very beginning stages where I’m doing sketches and I’m imagining that I’m the viewer looking at the finished work, but the work always changes through the process of making it, and during the process of making, I am immersed in the process of making, and I stop thinking about the viewer. Later, toward the end, I begin to think about the viewer again, as I work out the fine points of the installation. How the work will look when it is approached from different angles, how to move the viewer through the space, etc. But when I’m making it, I’m not thinking about the viewer at all. Actually I’m not thinking about anything – at a certain point it always feels like the work is making itself, and I’ve lost some degree of control. I can try to make it do certain things, and sometimes I’m successful, but at other times, the work evolves in ways I don’t expect….and again that is a connection to the Surreal. No matter how much I want to keep things under control, to be at all successful, I have to let go of that control, and the piece evolves. I can only describe it as working simultaneously on a conscious and unconscious level. I can see a parallel to psychotherapy, where you are trying to work simultaneously with these two separate aspects of the psyche. But then something might happen that is completely out of your control, and you will have an emotional reaction. Then something happens at a very different level. This also has something to do with how people react to the work. For instance, some people love the little hair sculptures I did and others hate them. They’re loosely based on the idea of teratoma, which is both frightening and fascinating.

LS: Why are you interested in this dark stuff?
CH: I think everyone is interested in it, but we don’t all admit to it. Maybe for some people their ego holds them back and tries to protect them. Or maybe they aren’t open to feeling in response to the work. If you don’t let it inside by taking time, reacting and thinking, you have only a superficial reaction and you don’t experience the work. To really experience a piece, you need to spend time alone with it. It is one of the reasons I like when people own a work, and live with it. It gets under their skin in a different way. It looks different on different days when you are in different moods, and when different events are taking place around you.

LS: This is why I was asking you what you hope people get out of your work because I imagine there are some very strong reactions to it. It does get at issues we all have difficulty with…what lies deep in the psyche, our ambivalent or even horrified relationship with our own bodies, etc.

CH: Certainly people have had very negative reactions. One piece in particular, the *Casebook* series, elicited a very strong reaction. It was a series of dolls that were made to look like birth defects. I got hate messages. Someone wrote a diatribe about how it was anti-child and offensive in the comments book. That work really pushed people’s boundaries. At the time I was a young artist and it bothered me that the work upset people. I realized later that I had already acclimatized to the subject matter and was immune to feeling upset. It took me almost a year to make it. When I first started, I looked at many photographs and I found them extremely difficult to look at. By the time I’d finished the work, I had internalized them and didn’t find them frightening. In retrospect, I think it is ok that the work upset people. It got under their skin; it evoked a reaction. Maybe it is more rare to accomplish that now when we are all much more exposed to difficult images. This was over twenty years ago, and so was pre-internet. The images I was using were from medical texts, so most people would never have seen that type of imagery unless they had sought it out.

LS: I think that we do become immune through exposure, but we tend to be exposed to particular kinds of images: many, many images of violence, sexual violence, but less of deformed bodies.

CH: Well I think it is more than visual conditioning. It’s that it is a taboo image. As children we are told not to stare at people who look different, and these days, in Canada, it is very rare that we see imperfect bodies. A hundred years ago, you could go to a sideshow and not only was it acceptable to look, but sideshows were often framed as being educational. There was a positivistic, moral aspect to them. The armless man would demonstrate how he could cut with scissors held in his feet, and how he could sign his name in perfect copperplate calligraphy … he had overcome something difficult. Now it has become taboo to look – especially to stare.

LS: I think we are back to our difficulty with the unknown. We are all afraid of the unknown.

CATHERINE HEARD’S WORK CAN BE SEEN ON-LINE AT THESE LOCATIONS:
1. For early work, before 2003, see the Centre for Canadian Art database: http://www.ccca.ca/artists/artist_info.html?languagePref=en&link_id=1922&artist=Catherine+Heard
2. For an overview of her work, along with reviews and catalogues, see her webpage: http://www.catherineheard.com
3. For work exhibited with Nethermind, see their webpage: http://nethermindcollective.tumblr.com
4. The Kamloops Art Gallery has recently acquired Confessional: http://www.kag.bc.ca/premanentcollection/recentacquisitions.htm
Bibliography:

Breton, André. “Le surréalisme et la peinture.” _La révolution surréaliste_ 4 (July 1925) and 9-10 (October 1, 1927).


LINDA STEER is an Associate Professor at Brock University where she teaches in the Department of Visual Art and the Centre for Liberal Arts and is director of the PhD Program in Interdisciplinary Humanities. Her monograph _Found and Borrowed Photographs in French Surrealist Periodicals, 1924-1939_ is under contract with Ashgate Press’s _Studies in Surrealism_ series. She is also a member of the Toronto Photography Seminar, a SSHRC-funded research collective.
Toronto Writers Cluster:
bpNichol Lane Workshop
Coordinated by Victor Coleman and Michael Boughn

The following pages feature a broad selection of writers from the exciting bpNichol Lane Writers’ workshop, held at Coach House Press, headed and coordinated by Victor Coleman and Michael Boughn. This suite of texts includes pieces by the following: Robert Anderson, Michael Boughn, Laine Bourassa, Zach Buck, David Peter Clark, Victor Coleman, Tyler Crick, Oliver Cusimano, Caleb R. Ellis, Kelly Semkiw, Jonathan Pappo and Andrew McEwan.

WARDS OF CUCHULAIN
(3 cantos from a longer poem)
Robert Anderson

1.

Impulses of the double world will rise
to negate the intent Space opens time
the narrative body’s excess and dis/ ease
the ambulance brings evocation of a dangerous place
Halls of pure gravity paint peeling on walls
botanical gardens consuming delirium
while Buddha sits on a thin bed
black milk delivers the psychosis of the word/ward
2.

The ward becomes suspicious
Saliva on the blue gown
we pass before mirrors
Dawn’s ancient war
language praises eternity
to decipher your silence
others make meaning of loss
I rewrite for meaning
the duplicity of savage meaning
to desire the dawn’s witness
unleashing mercurial hope
If the doors to this ward
we would want to ride
the elevator all night long

3.

Security guards and orderlies
laugh at the patients
Cuchulain sits in the ambivalence
of a powder blue room
Slowly moving
watching Kingsley and her
hologram face

In the first draft I wrote ‘her’
in this one I write ‘Kingsley’

We know the word’s poison
fought as allies in the war(d)
Unmediated communication
belladonna rules
the syntax
of the poison we chose

ROBERT ANDERSON holds a BFA and an MA from York University. His photography has been widely exhibited in Toronto. His writing has been featured in B after C, House Organ & Rampike.
Two Poems from *CITY*
Michael Boughn

**I.3.v – Rehabilitating the true iamb**

The once upon a time world formerly known, or at least spoken in turns

of inadequate formulation as resting on blocks of hygienic precisions

yields a certain panache of unruly hilarity in corners and cracked terrain. The embrace is a thing encountered in mercury lit parking lots deep in the spread of night angled encounters and flows

where the vibes thin into well-made laminar hymns. Both aspects afire begs the analogy to make it clear, though particular incursions leave such intendant caretakers in the midst of the only question

that matters when funny no longer occupies a declension of thinking but usurps all modal intricacies and variations leaving dead parrots in charge of transit and other municipal distractions. But that’s politics, and metrics, too, which brings us back to the true iamb, that wily old fart riding the air flow into relentless articulations of cloud logic’s worst nightmare. The need for rehab arises out of heavy insinuations of irregular toxic inculcations by rhythmic deviants related to overly intimate associations with atonal breaches in the historical fabric. Wastelands of varying density hang out behind curtains demanding to be heard, claiming redemptive associational immunity from the tumult continues to stir up shit
in anticipation of new shades of blue’s
signature. They like the view and the sign
is well-written, explaining in clear prose
the natural determinations
of pedal misnomers and how instants
of singular rhythmic contraction
uphold civilization’s virtuous claim
to keep the hips still. Stressed out
is related if you think about it
in terms of a kind of moral
rictus, a silent scream in the face
of some ambiguous, young beat
strutting its stuff in wanton displays
of variable feet’s projective
razzamatazz leaves the metrical
moral tradition not just aghast
but straining after the idea of order
as key to furthering common decency’s
demand for more prisons and regular
bowel movement’s reassuring fragrance.

I.3.vi  – No further adieu
Having reached the end returns godly
reminiscences to oginary impulse’s
boundary fetish. Maybe not boundary
as breath on neck announces
skin – more like a fence through dappled
meadow, a real fence, no doubt, but reeking
of overripe metaphors. Relief of the end
is a kind of meadow and therefore
dappled, a state of interruption tumbling
out of trees, some of which are oak,
birch, and sugar maple, at least
in memory. Wind telegraphs it
and edges flutter, delight a question
best left hanging, a state suspended
in light of dappled meadow
which may take tautology to a level
of impertinent signals, the kind
that lose you or leave you overlooked
by the mainstream which is busy
reiterating pre-established cartological
conundrums ironically inflected

to indicate subtle distances and taste

for great literature. If it bids
awakening, it remains a silent

partner, though the stakes become
astronomical, translated into blue

light of stars whose distances wheel
along boundary adieu calls

to attention, to here, that supple
shift of weight yields the world

in spades. Anyway, it’s a place to start
infrequent engagements with enormous
instances of lapsed, terminal nostalgia
thus getting on with it, no further

being a prod because certain limits resist
easy placement. Returning to delight’s

surprising instance was ordained
by virtue of some difficult

to define authority often
omitted from list of admissible

proclivities. But maybe further
interrupts it, leaves it behind

and delight is cut loose, maybe
no further’s boundary leaves adieu

in the dust of a passage delight
claims to have elaborated in clear

flutters signalling another city
not so much beyond as within, the way

a dream is within the arms of nether,
a boundary of such disproportionate

nebulosity as to make a Bay
blush, 5AM, July 4th, two thousand
twelve, and then it is breath on neck
announcing skin even as the fence

continues to demand its dispensations
and formations, and the meadow

shakes off metaphorical implications
and dapples as if life depended on it.

MICHAEL BOUGHN was described in the Globe and Mail as "an obscure veteran poet with a history of being overlooked...." His book, Cosmographia -- a post-Lucretian faux micro-epic was a GG Loser for 2011. He lives in Toronto and is known to frequent hockey arenas in obscure corners of the GTA and environs.
2 POEMS
Laine Bourassa

too much reps
The day:
measures floods
with psy-cono strokes
subject
is but where there is
meta-expertise lets celebrate!

*
The concept synapse
reaches enduring inches and sirloin muscles
contract – his back
The man with no father
one dollar for every bend

his cheque direct
to interest
Dried mud flecks
roll with sweat from

his ears
he loves
(hard heaving)
verbose wind
comes and leaves

Laine Bourassa and Tyler Crick are both from Prince George, B.C. They currently reside in the Kensington Market neighbourhood of Toronto.
Float

After the barricade closes — dear —
like the paddles of a defibrillator,

if anyone asks,
I’m just heading back for the bucket, shepherding
sacs of orificed cumulus, hooves weights
on the way back from pasture:

the dairy cows are coming home,
and if anyone asks, I like to say we opened the ozone
just to see the stars better.

I am following two men to the barn,
the stooped strung to the other by the simple implement
of his whispers: a bull in a field viscous with plants
sending off spores like single mothers.

A screw and nut buckled with rust. A penny.
Gravel and black plastic. This is my salvage:

in the classroom we pasted papier-mâché
over exposed blue balloons, painted the puffy carapaces
and let go.

The cows floated above us,
gastric as blimps,

butcher shop piñatas hung to dry
from the ceiling, and each morning
black from a pencil bubbled up like
dental fillings on a list
to collect us and connote the missing —

champed bits. To the barn I go flipping
the switch on the ends-meat of these dairies I fake my work with,
that they guise this great wish

to keep down
what I’ve hidden, to glue myself

to the underside of the roof, my eyes open,

for you,

is all the better for fielding, to follow,
go cloud-gazing as I close in

on the old hand and

the man that is founding Ontario.

Cuckold

“That’s the problem with pop”
says my dad,

“I can chuff a whole can
off in three mouthfuls.”

I tilted back, poured
until I could taste the sea’s sorrow,

Vikings did the same with their mead-horns,
then crushed the cans on their heads.

Jocks saunter off from the scene,
making words

with the backs of their
Lettermans.

ZACH BUCK plays in the GTA based band Other Families. He has been published in Filling Station, Cough, and BafterC. His first chapbook, Slay, with art and design by Lee Mobin, is forthcoming from Cough Books this fall. He is happy to be here with you. How are things?
From the *PENTACLES SERIES*
David Peter Clark

**LANDS**

Lehua * Alien * Naled * Duals * Setal

**to**

naLei * chuAl * seTa * leHu * aliEn

* * * *

Lehua

Island’s Hawaiian isle
whose sands aligned
as alien
to decease dunes
tide’s lull

a natal set

loons who

twine knotted
at a loss

stunned to see
not one

twine headed white’s
sandals

and tall cutlass
sunned

on sun’s end

S. 1812

an idle hula—
a swell while .

reven

a needle t'ween

eight and

nine t'ween

a line—

why

loony Eden
slices

noon smarts tightly
time

**SLIMS**

Sokol * Lathi * Idiom * Molas * Shadks

**to**

leThi * idiom * moLas * shAd * soKol

* * * *

idioms kill

still

shammed

will it

it will come

mocked

shush

lick liminality tea

eat tackle

as ill mola mola
ill shad
ill cod swim

acidity sea washed
caught

as much leashes still cloaked—

**TILAK**

at two

a mad class daddy
calls it .

lock its battle tedium
clock it

shut all its sick
lush data kick
its mole dome dashed
dumb

as foam lacks amid

cold . most steamed steel
mad its skull
we owe it

its shushed

idiom
David Peter Clark was born in Peterborough. His work has appeared in publications such as Cough, Echolocation, House Organ, and White Wall Review. In Toronto he's enjoyed performing for AvantGarden, Skanky Possum, and Toronto WordStage. In 2012 his chapbook feathereDinosaurs (a shuffuloff / Eternal Network joint) cracked its egg.
From *Miserable Singers*

Victor Coleman

**Frank Sinatra**

It may be superfluous to explain the difference between two sounds
The former is a simple vocal utterance
A sound produced by the vibration of the vocal reeds
One should have some acquaintance with the parts of which it is composed
In the dust and smoke of angry controversy

Phonation is, of course, possible without articulation
Unpleasant properties becoming incandescent at the slightest provocation
Thus making the imagination of his hearers helpless in their own deception
When struck from below by a current of air from the lungs
As a man who would pretend to smell with his lips or see with his fingers
A vibrating column of expired air is modified by being broken up into jets
As in animal cries, the screams and cooings of babies, or the yell of the savage

**Frank Zappa**

Frank is no more real to us than the figures which express the rapidity of light
Nor would it profit us much in our knowledge of the physiology of the voice
Were the back and sides of the space being pressed towards each other
No two persons have their laryngeal muscles arranged in precisely the same manner
Through a layer of fat of variable thickness with the skin as side-walls

A fleshy bundle passes horizontally from the back of the thyroid cartilage
Which may by assiduous practice be made partially submissive thereto
If the hand is placed on the chest whilst a deep note is being sounded
The shape of the cavity is susceptible to great modification in each individual
Although the uvula is seldom under the direct government of the will
Assassins wear suits

Assassins wear suits.
Assassins,
wear well fitted suits!
accentuate your intimidation

and be so polite –
sheep, wear wolves!
such sharp I teeth     – don’t divvy the moon,
you’ve earned the whole thing, so howl tonight
but silver burns
gold sum days –
market syndrome. meerkat shares for our majority–

mostly ticks and filler.
throw Stars, Assassins!
shimmer-thin distractions
from our
own-diets.
Assassins, ware our rations,
flex the cold between us – these are the lightest years.
but beware this vast sky, Assassins –
our bellies are empty of it.
Halloween at the Don Valley Brickworks:
A Piece of Fictional History

“The Push”

That bruised yellow bus was a hand basket
rocketing from the crypt of city lights
straight to someone’s undiscovered form of hell.
We hugged the seats ahead with a level of excitement
reserved for the abyss,
and we stared at each other in order to side-eye our neighbours —
night-hungry deviants, disguised as things tamer than themselves,
such as half-formed werewolves and the gentleman Hyde.

When the bus finally docked, it was oppressed with silence before storms
and manic auters of the out-world scene, waiting for space to pace.
The door opened and we fell out of the bus,
left to spin in circles, sandwiched between violently
lush mansions on one side
and a valley of doll-trees on the other, wondering for a moment if we had
finally gone too far.

But this was the Don Valley, and someone found the trail – a breadcrumb path of glow sticks,
which wrote over our doubts with the notion that a house of loaded sugar
cubes waited for us at the end.
Half way down the slope, past receding trees, we spied a wild dog on its hind legs,
its fly unzipped,
pissing against a tree and looking back at its pack while their cameras flashed him in return.

One of us claimed to hear sounds in the next room,
wondering how it was possible considering
the woods.
His body stayed close to us after that but his mind was at large,
until we bottomed out to a wide view of a bridge
over uncharted waters, ending in a trio of lightbulbs guarding the brick ante-room,
unsheathing the faces of any person-things that had joined us in the
slick
black
trees.
We scurried across that threshold, roaches out of the drain
of the city, out for a breath of fresh air.
The trail inside continued as candles, worming forward through a crypt doorway
to the enormous, crumbling grave
of Toronto's industrial revolution,
where unexpected others huddled in teams and explored, looking for something to kick,
or be kicked by,
flashing their lights at our engorged pupils.

This night emerged as a four-headed beast —
the writhing filth amoeba of enormous techno-beats and blue smiley faces;
rock nobodies coaxing a generator into their riff generation;
a lamb roasting on an inverted cross, guarded by a pig’s severed head;
and the vast deposits of promising, uninhabited darkness.
When faced with a night so heinous, it’s important to keep a tight belt
and a loose mind.

Tyler Crick and Laine Bourassa are both from Prince George, B.C. They currently reside in the Kensington Market neighbourhood of Toronto.
On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life, by Charles Darwin: Chapter I: Variation Under Domestication: Paragraphs One Through Six; and Beginning of Book’s Last Sentence

The unnatural authors bred hybrids:

extreme is

flowing organization
greater largely surprised, organic,

and suddenly...

unfruitful

inherited experiments –

nevertheless

is

strikes reasons

viewed

54
there is grandeur in this view of life

From “Pragmatism: Lecture 1: The Present Dilemma in Philosophy,”
by William James

s y s t
mu t philo phic sys ems –
ol e
scho -room univ rse’s –
and di a
and ver cts wh ck
s (t) o l e
mea ure G d a l sp ak

systole and diastole

OLIVER LA CAVERA Cusimano’s favourite building in Toronto is where he lives. He doesn’t always live there because he goes out for things. This is usually because his favourite colour is yellow, or because he is hungry, or hungry for yellows. If he reads it is to check if he can, which is to say, to re/peat to himself how he can’t.
On Growing
by Caleb R. Ellis

Sit down Sign papers
Sharpen pencil to the beat
Of an alleged enlarged prostate

Practice a signature
In the margin of the business section.
"It's time well spent. Invest in your future."

Stand and run Stirred with yearning
How many shits are upon the majority
Of these fucking relational inquiries

Panic and breathe A breath
Of one thousand sour keys, ten thousand comics books
And a tube of model glue.

Put Bill Dungs on the Roman dividing line
Strip the butt naked
And Fling it across the balding landscape.

Chop Old films take pills
With safety-scissors
And Cut all of the last

All of the last respected
And time-honored chase scenes
With jazz salts and glorified holes

Come in the wake of a latex change.
Settle the score, Save dark ballot.
Stave off the Daily Decline
again.

Sugar
by Kelly Semkiw

Sugar pour
chance to be feasted on
mummy-necked expert
in bed making
losing my blue to the heat
vomit riches
still a hot thing at the time
gathered with own
gloved hands
by memory
repeat

CALEB ELLIS and KELLY SEMKIW (Mrs Ellis) are currently residents of Santa Monica, CA, where Caleb is in second year law at Pepperdine U and Kelly is administrative assistant to the Dean. Together they make lovely music as KidCity.
Saturday is lingering and bored so you’re recording yourself do the mundane. Conscious of repetition and natural, you’re like yourself. Playback rewound watched backwards black passage into past selves—feeling sorry. See fitting clothes not fitting—skin peering out bending contorting morphing decaying limbs rubbery sagging jello—hungry. I’ve given up looking at the mirror.

Dinner soon with a man from the internet (friend’s recommendation)—disappointment ensues. Yesterday Penelope told you that you look beautiful and you should be happy with your body, but she is ugly. No one beautiful has called you beautiful. Does that mean that you’re actually altogether ugly? Rue the day in bed application rolls of concealer. Buzz and hum of loneliness—doorknob. Door creaks and tepid sack of skin. Oh, to pay for toupee for his balding. What are you to pay for? Every single thing! To pay for hope for possibilities—these things are proven productive pastimes. And yes— you are exactly what you think you are not you are undoubtedly yes the ugliest in the room are you not you have to compromise do you not base this on the most recent data available—Platonic forms—peeked knee—leaflets—photos—ripped—logical comparisons between dumb skin and the dog’s gums—yes you are ranked.

Are you happy now? And there he is. Whicker table and the toppling—floating—Sophia sits onchaired words, eating the thing placed firmly in front. Pardoned towards the bathroom where you can perhaps cry a little(mirroring mistakes) reflections flip spot the back of the head knotted mess of brambles Oh God, you look so old! And something has shifted—Sophia’s mind creaks towards a newly deigned paradigm

Perhaps—peering out—this is the one Perhaps—petering out—this is it But he’s gone decomposing (not gracefully)—slouching shoulder-crooked beast. A penchant—pizza-hamburger-junkgut, smothered over, drinking more than you, alcoholic father? God forbid, not all of them! God did not.

He is sad you are the same. This is your love. He will pay for body and dinner at the same counter—pile on conditions and arrangements that ensure you both get fucked. I insist, you insist. You can get closer if you disconnect momentarily, just for a moment. But these things won’t pay for themselves so pay for yourself. Apologize for your ugly body goddamn it, or do not come home tonight! Oh, you read my mind! I just want a glimpse the limb the precipice the particle not the whole damn thing!

I will end this otherwise. Or is it you? God forbid! Well look, here you have been caught by your old friend Richard I was worried I would never see you again in your towel after bathing bulged body and pursing your stomach (foggy mirror cold tiles warm heat). There is reason to laugh, so your wet feet slip on the painted hardwood and crack—open your head to ease the embarrassment. There’s the blood and it keeps on coming. Remarking, It doesn’t look normal. It doesn’t look like my blood, leaves the room unceremoniously. Splayed, blood’s—rattling—Sophia, your blood is ugly! There, whirring on the surface is footage of the ideal red—redder than your red—it is vibrant and glowing and flowing wishing from your head!

Reflecting on the possibility of possibilities—Sophia, there’s some miracle of genetics at work—oh, the perfection! Fuck your wonky breasts and dowel legs patoeey—this isn’t you or I or your carpet hair or my cold dangling body at the foot of your bed—feeling the decline goodnight visions—vanish

Goddamn it Why do you change? Why can’t you change?

Play with the disconnect, Sophia turns off. Crack open your red wine and smile! Listen! If only for a moment. Sympathy ages terribly callous and bitter reel spins the film is now over. Driven home by… what? and look to your left—bones flesh hair eyes blood look pour into you—fill you with dread. Talking about laughing, of all things churning and wondering what’s wrong. What went wrong? Sophia, are you okay? Your date is looking helpless. You miss Richard for some reason. Stumble into old patterns the dress is loose fitting bobby pin sewn tight worn tonight and soon will be lifted off by undoubtedly clumsy hands accidentally ripping the seams

Needlessly expensive! Spend time with me tonight. Why bother? Anything else? What will you ruin tonight?

JONATHAN PAPPO currently resides in Toronto. His is a contributor to literary magazines BafterC and COUGH, the fourth issue of which he will be the acting editor. It should appear early in 2014.
ROOMS
Andrew McEwan

Apartment                    Rooms house
In larger building
Construction of solid volume
Material
Bodies geometric lack        Structures interior
Columnic rooms
Space
Movement through
Lines furniture
Apartment inside out        Neighbours building
Contradictions repeat

A table meant                Passage exits walled
Askew construct             Whole component
Use                          As absent as
Copy design copies function
Hallways room hallway        Rooms
Table of objects             Separate
Sky
Building
Above
Rooms
Vertical
Passage
Reads
Gravity
Of
Support
Clutter
Exterior
Vertical
Right
As
Building
Angle
Furniture
Houses
Now
Rooms
Horizontal
Window
Space
Rooms

Private interiors surface a subject willed between walls
Exterior layout scale Margin lines
Exhibit Against
Trace transition To fill
Over floorplan Rooms dialogue
Inclusive Building
Stable routines temporarily trace visible private interior

Andrew McEwan is the author of repeater (BookThug, 2012), currently a finalist for the 2013 Gerald Lampert Award, and the chapbook Input / Output (Cactus Press, 2010). He is working on his M.A. at the University of British Columbia, where he is an organizer for the Play Cthonics reading series. Andrew is the editor of the soon forthcoming issue of BafterC.
TWO POEMS
Louise Bak

Losing

the only one left, she raises an arm, extending her thumb and pinkie, while curling in the index, for unpractical purposes, at the map of China. It’s glimpsed by the server with the scallion brush, whose lips tighten and vanishes inwards with liaoning, at where there’s the crescence of eight grams of carmel shade packet. She peers down the aisle, along the wrapper gathered up in to several folds, bit off from its garlicked chive, having had about four dumplings in a minute. Glances to the server’s skull, from the back, casting the mantou-like skin off a plate, while dropping to the slight surf, going high up in her leg, at the bag’s ring chain. Her eyes move to molded zipper garage that’s empty, but for koosh strands. The filaments pulled with rictus in her expression, not looking too closely, at its thresh on the linen stock sheet. Its horizontal groove texture flatted at the chlorotic mottling, where there’s the scrapes on a date in winter, gapped from its right hand corner’s four digits, at the cramp, sounded like a rubber-unsealing screech, along a click of soup spoons prevented from tipping with chiu chow heard halved. Her quickly glanced out eyes appear squeezed closer together, as she spraddles forward on the chair, while lurching between the sclera of her inner eyes, some métrage from a poplar Chinese minority doll, jacketed in big-fronted skirt. Its dickie of azure corydalis accurately pinned in place inside the jacket, as there’s no blouse. It is rolled longer and slapped thicker under high density foam of the chair, whilst commissure lines extends from mouth corners with ethul at the kilobyte, up on mooong joong tsum, ye fun joong ngor joi dung, it’s clipped by the irreversible mark like a locking jaw piece of a hose clamp. While the telesync copy slips to a woman, clad in the fumed marten and rufescence wefted hat. A couple of pairs of hands, moving toward the back of the fraise of yellow ribbon. It’s snapped, as she’s pushed by a small cooking fire. Going out of focus, a small left shoots up, missing the sudden shotput of an electrified trunchecon. An intermission of a spectator dodders by the pleated khaki turned out thigh. A wicket sack without the baguette grazes there, as there’s a wary surveyance of the turnstile’s draped and weighted on the right and left lower ribcage, triangular pewter stampings. It’s shut off in the peered way to a seven-year-old scar of a development site at one end, a barren flat building, remodelled by the government at the other, whilst aloft over the desk afore them, inner-tubes grouted with fat. She paddles to hold another seat, spaced closer to another in deep inspirations on the folded crosswise lambswool, whilst smelling of frosted wet knit. Fitfully, she knurls to each side of herself, appraised unlike the smooth stroke, originated at the elbow, used with the soy sesame dip. In pieces, the moo shoo wedge, the server approaches the proptosis of her left eye past a bill, on a cenotaph of wheat, the aril for a wreath.

moong joong tsum, ye fun joong ngor, joi dung is translated to person in dreams, this minute i’m waiting, from Faye Wong’s Cantonese version of the Cranberries song, “Dreams.”
Rupt

the recessed balcony window is open. about 16 inches from the building exterior. there's freshly germinated seedlings of por see yip in little two-inch starter pots. lingering seconds at the jointed moose, raised from the crocker sack, by the aperture in the north wall of her building, admitting light to the room cross-upper to her storey. she switches the .3 mm black to the .5 brown lead in the mechanical pencil, above the cross-section of a subglacial lake. angled tip weaves nearer the borehole diagram's lower insert at a microbial assemblage, cycling sulphur. its' banded by the lead visible in the transparent grip. she moves the pop quiz with the capsuled rabbit sticker, she had popped on to the 14” school chair, in paying heed to the indistinct chatter. they finish gong cha milk tea, she finding the tip chiselled more on her neat lines. the sheet of paper squalled like a circlet of hair, at hearing adelheid, like spyri's governess, who insisted on using that on heidi. she assays at the test buckling up a media pocket, knowing they left the table, at heidi's paralyzed friend's start to uprear herself, not like it's some big caper, she'd walk on her own was with his “moh-noh.”

she inadvertently turns her arm's compressible gachapin as she jerks her neck, to the giddied steps in the alley. a branch of the hair is stretched to the owl motif on the cowichaned shoulder. they recede with choreic tics of a snake ribbon wand tossed, while tumbling ground wise, a brass tee. leafed at a hurricane, merged with remnants of a cold front, she reaches for her wallet, which had been on top the weighted tape dispenser. there finding the opening out of a shaggy mane, its gills like the dimmed tone of the rayon ribbon, glimpsed streaked in needlepunched zig zags, aside pincers of milky limescale remover. it is coiled, subjacent the unopened package of fig newtons. what had been in coin pouch, a texturedness of upper incisor like bûche. tracing the end of the 1 3/4 yard segmented of malar model-knotting wasn't as easily inpoured through the desk chair's pine slats, as the satin feeling piece. taking to a pottering spiral, turning at just 180-degrees, to the footed-in gainsboro plaid of her mom, stilled at the gow gee wrapped baochan, forming an impenetrable seal from its steamed process -meets hwaai, at her uncoming off a rope, aokigaharan

por see yip, in English translation, “Persian leaves,” deemed efficacious in treating many ailments, detoxifying

moh-noh, no brain (cantonese)

baochuan, a steamed dumpling made with pork filling comes from a legend of Wang Baochuan, a kind-hearted and faithful wife who waited for her husband for 18 years after he left for war.

hwaai, bad (Cantonese)

aokigahar, referred to as Japan’s suicide forest, were there’s hundreds of long ropes tied to tree trunks. This area described as the “perfect place to die” by the author Wataru Tsurumi in the book, “The Complete Manual of Suicide. This narrative has been found next to many bodies in the woods.

Louis Bax is a Toronto based poet, performance artists and sexual activist. She is the author of emeighty (Letters), Gingko Kitchen (Coach House) and Tulpa (Coach House Books). She is the co-host of Sex City, Toronto’s only radio show that explores the interconnections between sexuality and culture. She hosts a reading series called The Box, and she is currently a doctoral student at the University of Toronto in Cultural Studies and Women’s Studies.
10. Bella Epoca

Got lost in the sphere of fear we dwell in as a whole but cannot see all of, because we cannot see all of it, as the aerial view of the plaided city street pattern doesn’t catch the decentered focus of changing one’s focus for the variety of things to focus on; whenever you are in and cannot see all of it, like a reoccurant that makes no sense.

No matter how much you smoke it still seems senseless, no matter how much you drink, if you drink, there are laws to the axladies on a marabou that look south southeast, and you check it out on the eastside, looking for east in a palmread outside the sidemarket on the eastside of any street, saying you too once rised w/ a seminalisic vector.

But that your focus has changed, as it can, though even though you have had a shift in vision before you saw nothing different after, your focus has changed now and now there is nowhere to return in, nowhere you see sanctity but in a trace of arbitrariness that’s solemn, like a little square to sit in contrast with the cynical walk you in along to sit and think.

If only you could see all of yourself, it’s a complete life you can never see all of, the day is complete and yet you can’t see all of it, you know the church is all there but you can’t see the other side of it, you couldn’t tell the square turns to two circles behind the churchyard where the voices of schoolchildren rise inaudible for a passing bus.

But you see a pattern of figure eight times twice more before you associate it with the churchyard garden, ants doing it with leaf bladed, various birds, and as you do so the receding voices of sanctimarian, or the sound of voices you locked away over the years, return, but in retention so that it was you who kept the continuum in terms of time, it was you who died each time you overheard the years in voices not there.
STEPHEN BROWN is a visual artist and writer investigating textuality as an artistic form. He divides his time between Canada and Mexico.

3. Los Atajos en Naranjo

In the metrobusb metaphorical, wad cough syrup in my coffee, in on among the phatic intertext between time biocloud and statis of public transit, transient, standingthere, doingtime; and the seriation of streetnames taking place was placed at freesecond intervals, and they called it continuous, and the hand of the child w/ the coloring book was, drawing hands, and I had forgot what I had wanted to forget, so that what was taking place looked dis-placed.

Hadd had had the shagweed the chimแปနချင်း left the night before, in a folded piece of footslop.

Where what once seemed solid outflow Integrity in a serialized window, and the picture of what was taking place was placed, but at the wrong time, and the crossedlegged woman uncrossed her leg, then put down her hand, and when the live seeker touched her options, which had a histrionic picture, under the shade of a building highrise, the screen liquefied to streetlevel.

& the sun pinpoint in the sky was a yellow blotch of coloring book scumble on the shield of your eyeshield, smeared-dandelion on yr wrist, then fingers, sidewalk mainlining, where the clown's daughter did somersaults on broken glass, and a man w/ a mustache sprainswasted his blackshirt, then the interior buswindow getting by doing the bare minimum, day to day hunger, as I followed maiming among the among on the footpath trope of his pedestrian walk, from lot to lot, out on a narrow one-way leaving sun-print, traces to be transposed by a man standing a foot close or more to fixing a tagged concrete wall scratching a phantom limb.

4. in public transit transient standingthere doingtime do not let your thoughts wonder, standingthere doingtime; while advertisement metrobus wall panels provide you uplay, you can re-cognize what is you are doing standingthere doingtime.

a thistle of sunflowers we the metrobus telling plastic like a live cat of flame licked out the contour, then photographed. I am, standingthere doingtime in a shock of flame the reflective pavement reflects, or is reflecting. I haven't seen myself for 2 weeks but in a reflected window's reflection my step is fifteen steps outside of time. Cp sorty attempts in advertisement everydaystandingthere doingtime.

maybe I will安保保 on screen in the security-tape standingthere in the time that guy was waved.

5. a nangan human pretender breng de canama just off half a colonial hall-street reoccivered w/ bedframes, mattress, wallclock, who's catch a sight ellipsis in it. berdeye's caption reach the epigraph of incoherence in silence godmote.

dearth-body smell, nose & hands on a paperplate beside a flattened brownie piece in footpasta wallfaster. be all you can be, dusty somberness comingdown in season in a sprigofollicle capote.

on child-nursed crayonportraits. frauline's eulogies he knew in his back sidecube i like a compromised trumpet winddeck compensated w/ immortality, the sun hitting the northeast in a bony heatstroke complicated w/ maniacally. & even though i cannot make it to his ceremony anniversary winning tribute.

6. behind the beaded curtain is a gauze's arrow

dearth-body smell. a girl w/ her hair half shaved in a nose see-thru houselaundry reading her cigarette ends from a coloful tube ashyw/ crossed eyes. the light warning thru washcloths on a blockwall.

question or gave in squibbottles on a corner of stacked pallets, the semi-precious smoke coaling down from the ceiling in spindly out, like oracle, deviations of assembled stage 5. cats w/ glaucoma.

standingthere doingtime, when she told me to go fuck myself a she was standing called beetle & penny royal on her anorectic belly just above the pubic line. the light warning thru washcloths on a blockwall.

dearth-body smell. in a semi-precious half-shade where the color of water is still indubit in turquoise.
GHOST STEALS A WOLF
Jon Flieger

There was this ghost and he stole a wolf from the zoo. Kind of see-through, sheet over the head with little eye slits cut out, the whole thing. And a wolf. So then the ghost is walking across the bridge in Inglewood and the wolf was just padding along after him because I mean why not? If I was cooped up in a zoo all day and a ghost stole me and I was a wolf, probably I’d follow him too. So this wolf is walking along behind this ghost who was kind of floating maybe but it was hard to see under the sheet so I guess just saying walking is fine. And it was a nice day and so a lot of people were out jogging and biking and whatnot and the people see this ghost and this wolf walking across the bridge in Inglewood and the people just start straight freaking out. I mean, it’s a ghost with a wolf. That’s not every day in Inglewood. That is weird. So one girl was all, “Is that…? “ And kind of trails off and takes a step back and another girl is all.

Well actually she doesn’t say anything but she thinks, “Are they filming a movie?” But she doesn’t see any movie cameras so she thinks “Is it some kind of stunt? Or lame art project?” And some people were excited and some were scared but the ghost and the wolf weren’t really doing much, just walking. Or floating maybe. The wolf wasn’t being terribly wolfish, he wasn’t howling or savaging anyone, just walking along following the ghost. And the ghost did not seem to give a what. He seemed to have no whats to give and barely even noticed the traffic stopping and the people staring at him and the wolf. The ghost led the wolf across the bridge and up to the glass and steel of a pub’s doors. The ghost held the door open for a woman coming out of the pub.

“Oh,” she said. “Oh thank you. Um.” And the ghost didn’t say anything but kind of half-smiled without making eye contact. The wolf sniffed the woman’s crotch and she called him a nice doggy and patted his back. So the ghost walked into the pub and caught a server’s eye and said, “Just sit anywhere? Or?” And she was all, “Um.” And the ghost went and sat on the patio because it was sunny and the wolf came shuffling after him. It sniffed around the table, licked at the chair legs for a moment and then curled up by the ghost’s feet. Or whatever was under the sheet. The server came out and said, “Um...” And the ghost asked for a pint of beer and a bowl of water. And two hamburgers. And he seemed too preoccupied to argue with, and the wolf was not being too wolfish and it was early, so business was still slow despite the nice weather, so the server went and put the order in. Brought the ghost his beer and some water for the wolf.

“If that. Is that a big dog or…” “It’s a timberwolf.” “It’s a, oh jeez.” And she placed the bowl of water on the ground, but not too near the wolf. When it got up and loped over to investigate the bowl she rushed quickly back inside the pub. I mean, I don’t blame her. It wasn’t being particularly wolfish, true. But still. So the wolf lapped at the water in the bowl and sent it scraping along the patio with the force of his thirst. The ghost took a small sip of his beer and looked around. The only other people on the patio were a middle aged couple who were studiously ignoring the ghost and wolf, imagining he was playing some kind of prank. Or something. The ghost ignored them back, but with less enthusiasm. The wolf urinated against the base of another table on the patio and then returned to its spot under the ghost’s chair.

Inside the pub the bartender asked the server what was wrong and she said that there was a ghost on the patio and that he had a wolf with him. The bartender said, “Oh.“ When the hamburgers were ready, the server brought them out to the patio, careful to keep the table between herself and the wolf.

“Thank you.” “You’re welcome. Would you like another beer?”
“Yes. Thank you.”
“You’re welcome.”
But she didn’t leave right away, instead she watched the wolf devour both hamburgers when the ghost put the plates on the ground. This was fascinating. I mean, she was fairly fascinated by this. It’s not something she got to see all the time, is all. The middle-aged couple weighted some money down under a half empty glass and got up.
“Thank you,” the server said to them.
“Hmmph.”
The wolf watched them leave, licking mayonnaise off its snout. It had not eaten the tomatoes or the pickles. The server met the ghost’s eyes.
“So you’re a ghost.”
“Yes.”
“Like, for real?”
“Yes.”
“Why?”
“I’m sorry?”
“Are you…haunting? Are you unhappy?”
The ghost shrugged.
“And the wolf?”
“Oh. He’s not a ghost. He’s a wolf.”
“No, I see that. I mean, why do you have a wolf?”
“I stole him.”
“You. You stole him.”
“From the zoo.”
“Of course.”
The ghost finished his beer and set the glass down. Somewhat purposefully, to remind the server she had not gotten his second beer yet.
“Why did you steal a wolf? Why are you here?”
The ghost shrugged again.
“That’s not an answer.”
“No.”
“I really want to know, though. Because I’m kind of scared.”
“You are?”
“This is scary.”
“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to scare anyone.”
“You’re a ghost. And you stole a wolf and brought it into a bar.”
“Yes.”
“And you don’t want to scare anyone.”
“No.”
“Just tell me why you’re doing this.”
“I don’t know. Why does anyone do anything?”
She thought about this for a moment. Had nothing to say to this, but felt like she should have. Felt exactly like this was something she should have something to say to. But didn’t.
“Fair enough. I’ll go get your beer.”
“Thank you.”
The server went back inside the bar and the wolf poked his snout among the last of the French fries, hoping for a bit of meat he had missed. The ghost watched a squirrel run along the railing of the patio before jumping to the pub’s roof. The wolf noticed it and snarled half-heartedly before curling into a ball at the ghost’s feet. The server brought the ghost his beer and the wolf kicked softly as it began to dream.

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JON FLEGER is a graduate of the University of Windsor M.A. program in Creative Writing. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Calgary. His book Never Sleep with Anyone from Windsor was published by Black Moss Press.
**LA FORÊT**

(“Version B”: excerpted from a longer text)

**Marie-Hélène Tessier**

“Back to normal” is a strange expression. Unfriendly to dissipation, it has to relate to conservatism. Sunday strollers. It defines the time after crisis, small or big. After the uncanny, we keep falling back on what we know. After the rainstorm, after a cry, a fight, after riots and strikes, after a vacation or a revolution, after a concert or a bad dream. This “back to normal” business is not to be trusted. During an argument with my son, I bit his hand. He was so shocked, he laughed. I was perched over a delicate task of sticking down the third and bottom part of an exquisite corpse composed of one ostrich leg, wearing hound’s-tooth pantyhose, revealing a grotesque Jurassic claw, standing onto the middle tip of a broken record player; a commissioned piece about the media in general. In French, instead of hound’s tooth, we say *pied de poule*. While one relates to a dog’s teeth, the other is about the chicken’s foot. The second leg of my collage was made out of a series of vacuum cleaners vacuuming a vacuum cleaner vacuuming a vacuum cleaner vacuuming a vacuum...for CBC-Radio-Canada for an exhibition themed *Un Monde médialisé / A Mediated World*, for a silent auction, to raise funds through the Red Cross Drought Program, for the Horn of Africa. An exquisite corpse for people dying of hunger. Africa never ends to dry up. *Wine and cheese between six and seven, by invitations only. Space limited. Cocktail attire.* My architect was speaking to me about how a slight curve changes everything. How architectural details can reach acute political statements about high and low. He was linking Modernism to Gothicism and Post-modernism to the Beaux-arts tradition, taken up by the Philadelphia school, against the International Style. History runs its course like an unconscious flow of ideas we spend time connecting after the traces have manifested themselves. An artist cut a big tri-dimensional circle into a country house. The ripples of that piece are vast and cosmic. I relate to the gesture in a new way. I bit his hand because my own were full of glue and scissors and after I asked him a hundred times to leave a lot of space around my body so I can concentrate over the delicate operation over the legs of my corpse, he put his precious little paw right on my mouth to shut me up. My mouth. A black hole is a region of space-time from which nothing, not even light completely absorbed, can escape. Around a black hole there is a mathematically defined surface called an event horizon that marks the point of no return. In research, it is important to leave what you are doing, forget how and why, and trust the itinerary in real time, without a clear purpose. Artists, repressed with current discourses of various guilt productions, are cut off from unconscious desires which should drive their impetus. A certain independence from the initial intention is of essence. In a labyrinth, to get lost is a prerequisite to finding your way. In *work*, there is the word *œuvre*. OE is a rare combination of vowels found also in *œuf* which means egg. In the word *œil*, the eye. Also in *Cœur*, which means heart. Eye. Heart. Egg. Œuvre. One's life's work. Attached in an embrace, they are mystically connected. Writing is all about getting lost in the forest of the alphabet. Max Ernst thought that the forest never goes to sleep early. “She awaits official and proud cutters who are looking for midnight at x hour”. In *Minotore no 5*, May 1934, he says that the best season for the forest is the future. “The future was the past when the nightingale was friends with mystery.” A Minotaur is a Greek figure part man/part bull. “What is imagination? It is a woman who cuts down trees”, Ernst cries, while describing the forest as a maker of matches which we give to children as toys. The forest was his favorite subject; an apt symbol of the recesses of human psyche. Places where people can become lost and reason bewildered, to finally understand the other side of existence. Where I live, in the summer, forest fires are always a threat, latent, probable, included in the concept *<forest>*. Wilderness is fabulous, but not for too long. It is best to leave it before it captures you, before nature takes over culture. I knew talented artists who casually started to garden only to eventually tragically abandon art altogether in favour of labouring the land. Only a slice of nature. A cloud of milk. A sliver of reality. A tiny piece of the calendar. Who cares which day A is sitting on a fence. I remember someone took me down a path in Ashdown Forest, in the thin tunnels of trees serpenting the British countryside, giving the false impression of being deep in the forest. The first time I saw red mushrooms with white polka dots. There was a kissing...
gate. We did not kiss. He was from Stuttgart. He took me under a fantastic tree where we spoke in English, a language neither of us knew how to speak. We also spoke about philosophy; a language both of us wanted to learn, so we tried to describe the feeling at the end of the day, just before sundown, the colour of all endings. There is a philosopher who puts together as a related series of signs, the roman number five (V); five o’clock sunset; the position of a woman during lovemaking and the inverted spelling of Venus, lurking in the evening sun. We were passed by British nymphs wearing tweeds on gentle horses and then we arrived to another gate, overlooking a vast meadow and we both laughed at how British the whole scene was. So many films I need to see again, especially the ones where I cannot recall any specific characters or any particular denouement. I was at the cabin. It was a dry and sunny afternoon. The sun was too high, too loud, a garish hour, I was preoccupied by petty things I carried with me despite the multiple ferries taken to get there. Irritable at large, I had not slept much and the light hurt my eyes. When I am in rhino mode, I make bitter tea and soap breaks in my hands and I cannot find my keys anywhere, usually because somebody stole them along with my rings, my lipstick, my leather gloves and my phone. I also provoke the rain and nothing is happening but vertiginous casualties. I spend my life in damage control and chronic apologies. I must do something about that. To help erase the negativity I was subjecting myself to, I looked into the cabin’s library, which contains a collection of odd reads, some books I never dared to open. An illustrated field guide to Western Birds; Sandpipers, Eared Owls, Loons in flights, vultures, eagles, hawks and falcons in kites. The Wordsworth Manual of Ornament; An historical compendium of applied and decorative art. The Moon Handbook; a 21st century Travel Guide. Life is a long long short convalescence. We seem to never recover fully from the accident of birth. I took out Ovid’s Metamorphoses and a very small, hard cover olive green dictionary of synonyms published in Edinburgh in 1929. In defense of the use of his humble compilation, the author insists on its high minded purpose, not for seeking elegant variety but about the secret of good writing in knowing one’s thought, finding les mots justes, the right and only words wherewith to express it. Taking a slight offense to foreign influences, the preface is replete with comparisons between English and French brought through the Normans. Because of its condensed format, one word keeps referring to another. For the word reality for example, you have to refer to dream; for sound, look for silence, for death, see life, for opposite think similar, enigma in forest, smile for rain, and so on. I picked up a fifties English translation of Nadja, published with Evergreen Books. Shakespeare’s Sonnets translated into French, published with Mille-et-une-nuits. Maximes et réflexions diverses from La Rochefoucauld; about good and bad manners in various social contexts. He says that there is an air which matches the figure and talents of each of us and that we always lose a lot when we leave it, to borrow another. He suggests finding our natural air and perfecting it as much as possible. In the window facing the bookshelf, I saw the woods. Books are felled trees. Sometimes windows are see-through mirrors; libraries are barren forests, deserted cemeteries, and books, wooden coffins awaiting disinterment by the simple and solemn gesture of opening their concealed cover; allowing the dead to breathe out life. The word book comes from German and it means block of wood. In French, livre comes from the Latin and relates directly to liberté as well as to vivre which means ‘to live’. Reading is to have a liberated life. Free. Trees. Wind. Books. Voices. Obscure image of the Arcades after demolition with scholars salvaging human knowledge amongst ruins, like every couple should when they break up. Salvaging the best is the human condition, every day. The manuscript for the Arcades Project by Walter Benjamin had been entrusted to his friend Georges Bataille before he fled Paris under Nazi occupation. Bataille, who worked as a librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale, carefully hid the manuscript in a closed archive where it was eventually discovered after the war. The fragmented style of his life’s work as a collection of unfinished reflections, a meticulously constructed monumental ruin, written between 1927 and 1940, edited only later, is often considered to be a forerunner to postmodernism. I hear a boat siren, accompanied by a vague brass section. Baritones and base clarinets, but I have no idea where they come from. A mixture of the outside traffic and inner noise. A copy of Les champs magnétiques. The charmed experimental game to converse only in images. Life is all about telling each other stories, including the ones we are telling ourselves. I took out Maldoror,
published with Clair Olivier, but I was not convinced. I was not in good form for edgy encounters. I think that friends should be friendly. Chopin is always there when I need him and knows to say the right things. His understanding echoes his generosity. His œuvre is a complete repertoire on tenderness, the infinitely delicate. A disintegrated blue and black cover copy coming from the sea: Maurice Blanchot's Espace littéraire, an approach to obscurity. Britab Columbia; a Complete Hiker's Guide. Native sites and fire ecology with trail descriptions showing route difficulties, elevation gain and loss. A splendid illustrated version of Through the Looking Glass. And last, from the higher shelf, I noticed a decaying map sticking out of a rotting travel guide for Roughing it in the Bush: a Manual for Emigrants Entering the Other Side. It was hard to read as it was almost all erased and fragile in its multifold, but the essential seemed to have survived. It was a mix of humid perspectives and moist topographical renderings in line drawings, with touches of pastel, geological signage and a clear set of instructions written in sixties beatnik woodsly font. Some handwriting in parenthesis, which reminded me of Tanguy's drawings; the ones which include the titles within. Walter Benjamin says that "there are perhaps paths that lead us again and again to people who have one and the same function for us: passageways that always, in the most diverse periods of our life, guide us to the friend, the betrayer, the beloved, the pupil or the master. Forests are not only to be found in forests. It would be a mistake to think that The Sunnets are addressed to a woman. It would be an equal misunderstanding to presume they are not, and that Nadja is only a crazy homeless woman, a femme-enfant or a mere account of an artist running after an ever fleeing melody, praying for its return. The term fugue derives from the French which relates to fugare in Latin, which means to flee, as well as fugare, which means to chase, so that the fugue is included in the chase and the chase in the fugue. Music serves to reveal the essential within us. La sonate de Vinteuil. There is not such a thing as silence. I hear the laughter of children in the garden. One is skateboarding on the roof of the tree house, while another is playing with electricity in the rain. A third one is running bare foot brandishing a piece of broken glass in her hand. "Children Three that nestle near, eager eye and willing ear, pleased a simple tale to bear, echoes fade and memories die, Autumn frosts have slain July, lovingly shall nestle near, in a wonderland they lie." Sitting in a congee house, my friend asks me: "What do you think of a femme fatale?" "It depends what you like" I answered. "For some people, it could be a very wealthy woman with the power to make you famous. Others could find the fatal in a very talented woman but she would also have to be beautiful. Or just painfully hip. Talent is overrated. Too beautiful to desire could be fatal. I don't know, why do you ask?" I was quite off. "I think it has something to do with power", I continued. "Political power is not very sexy. Style goes a long way. I would like to think that it is someone who has perfected her misgivings". In a Korean film noir, The House Maid, the original version thriller directed by Kim Ki-young, known for his psychosexual and melodramatic horror films, often focusing on the psychology of their female characters, tells the story of a family's destruction by the introduction of a sexually predatory housekeeper into their home. Every character in the captive family gains in higher degrees of latent propensities whether it is passivity, victimization, masochism and other similar noble qualities. I suppose that horror defines itself by forfeiture, through the accentuation and flourishing of pre-existing untamed negative forces. The concept of femme fatale requires danger, risk taking, the possibility of loss. Mata Hari, a Dutch exotic dancer from the turn of the century and convicted spy, accused of espionage for the Germans during World War 1, executed by a firing squad in France, is an archetype of femme-fatale, alongside Eve, Mohini, Lilith, Delilah, Salomé, Aphrodite, Medea, Cleopatra, Clytemnestra: all those who madden their lovers and lead them to their doom. After execution at the age of forty-one, Mata Hari's body remained unclaimed and was consequently used for medical study. Her head was embalmed and kept in the Museum of Anatomy in Paris, but very recently, archivists discovered that the head had disappeared, possibly as early as 1954, when the Museum had been relocated. Records dating from 1918 show that the museum also received the rest of the body, but none of the remains could later be accounted for. At her execution, she wore an Amazon style tailored suit, specially made for the occasion and a pair of new white gloves. She refused to be blindfolded and looked directly at her executioners, her head held up until the very end. Finishing our soup, my friend tells me that a femme fatale is a woman to whom nobody tells what to do. I thought to myself ("you mean, a woman who stops believing in you?").
"Some people would call that 'a woman with balls' I replied before handing him the bill. I do not live close to the airport but I do hear the sound corridors that airplanes draw in the distance. Take-offs and landings are a recurrent motif in the fragments of the tapestries I am weaving. Sometimes, I can hear them for an indeterminate number of minutes, outside time. Sound is all about memory. Spiders use different gland types to produce different silks; sticky silk for trapping prey or fine silk for wrapping it. The tensile strength of a spider's silk is greater than the same weight of steel and has much greater elasticity. Its microstructure is under investigation for potential applications in industry, including bullet proof vests. In an installation film loop, a British artist asks his ten year old daughter several questions about time and space and about identity and existence. You have to sit through and follow the thread of thoughts until the very end which is looped. It was about thinking of space and time, separately. About time not being subordinated to space, past and future colliding into the present. I need to see it again. Eyes and ears. The Tibetan Book of the Dead was never called the Tibetan Book of the Dead. It was called the Book of Listening. I doubt I will ever read it. Listening is just as painful as trying to read things from very far. The more you stretch your ear, the more you hear things from inside yourself. That is why the rabbit is wise but he is also always late and never where he wants to be. Time flies and some days being courageous just means cleaning the pile of dishes, doing multiple loads of laundry, cooking a decent meal while trying to become immortal. There is a pretense in humility. Modesty is most often false. While going to art school I used to work in a bookshop called Black Sheep and there were all these weirdoes who came to talk to me. Once, a chubby asexual individual dressed with a mat brown monk cloak carrying a wooden walking stick showed up. He had a very thin and sparse blond beard pinned on his baby face. I was still getting used to West Coast surrealism, which differs from the Mexican magic realism which in turn distinguishes itself from its European manifestations. Less subtle in tones, not always broad in character but often lush and foxy, woody, with a paranoid finish. The nice thing about the Wild West is that everything can only get better. Another book browser gave me all these bootlegged Scriabin discs. He is the one who told me that Henry Miller said that listening to Scriabin is like taking an iced bath on cocaine. It is true that cocaine relates to the Alps more than to the warm desert. I kept opening the bookshop later and later, sometimes I was five hours late so it finally went bankrupt. The truth is that I could not have saved it, had I arrived on time. It only sold contemporary poetry for which I had no time for as I was a bit narrow minded in those years; I was exclusively interested in Cinema and French philosophy. But the truth of the matter is, I did not understand a word. There were poetry readings once a week which I liked to miss because I could not identify with the style; the disproportionate purple tones right next to cold blacks; too many accessories, like big hat with big earrings with big glasses with big scarf on the same human body. I thought, how could they produce anything remotely subtly interesting. Also, I found it distasteful, or uncomfortable to share profound encounters with meaning, in public. That is why I could never belong to a book club, the disgrace. After an intense concert, I would rather be alone. I heard such a quantity of poetry said to me today, all about fishes. I guess when an artist emerges, like a salmon jumping out of the river against the current, it just means that he arrives somewhere above the line of the horizon, towards a possible immortality. According to Judeo-Christian mythology, celestial hierarchy counts nine different levels. Late Renaissance Italian painters, Botticini in particular, depicted them vividly. Religion clearly invented surrealism and systemized it. Frog rain, walking on water, parting seas, turning rods into serpents, making the blind see, waking up the dead, ascending virgins giving birth to all-encompassing kings, and all sorts of great magic shows. Most people are walking around all day not knowing who they are so they make busy, looking for people to have coffee with and discuss the lives of others, until it is time to pick up the kids. They breathe in and out of make busy as we cry and laugh, in and out of make belief. I think that being exceptional is perhaps better than being exquisite. Being rare is probably best, while disinterested generosity, in proportion and well-appointed is also very important. I now understand these old folkloric European dances where men and women weave in and out from one person to the other, resuming interrupted fragmented conversations, some started the week before; it must have been exhilarating to have something rare or exquisite or exceptional or enigmatic or sexy to say, with your eyes, to different partners.
in and out of an original thought, the time of a song. On our way to the island, the ferry was called Queen of Oak Bay. Upon our return to the continent, it was called Queen of Cowichan. The Cowichan tribe which was forced to amalgamate several tribes is the largest band government in British Columbia. My tribe is the best tribe. I was shocked to learn that the African Queen was not the role of Catherine Hepburn but the name of the boat she was sitting in. A Queen does not say: “I would prefer this, or I would have preferred that” my friend repeated to me like a knight. At departure time, the recorded voice of a woman stating the emergency exits and safety procedures in case of a disaster - I thought it would sound very nice in an empty art gallery. In a family gathering, most of the times I like to sit with the eldest or with the youngest. I sat with my friend's mother. Alice was her name. Her daughters were eternally fighting as they never accepted that they were both the inverse image of each other. One was very rational and dry with no airs whatsoever, which gave her a certain power in stillness. The other was all fire, as lively as a song, she was all about movement. They will never get along. They shared, down to great details, the exact dynamic operating between my mother and her sister. We think we are unique but in fact, we are mere synchronized swimmers in different pools emulating kaleidoscopic eternal archetypal compositions. I woke up and went back to that map to make sure I did not dream it, because, in the light of the night, I was maybe starting to make sense of it. There was something tribal, Oceanic or perhaps Mexican, if Japanese, definitely aboriginal. I went back to it because, except for time, I had nothing to lose, in a Pascalian manner, and I was supposed to be there to rest. The instructions went on with more and more authority...Carve images of gods...Conceive by the most distorted imagination...Represent in a sitting attitude, the eagle's claws...Form his hands; rest upon his knees, his legs, in lion's paws...Face a strange compound of beast and bird and part with feathers...In bold characters it said: Lower long weapon. Lower long weapon and join high friends found lying upon the bookshelf...Communicate the important discovery...Belong to a fierce people who live over the Great Salt Lake...Not Christians, it said...Before battle, pray your own hands and highly amused pass the sword to the other...In spite of outward demonstrations of contempt, perceive circumstance a great value...In their eyes regard with awe...For several days continue to visit the house, bringing along some fresh companion...Look at god until vexed and annoyed by light...And the very last commandment: Manifest the sight of the eagle and gratify curiosity by producing again. Producing again. Some of us are busy with climbing summits in our head trying to achieve something more than decent, perhaps exceptional, at least rare, while others are climbing actual real mountains and it is confusing which one is the metaphor for the other. At the end, it is all about the feeling of accomplishment, whether it is making art, baking or climbing. In a black and white film from the Yugoslavian nouvelle vague, a sensual woman, perhaps an Eastern European version of Monica Vitti, prepares a traditional dish. The eggs, in luminescent white, are hand beaten and as they get lighter and lighter, higher and higher, inevitably turning into snowy peaks. She spreads the snow onto a table, the only surface available in this improvised bachelor's kitchen. It is clear that she made love all night as she is so relaxed and happy to bake. If you borrow a woman, make sure to return her in better condition than you found her. She mixes the egg whites with dry ingredients which form a tender white mass. At table level, she blows slowly on the white blob with deep concentration and lightness of being, so the paste gets filled with air while thinning out just before breaking, in all evidences a delicate enterprise. Looking at her accomplishment, she smiles to herself because she has the certitude of having surpassed herself. White flour, egg whites, white sugar, a pinch of salt, magic powder, baking soda, icing sugar; summits. Baking is about climbing the Alps, while writing is connected to aimless wanderings in the desert. It was a film about desire, about the staircase which goes up and down. The Assassinated Operator by Dusan Makavejev. A film about love as a deep well from which we can quench our thirst or fatally drown. We were walking along the sea but from a very high point. As she took chocolate from the pocket of her oversized fashionable parka, I noticed the Swiss mountains on the royal blue package, which looked exactly the same as the mountain with snowy peaks behind us, our permanent backdrop. Then, I saw a bright white canoe (I have never seen a white canoe before) with two people ever gently paddling, ever gently tearing the perfectly calm mirror waters of the bay (I had never seen the bay so even and tranquil before). Row row row your boat gently down the stream. Canoes are Native commas in the Canadian history of conflicts. It was after I gave
her a splendid bouquet of white peonies in guise of our new beginnings. We had not spoken in years out of the most stupid misunderstanding which came up to be the most serious argument. Feminism will happen when women learn to shine from each other's light; embrace each other's beauty. Merrily merrily merrily merrily, life is but a dream. Aragon favored collage as an ethical process in which there is a negation of the real from the merveilleux, thus proving that the merveilleux is always the materialization of a moral symbol in violent opposition to the morale of the world it springs from. That is why the poetic power of surrealism becomes political, as it positions itself against the forces of order.

Before I entered the Surrealists exhibition titled The Colours of my Dreams, outside the art museum I saw a gigantic eagle in sitting attitude, his claws, his hands, his knees, a painting from Edith Rimmington, The Oneirosoptist, and down the dramatic stone staircase of the art institution, which in fact used to be the Law Court, there were two lions on each side of the entrance. Before passing the entrance, two young judges in black togas passed me on my right, while on my left; twin Asian photographers were shooting a white wall. I entered the first room of the exhibition, which felt like a vestibule. For an instant which I tried to later reproduce in vain, I felt the integral meaning of being a guest at the Cabaret du ciel. On my right, there was a very tall painted cedar figure called Speaking Through Post, where an honored guest would conceal himself and project his voice from behind the figure, positioned just inside the door of the Long House, to announce the arrival of other imminent guests as they stepped from the mundane world into the realm beyond time.

During winter ceremonies, this commanding presence in the house was meant to represent venerable ancestors, palpably present and far more powerful than the living. On my left, a peace dance headdress, also to welcome dignitaries, and usually worn by the highest ranking dancer, first to appear in traditional regalia ceremonies. Finely carved figures representing family crests are attached to a head ring made out of mountain goat fur. A long train decorated with ermine skins descends from the back, symbolizing the wealth of the chief. Crowned with a cage of sea-lion whiskers surrounding eagle down, which then floats out in the air as the dancer bobs his head. This exact headdress sat on André Breton's desk for years, facing him. In La Révolution sur Paris, no.1 December 1924, we can read that the Prophets conduct blindly the forces of the night towards the future; the aurora speaking through their mouth and the world, seized, is terrified or congratulates itself. It goes on as saying that the speed of light conducts in their brains the wonderful sponge of deflowered gold. Everything is whispers and coincidences… silence and the spark ravish their own revelations… the meat loaded with meat cropping up from between the cobblestones is only supernatural in our astonishment, but the time to close our eyes, it is awaiting the inauguration. In the second Surrealist manifesto, we can read that everything led them to believe that there is a certain point in the spirit where life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, the communicable and the non-communicable, the high and the low, cease to be perceived as opposites. In that space, destruction and construction cease to be represented against each other, and the manifesto also adds that in this mental space, which we can only undertake by ourselves, a perilous but supreme recognition of the general enigma happens. It is out of the question to attach the slightest importance to the ones who arrive and to the ones who are leaving. Suddenly, the crowd's murmurs in the museum sounded like a Latin prayer, an incantation of a sort. Walter Benjamin read Nadja and while he resented the limits of its social context to explain mystical reassurances in profane illuminations, a few days later however, he finds himself in a hotel in Moscow and notices that all the doors of the rooms on his floor were left ajar. At first he thought it was accidental but then he found out that in these rooms lived members of a religious order, who had sworn never to occupy closed rooms. They were Tibetan monks. The friend who just left for Nepal to semi climb Mount Everest with Tibetan Monks never locks the doors of his house. I am not looking for keys, but humans are pattern seekers and this last innocuous fact draws a loop of sorts in the semiotics of my limited world, the limits of my language. The machinery I presently hear from outside has a Hindu chanting quality. The way it holds a note for a while and abruptly starts the next one, lower, to meet again at the same level, even though they are just vacuuming tree leaves from the ground. In the exhibition, a black and white short film showed all of the police uniforms throughout history telling us to recognize them as they represent law, rationality, order; all things against dreams and freedom. It was gripping. The myth of Orphée tells me to neither look too high nor too low, but straight
ahead, with a healthy peripheral view which is sufficient to gain whatever knowledge you are ready to see and hear at a given time. That horizontal disposition gives the advantage of never getting burnt or wet. Breton somehow tells to listen to the fools without becoming one. I was listening to the kind of music that gives you the feeling of landing for hours in a landing tunnel. After a concert, the real sounds become an empty dark comedy. When silence drops, you feel you have gained and lost something precious. Time is what we do not have. It relates to the left side of Kay Sage’s painting titled The Upper Side of the Sky, which reminds me of a piece another friend made, perhaps his best piece ever. In a hotel with two communicating rooms, he placed objects in the exact mirror image. Pants on bed, ashtray with a cigarette smoking itself, a few books and all elements repeated in an exact copy on each side of the wall. The two rooms were separated by a pitch black corridor which made the transition more effective. The sinks in each room, were turned into fountains, water running endlessly. Time is running into Les Vases communicants. Despite unmet deadlines, I accepted the invitation for a short escapade because I knew that a journey, especially a condensed one, can be like a dream, rich in presents, the present being filled with hard to find gifts. Traveling has the optimal conditions to get into that generous space of receiving, a superior mode of existence. As in the studio, you know when the magic has escaped. There is not much you can do about that. I also thought that it could be an opportunity to salvage the best between us, but truly, it was to celebrate the end of a long friendship. That collaboration was a total bankruptcy. He took me to Tofino which for me means Total Finale. Tout fini. He kept repeating to me that the one who wins is the one who sees. “To win is to see” he kept hammering like a prophet preaching upside down from a scissor lift into a megaphone. His work was about the slow death of cinema wearing trench coats for the funeral of sublunary picnics spread over nothingness, shared with zombies marching towards vanishing points, making holes in fields of lost wars, freeing the living-dead advancing onto the screen of general stupidity while reminiscing over banquets of cannibalistic eulogy, with the blind leading the blind control of the masses towards the secret agent of chainsaw documentaries, and so on. He was so certain about the angle he chose to look at things; there was no space for critique. His cultivated and fertilized La Fabrique revolutionary concepts, paired with a sense of self-importance from waking the dead and making the blind see, created a pâte filo around his heart. I knew he had passed away several times and that he was very experienced with death, quite a specialist in fact, and of course that is impressive in itself, and that perhaps he could accompany me into the darkness of things, in a friendly way. But there is nothing friendly about death and orange life savers are nowhere to be found when you need them, even though they seem to be floating nearby. Putting on good music in the car can have a very powerful effect on the things you see and feel on the road, but that was too much affect for him, he was against it. I cannot believe I am friend with someone who dismisses candle light or dimmers as too mannered. So young yet so repressed. The ride started out on a high caliber of abstract rhetoric about art and we spoke only in abstract terms which I liked as it allowed for the propensity of a trans-like thinking where you open your mouth only to utter something grand or at least funny. His obsession with his own work was redundant and nauseating with everything relating to his own neurosis. It is very good as a method of research but not for conversation. He read to me on the ferries, quoting himself in the car, on the beach, quoting himself again by my bed side; he was in my face at all times. I let him be his own excessive self because I knew it was the last hours I was spending with him. We talked in semi-precious codes the entire time, which allowed me to re-enter the death zone I forgot I was already into for a few weeks now. The death zone in mountain climbing is when you have to go to the summit and back as fast as you can in order to survive. It starts right after the coffee stand on your left, right passed the gift shop selling miniature Everest mountain top candle sticks, erasers, pencil sharpeners and snow globes. Entering that post tourist space, one starts the process of a slow death because of the lack of oxygen that comes with altitude. Every conversation relates to that process. In every thought there is the ruin of a smile. Someone else picks up from where we left. Another friend of mine decided to climb Everest as a performance piece. He has physicality in his art work where he undertakes very challenging tasks which always imply deadly and exhilarating risks. He is a neo-romantic Dutch artist and his work contains the whole art
history of the Netherlands. One of my favorite pieces is where he walks on an ice float, ten meters in front of a huge ice breaker. Non-Romantic people always think that he photo-shopped himself or used some green screen effect. After we pass away, each of us starts to walk into this intermediary zone. I heard it takes forty-nine days for Tibetans. It is perhaps useful to read the Bardo Thodol which guides the late one to the road of rebirth. But what happens when the dead do not listen and prefer to stay in this intermediary zone? What happens when amongst mystics mingle fools, retarded revolutionaries, imbeciles and animals? In another piece, my Dutch neo-Romantic friend walks against the rotation movement of the earth on the exact axis around the planet to find himself standing for twenty-four hours on the very tip of the North Pole. During that trajectory around the earth, counter clockwise, he was also, in a parallel manner, playing chess with an old Russian Jew in a chess shop in Manhattan, where I happened to spend several hours years before. He composed a piano piece for the entire design of the game explaining to me that the eight squares were easy to transpose onto octaves. Yesterday I got a print for a dollar from an artist I never met. It says in big blue letters: DEPROFESSIONALIZE. I should frame it to protect it but I cannot decide on the type of frame. This whole professionalization of art can be a real embarrassment which is enhanced when the product is not good while the pretense persists. On our way back from the island, the landscape was furnished with huge billboards which prove Ray Bradbury right; announcing a great civilization a few kilometers in advance to make sure not to miss the apocalypse. We stopped in a mixed use mall-village-settlement-spread-parking-lot, to look for a decent coffee, much needed, like aspirin. I parked in the middle of vast asphalt nothingness filled with cars in a city which was named Parksville. Sitting in the car, I was surrounded by Wal-Mart and Winners on the north side; Dollarama on the south; the eastbound being delimited by Best Buy while the western perspective was bound by a drive-through Starbucks. There was no possibility for escape. Non-plus, we were forced to surrender. Still resisting the plastic burnt coffee of the west frontier, I asked an obvious local if there was a café nearby, she pointed out to the Tim Horton's behind us. It must have been in my blind spot. In French, we do not say blind spot, but angle mort (dead angle). It is more polite for the blind and the dead do not mind. The colour blind are not called "colour blind" anymore but colour sensitive and they are very sensitive about it. I told the obvious local that I heard on the news that some radicals were bombing all the Tim Horton's and Starbucks in the vicinity. She looked puzzled as to why. I told her that the report mentioned something about acculturation and lack of civic poetry. The Pacific waves were never big enough to meet the violence my friend needed, to feel alive. He was looking for high emotions, hill tops, he was looking for the Festival of Ocean Storms. Life is one festival after another; fun, but exhausting and hard to keep up with. As much as he was seeking the infinite open horizon of the bright sea, he was also interested in trying to penetrate the closed and dark density of the rainforest, only to find out that it was actually impenetrable, tightly packed, overcrowded; a green saturation of trees everywhere, all piled on top of each other, sleeping like cubs under the green moss carpet that covered absolutely everything, forming a powdery green scrim veil. We might be all bi-polar, but we do have to take sides; say you have two minutes to choose between life and death, between good and evil. In front of my work, I had been lost in forests and labyrinths so many times and my unresolved thought process prevented me to know where to begin and where to end, so the presence of Arachnea, who works from the middle, was bringing me both empowerment and humility. There was a spider making a web right in front of me, dividing the entire space in two. We were working side by side. Even if I am bored of it, black always suits me best and it has the advantage of absorbing all the light so I can reflect it back from the inside, through my eyes, in the way I look at things. In French we say, le regard, the gaze, and le regard is something we carry with us and we rest it upon everything we ponder; situations, people, the world. Le regard is about an angle, a posture; an internal one. Queens see the best in the worst, la lumière dans la nuit. They sit on the side of life without making a big deal about it. The spider is still there. She gives me strength to finish this text. Spider webs have existed for at least 140 million years. In 1973, aboard the rocket Skylab, a science experiment took two spiders named Arabela and Anita, to spin in low earth orbit to see if they would spin webs in space, and, if so, whether these webs would be the same as those produced on
Both spiders took a while to get accustomed to their new weightless existence both still produced some works. The scientists studied the webs to discover that space webs were finer than earth ones; and although the patterns of the webs were not totally dissimilar, space webs had variations in thickness in places. This was very unusual because on earth, webs have been observed to have uniform thickness. Science can be so stupid and completely useless. If I were a conceptual poet, I would make a list of science experiments which push rationality to a point beyond irrationality, reaching plain absurdity, landing inside poetry. Like the astrophysicists I met in Banff who are applying the capitalist concept of Too Big To Fail to the threat of big stars falling and ending our meal abruptly. Both spiders died of dehydration during their mission. I woke up and Arachnea and her binary logic had disappeared. She ate her web and fled. I walked into the garden, it was around noon. I looked at the small tree we planted last year, after the storm that destroyed our century old tree which had the fantastic shape of a lyre, a trident or the letter psi, whatever you fancy. In the process of the implosion, the huge left and right branches of the candelabra fell to reveal a third middle branch in the shape of a crazy black serpent erected towards the sky. We decided to build a tree house around the dead tree which was still offering a very imposing garden feature in its abandoned stump.

In my chronic neurosis, I still believe I provoked that storm, that I am responsible for the decimation of the forests because that night, I went to sleep very angry at all the mother figures in the world. Now, on each side of the new planted tree, below the black snake, two spiders of the same colour had built a web, dividing the garden between life and death. I think I spent too much time alone and meaning was controlling me in the Surrealist House, I was starting to hallucinate reality, which brought me to another plane, for another text. For another forest. Less virgin this time. Max Ernst describes the forest as impenetrable, black, reddish, extravagant, secular; full of aunts, diametric, negligent, furious, fervent and friendly, without yesterday nor tomorrow, from one island to the other, over the volcanoes, as she plays cards with messed up decks, naked with majesty and dressed in mystery. The forest is everywhere in the city, in my head, in my sleep, in the studio and moreover, where I expect it least. It is not overruling the field of my consciousness as much as we are in constant negotiations, taming each other’s terrains; obviously I need her more than she needs me. It is when the forest is not invited that she delights to surprise you, and the ravishing experience of her peculiar charms become so clear and distinct, enough to know that even if you dreamt it, it does not mean that nothing happened. Like the Wild West, it has no past and no future.

MARIE-HÉLÈNE TESSIER is a visual artist and writer based in Vancouver, Canada.
3 POEMS

Nathan Dueck

1.
G-d lives,
only grammar is dead.

2.
PROVERB

He
is a pronoun,
the word to replace either the speaker, or
someone or something mentioned earlier in the discourse.

It
is a word pronounced as one syllable, but it is composed
of two sounds in the discourse.
A pronouncement:
Make up
a part of speech that refers to an action, happening, or
state of being asserted before.

Compose the way to say a
proverb.

3.
ARTICLES OF FAITH

The
is definite article.
A
is less definite,
but it remains article of faith.
An
is least definitive,
but it remains articulate about ism.
a
the

NATHAN DUECK was born in Winnipeg in 1979. He has studied at the University of Manitoba and continues to revel in literature. Nathan loves song, portrait, and parody. His book, King’s(mère) was published by Turnstone Press.
**REVIEW: Surreal Seamstress: The poetry of Beatriz Hausner**
by Luciano Iacobelli

_The day will come when the palpable evidence of an existence other than the one we believe we are leading will no longer be treated as cavalierly as now. It will then seem surprising that, having been so close to TRUTH as we are, we in general should have taken care to provide ourselves with some literary alibi or other instead of plunging into the water...._  
[from: *What is Surrealism* by Andre Breton, translated by David Gascoigne]

From the very beginning of her literary career Beatriz Hausner has been immersed in the fluid that flows behind “the existence we believe in”, water that is simultaneously fire, ash and phoenix. A steadfast surrealist, it has been her unwavering obligation to lead the water over the dam and down into our domestic and mundane world, soak it in the sublime. When the water spills, even the jobs of secretaries and phone receptionists become grand with love and passion:

Ecstatic the phone hostess  
presses keys tunes her ear to those  
meteors shifting in their orbits as they  
crash into the glowing heart choking  
the line that connects her to  
ghostly lovers in the beyond.  
*(Telephone Duty,* from *The Wardrobe Mistress)*

Hausner designs and sewing the fluid she swims in, stitching it's course, embroidering the current, hemming the waves, so that when the water spills over, it does so with style, and river, lake, ocean become pieces of a fashionable wardrobe worn over routine flesh. She attempts to sew a reality that is both adventurous and fulfilling, and if unhappiness exists it is because the needlework is incomplete. A conflicted heart is a heart that’s not fully or properly stitched:

The raw edges beckon  
the heart rises slowly up  
the bias seams marks the edges of the unfinished garment with tear now  
of sadness now...  
*(The Conflicted Heart,” from *The Stitched Heart)*

Compare this heart to Hausner’s mail delivered “hand bag”. More than just a fashion accessory, it’s a reality container, and although things burst from it, the bag itself never comes undone as would a badly made heart:

Many legs burst out of my bag  
as we rush down the street  
emptying our fires our pleasure  
*(“My New Bag,” from *The Wardrobe Mistress)*

This poet is obsessed with well-made things, and is herself a meticulous craftsperson. The artisanship is evident in the actual structure of her neatly cut stanzas, squares, rectangles pieces sewn together into nervy sinewy quilts: the patches are solid but inside the cut fabric everything jostles melts, mists dizzies: Or, One could also say that her poems are solidly built handbags that never fall apart even though they hold cascades and explosions. Fulfilment and romance are what drive Hausner’s work, and they are the tools of her work:

Weft and warp the eyelets  
join at the root where first  
man and woman are sewn  
to each other by love’s elastic needles  
*(“The Wardrobe Mistress,” from *The Wardrobe Mistress)*
Love is not a thing the poet leaves to chance, it is carefully measured, cut, sewn and embroidered. Many of the poems are concerned, not with finding love, but with making the ideal love and lover. The two poems that best illustrate this artisan approach to love are *Coppelius and His Doll* and *The Seamstress and the Living Doll* both in the book, *Sew Him Up*. The Poems form a perfect contrast. They each depict a distinct “love making” process, and the distinction is based on gender. The first poem mentioned representing a male approach and the second one a female.

*Coppelius and his Doll* deals with the assembling of a doll, and how the assemblage subsequently comes to life and becomes the maker’s ideal consort. Coppelius uses broken parts to make his creation. Using solid inorganic matter combined with some breath and blood he puts together a creature that is part machine and part human. In other words an android:

I come alive on your mirrored brow  
new circuitry drives my pleasure  
from edge to edge as you place  
your hand on my back winding  
up the key so this metal heart may  
beat rhythmically systole-diastole  
love pushes movement into toes into  
feet alive to the wiring of your electric  
tongue while the clocks shift inside  
their shrunken casements....

Coppelius and the doll unite in sexual union but the orgasm is not all consuming or comprehensive, it is contained in the starches of “the crackling starches of the bed” and “the empty shoes of past lives”, and the doll maker emerges from it tired but still intact:

Exhausted Coppelius and his doll  
dissmissed their ghosts to live out  
the eternal dream of their nuptials.

*Coppelius and his Doll* was originally published in Hausner’s first book *The Wardbrode Mistres* and then again republished in *Sew Him Up* as a companion piece to the *The Seamstress and her Doll*. The later piece provides a contrast and subtle critique of Coppelius and his male process of creation. Although it never comes out and states it, it subtly insinuates that the male creator doesn’t finish his job, that his creation never fully becomes human, that it stays a little mechanical, thus preventing complete flesh to flesh or soul to soul engagement.

*The Seamstress and the Living Doll* is a narrative poem chronicling a woman’s creation of her ideal man. Doing some of the work by hand and some of it by machine, the seamstress sews a man in the very image of the love that calls him into being. a love based on texture and design:

She closed all the doors  
and began her long wandering  
Inside houses built from  
columns of fabrics invisibly  
laid out by first designer  
the one who fashioned the  
architecture of her love.

Unlike Coppelius, she sews a being whose sum exceeds his parts: the fabric becomes flesh, and the creation exhibits an independence and a power of its own, enough to engulf the maker, take her away from her needles, threads and machine. The seamstress is rewarded for her work with loss of form. She is dismantled, relieve of shape and design and whisked away into formless rapture; she is able to explode and implode safely in the confines of their love. At the base of feminine creativity is a need to come apart, to be dismantled by the very flesh and blood that woman creates:
The needles began to turn dull
as blood flowed inside the doll
his capillaries fed his heart
releasing him entirely impelling
ideal man to his maker now
coming undone for him as
he escorted her feet and her
hands away from pedal and
wheel on to dance the continuum
of their nuptials amid the day’s
scraps strewn on the workshop floor.

The two poems discussed above clearly highlight Hausner’s main subject of interest: the persona’s paradoxical mode of being when it is in a state of love, how it can stay miraculously contained and dispersed at the same time. The subject is present in almost every poem and is demonstrated in the actual style and structure of the work. The reader of the poems not only submits to a dizzying nonstop parade of hyperactive verbs and morphing nouns, but also to a reassurance that at the core of this spinning “surreality” there is a lovingly and passionately crafted axis that provides a center for all the apparently chaotic happenings.

The exuberance and overwhelming richness of this kind of poetry is seldom encountered in Canadian poetry; despite the impeccable form it is still considered inaccessible and perhaps a little too wild by a literary culture that prefers straightforward anecdotal realism, or conversely, favours work that’s preoccupied in narcissism of its own making and workings. Hausner has not been seduced by these directions and has remained an unashamed surrealist with no “literary alibis” to hide behind. She is a seamstress who does not make simple pretty dresses, nor is she just interested in sitting around admiring or dismantling the fabric; what she prefers to do is find the stitch that turns the fabric into flesh.

LUCIANO IACOBELLI is the author of 3 books of poetry: The Angel Notebook, Book of Disorders, Painting Circles. He is the publisher of Lyricalmyrical Books, and is one of the partners and founding members of Quattro Books. Active in bringing poetry to the page and to the stage, he is one of the founders of the Wordstage reading series. He also owns and operates Q Space, a venue for literary and spoken word events.
Four Seasons #1, Gerry Shikatani (Japan/Canada)
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