



THE
FIELDSTONE
REVIEW

ISSUE 5, 2012

POLITICS

Note from the Editor

Josh-Wade Ferguson

I hope that this edition of the *Fieldstone Review* is as exciting and refreshing for you as it was for all of us here. We are particularly excited about this edition because it is both the Fieldstone's first special edition and it is also our return to print. It has been a lot of fun – mixed with serious dedication – to get this journal back on its feet. I must say, none of this would be possible if it wasn't for the wonderful effort put in by the entire editorial staff. Jon deTombe, Adar Charlton, Jon Bath, Shakti Brazier-Tompkins, and Rob Imes have more than outdone themselves. I found myself awed by their devotion and creativity each and every time that we met to put this edition together.

This edition is brimming with literary delights. The poetry section offers varying poems that move from ecological issues, identity, and place, to whimsy and – much to my delight – swashes of Saskatchewan flavour. It is my hope that the prose section will engage and entertain you with the same fervour that it has me. There is enough existential angst and country-n-western to keep me satiated for a while. I was surprised and pleased by the abundance of talented submissions we have received and I hope that these chosen pieces surprise and please you too.

We are also blessed here, at the University of Saskatchewan, to have recently started an MFA program in creative writing. This past year was the first year of the program, and, from what I have heard, it has been quite successful. We are lucky that our new coordinator is an old friend of the *Fieldstone* and she was kind enough to give us a few words. I highly recommend reading Jeannette Lynes' "Musing in Work Boots." I feel that she accesses the sense of literary community that we strive for here at the *Fieldstone Review*.

This experience has been wonderful, and I hope you enjoy what we have put together here for you.

All the best,
Josh-Wade Ferguson
Editor in Chief

Poetry

Musing in Work Boots Jeanette Lynes

Iconic singer-songwriter Joan Baez has said that when she writes songs, the words just “crawl down [her] sleeve and come out on the page.” In a similar vein, I’ve heard this or that fiction writer claim that once the story kicked in, it just ‘wrote itself.’ Or that the characters ran away with the story and the author became a mere conduit, a sort of secretary transcribing the movements and words of these upstarts formed from syllable and syntax, adjective, verb, and noun, who then leapt off the page. Such notions make writing sound easy and if the words slide down the songwriter’s sleeve and onto the page, I’m delighted for her as I am for *any* Fictionista whose characters step up to do the heavy lifting. For most of us, though, writing is hard work. There’s no auto-pilot, no cruise control, no real shortcut. If any of you editors, contributors, or readers of *The Fieldstone Review* has found a way for your story or essay or poem to ‘write itself,’ please Facebook me immediately. I want to know what computer program you’re using, or substance you’re smoking. If writing really, truly ‘wrote itself,’ wouldn’t there be many more writers? At the risk of coming off as gloomy, my own predisposition follows more closely along the lines of poet Louise Glück’s contention that “[t]he fundamental experience of the writer is helplessness.”

I don’t think this is as bad as it sounds. A sense of helplessness may impel us to get to work by triggering an enabling humility, a critical stance, or a feisty aggression towards the compositional task at hand. The first students in the new two-year MFA in Writing at the University of Saskatchewan are now working on the book-length projects that will be their theses in poetry, fiction, or creative non-fiction. My hunch is they won’t tell you writing is easy. Still, they write. There are stories to be told, poems to be penned, language to be mined, imagination to be tapped.

Magazines don’t ‘edit themselves,’ either. Putting together a magazine involves real labour and I commend the editors of *The Fieldstone Review* for bringing this publication back into the light again. It will provide a lovely venue for writers at the University of Saskatchewan and beyond. Writers need venues. Venues make us feel less helpless.

Notice that Louise Glück said “helplessness,” not “loneliness.” Yes, it can be lonely being a writer. But the editorial collective of *The Fieldstone Review* is an anti-lonely brigade, a community, hub, pre-emptive strike against isolation, just as being situated in a literary culture as rich and varied as Saskatchewan’s affords us an artistic home. Home is our stay against helplessness. If we have an artistic home, whether virtual, physical, metaphysical, or some combination thereof, we’re not entirely forsaken, over a literary barrel, up a compositional creek without a paddle. We share this home with others. *The Fieldstone Review* and all the intrepid writers at the University of Saskatchewan bear tangible witness to our collective labour; even as I type this, I can hear work boots thunking their determined daily paths along the floor to the writing desk.

Blood and Trees
Courtney Bates

I remember being told:
ink was once made with blood.
Turns out it was actually ashes,
but who is to decide where skin
ends and blood begins?
I can see blood oozing over bark
– human or tree?
Isn't it ironic that we preserve
our words in blood on the trees,
our trees in blood for our words.
What wound do words open,
gushing onto the page?
Language that both gives breath and brings death,
like blood.
Is it the tree or the blood that survives?
Or do they carry each other,
piggy-backing across fire, floods, and time.
Can I put my hands on this tree,
here,
and divine meaning
from Brailled bark,
fingertips catching on rough slivers,
leaving their blood mark.
Eventually, we all wish to end as trees.
Baucis and Philemon, dead at the same moment,
but living intertwined.

A Shining Light
Cory Baumgardner

A shining light amidst the shadow of “discovery,”
there came on tides of blue and grey
fresh death of stories lost to all recovery,
veiled by “seize the day.”
Histories laid to “rest” in porcelain tombs,
there came The Pale Hand that wrote
The History, stifling colonial gaze,
the stories of those who arrived by boat.
“This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.”

Saskatoon 2020 A.D.
Gary Chappell

my tears land
unnoticed
on the clean sheets
in room three-oh-four
I vacuum, change the towels
disinfect the tub and sink
new soap, glasses
on to three-oh-six
treadmill job, a flat in the slums
with my two sons
thirteen and eleven
rooms too small to breathe
their friends with knives
baseball bats and no ball
the street the only game
where admission is free
each morning I walk to work
past River Landing's new art gallery
see the Mercedes parked in front
eight dollars to go in
last night we saw the fireworks show
at the river, so many colours
no charge, everyone was welcome
like when we go to the food bank
sometimes I watch lazy lovers
on the grass near the Bessborough
they walk the river path, point at yellow
kayaks in their whitewater heaven
my boss lives in a condo village with a gate
hydro-turbines in the weir
heat the hot-tub in his back yard
not the shower water in my flat
mud sturgeon and suckers swim at the weir
the fish ladder helps them climb
out of their trap, to a better place
where is the ladder for me?

The Prize Cat
Merrill Edlund

a mash up poem inspired by E.J. Pratt

1973

Analyze the poem she said

I was an optimistic poet studying Canadian Poetry

I searched for answers in the stacks of the library periodical room

no google god would save me

I observed "*The Prize Cat demonstrates an instant reversal to primal nature in a pet that has*

been tamed and comes from a pure blood line." 1

Held my hand high "*The human race is primal and uses instinctive needs as well as ethics in*

order to survive and progress." 2

"No it's not about that!" a *sudden sharp assault.*

"Could it not also be about human relationships?" I said *gentility was in the fur.*

"Is that the best you can do?" *she gleamed.*

"*Though it pertains to a prize-tabby yet it also applies to the most cultivated of the humanspecies, male and female.*" 3

"No, you are wrong!" *the jungle strains within the cells* and in veins of her throat.

"Certainly there are different levels of meaning in the poem?" I said *soft-mannered, musical in purr.*

"You are wrong! It refers to Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia just before the Second World War."

Her eyes rolled back in a trance and *caught me on the wing.*

"You. Get out!" *anger ever arched her back.* "Get out of my class!"

"*The sudden assault implies colossal powers uncontrolled and irresistible— not just out there in*

the external world but here, close by, inside the domestic cat and within our own civilized self." 4

From behind the desk came *the leap so furtive-wild.*

"Why don't you just go home and have babies!" she hissed.

And crying *like an Abyssinian child had cried out in the whitethroat's scream.*

That's exactly what I did.

1 Mensch, Fred, 1972, *Aspects of Heroism and Evolution in Some Poems by E.J. Pratt.* Univ. of Lethbridge. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts. P 23.

2 *Ibid.*, 12.

3 Retrieved from: The Prize Cat: Annotations Box 7, no. 60. On his life and Poetry 95, www.trentu.ca/faculty/pratt/poems/annotations/134annotations.html .

4 MacDonald, R. D., 1995, *E.J. Pratt: Apostle of the Techno/Corporate Culture?* Canadian Poetry 37, p. 17-41. Retrieved from: <http://canadianpoetry.org/volumes/vol37/macdonald.html>.

Modi says Hello
Milton P. Ehrlich

Addicted to absinthe
and hashish,
Modigliani
was a troubled soul.
Impoverished in Paris
before the war,
he lived without running water
and moved whenever
the rent was due.
He roamed the streets
in drunken squalor,
desperate to sell his art
for a drink.
He clowned around
with razor-sharp wit,
meningitis eyes
and sparkling lips.
Incensed by anti-Semitism
in France,
he'd take off his pants,
and dance naked
on caf tables to show
he was circumcised.
Painfully aware
of the Royalists' role
in the Dreyfus Affair,
he'd gaze intently
in to the eyes of a bourgeois
and greet him
with a blazing surprise:
"Hello, I am Modigliani;
I am a Jew."

Light fingered (Once a thief)
dee Hobsbawn-Smith

She reads the news online,
the latest heists, secrecy
liberated, documents freed
from government vaults, seniors separated
from savings. It sounds so effortless
compared to an inhuman being in black balaclava waving
a gun, running out with millions,
bodies in his wake like jetsam. Actual
theft, so physical,
compared to cyber-stealing, flaming
texts illuminating the wrong face,
blue-bell computer screens
broadcasting glorified gangsters,
barracuda bugs clandestinely recording every show she watches,
every tiptoe through the illicitness
of chatrooms and online porn.
The real future as a crook
is online, look ma, no hands.
Today she catches herself
pouring the extra glass of wine at dinner,
the afternoon's uncounted
cookie and espresso, the coffee cake's last slice, accumulating,
psychic weight made manifest.
Her oesophagus can't contain it all, valving
open, gas reminding her. And she remembers
the bulge of purloined earrings
chiming together, secreted under her narrow teenage waistband,
past the oblivious clerk,
remembers too the stealthy slide of surreptitious fluids
down his thigh onto her palm,
as she rode home late one night
in her best friend's boyfriend's car.

Life Under the War Memorial Bandstand: An Amputated Labour Day Sonata
Holly Keeler

Seasonal Washrooms:

Open: First of May

Hours: 9:00am to 10:00pm

Closed: Labour Day Evening

A sign with so many colons,
I didn't know

bathrooms existed here.

I sit on the bandstand

barefoot and superior

writing poems extolling

war dead, people peeing

beneath me. Signs, labels

separate the sexes.

Men, shown with pants

women, the dress

Ladies to the last. Behaviour,

curbed to suit the image.

Latrine land for men

means, no privacy.

Real men have no problems

Showing off their dicks and

Dying for their country

Rosie left

to screw the nuts

back home. Anything for the war

effort. Death by gun

Is now an equal opportunity,

So, you would think

they would put doors

in the men's shitter,

equality only goes so far.

As a woman, in my enclosed

cubical, the only blood

I spill is when I change

a tampon, and... *Who*

cleans this place anyway?

Tomorrow, this place will close

But for today,

I write a poem

And flush a toilet.

The Refuge of a Hill Town
Mercedes Lawry

Drowsy men in piazzas wait for their souls
to step forward. I come quiet as winter,
bereft of stories and caution.
The blue hills keep my eyes.
I'll go nowhere for a long while.
The arduous ways of time
steeped in sage and warm lemon.
The salted fish, brown potatoes,
small cracked cup of weak tea.
No one prays out loud. No avenue
of birds, or lovers waiting by the gate,
that eagerness not even a memory, or page
in a dusty book. There must be knives,
there are always knives when the night
turns grim and somebody cannot bear the truth
and so becomes the lie, as if that will change
his bones to gold. Dinner is served
at a regular hour under the stars,
which even the blind can carry deep in their pockets,
letting their fingers trace the shape
so as not to pierce their skin,
releasing pills of blood, startlingly red.

Cut
Nico Mara-McKay

Fat yellow roses
Sip from a jar
Baby's breath and greenery
Accentuate golden knots
And grape heavy heads tilt
Toward a moment –
When the question of god
Becomes unnecessary

Brooklyn, 1952
Dave Margoshes

We board the bus together,
me first, so I take
the first empty seat,
there's plenty more further back
but that's the one she wanted.
Me 10, 11, innocent
as a certain lamb.
I don't even notice her
till she's pausing beside
me, glaring down, grey-haired,
grandmotherly. "Kike,"
she spits, lumbers on.
The bus trembles.

I spy a pair of eyes: a riddle
Cassidy McFadzean

This creature is hidden behind walls,
concealed in confines clapsed tightly shut,
or whisked away in wheels and hutch.
A pair of eyes inside steel slots,
peer into mine, pupils brightened
black as onyx, an unblinking stare.
I touch a tuft of tangled fur,
long hairs flecked with fleas and dirt,
a tail flicking teeming flies
from scuffed hooves, hard as stones.
I see such pale nostrils flared
smelling soured piss on matted hair,
the grating wet with waste and gore,
or poison methane masking air.
Still, I discern two docked ears
through tiny cracks carved in the wall
and hear the moans, muffled and dull,
the clang of cage, the cold, hard metal,
and two dark pupils placed on me.

ANSWER: livestock in truck

Pigeon on a London Street
Charlie Peters

The bobble-headed pigeons of London
saunter around because they own the place,
I shuffle out of the tube and stare wrinkle-eyed
as the collared shirts and pressed skirts
flowing around me fold their foreheads
at me, I see it, and know suddenly
that I am a child to them; as are
the children of London, I am fascinated
by the pigeons, imitating their pecking trot
without thinking. "Like a silly child, this foreigner"
say the eyes of this world city
and my colonial t-shirt gaze is ashamed
because there are no pigeon feet on cobblestone
in Saskatoon.

Heather
Hilary Sideris

Miss Mather called
me Heather all
first grade. My bully
brother named me
Floor. You dwell
in subpar, marshy
soil: who'd think
your creeping
grayish stem
could break into
this violet spike
& bell-shaped *flor*?

Dandelion
Hilary Sideris

The jagged edges
of your leaf explain
your name, *dent*
de lion, also known
as Pastor's Crown,
Swine Snout. Humid
Indiana afternoons,
blowing your gray seeds
out like cake candles,
I'd count the souls,
like it or not, I'd bring
into this world.

enough
Greg Stacey

she liked that.
what else did I say to her,
that I “just can’t understand the ability to become something.”
this was my poetry teacher.
this was a poetry class.
ten of us
mostly women
from Chapters.
and they liked mine best
and like Charles Bukowski
I wrote a poem about Bukowski
and they liked that one best
and I longed to remember why I started to drink alone, but
no
I ate it up; the poetry class loved it,
the poetry class loved me.
the attention,
later I sent her an e-mail
saying how much i liked
it
and her.
and after, always,
the red
and green lights
led me home.

On Writing
James Tyner

and then there was blood in her eyes, running over cheeks like tears. I'm in a stadium of twenty thousand praying people and this four foot Mexican woman is screaming now, grabbing Luis by the front of his robes, flinging him down a row of seats, chairs rippling over the monk. It's my first year in the monastery and I'm thinking this bitch is gonna get socked for throwing Friar Luis when this priest shows up, right out of the crowd. And he is praying, and there's a bible in his hands, and the words are flowing from English to Spanish to Latin. The woman seems smaller now, hooting, screeching, writhing in her seat like a snake and someone whispers "Exorcism." The priest flicks his wrist, calls me over, and I'm holding a bible for him now, as he reads, but I can tell he's not even looking at it, this is rhythm, this is practiced, and I can't wait for this to be over, and all the faces around me are dark, the stadium lights off. But it's like they see more than a woman with bloody eyes, and I keep thinking if she moves again I'm dropping this bible, and kicking her fucking ass.

Trace
Lesley Washington

it appears you have not noticed
but i have disappeared
gone from you and this house of
bleached bone we once lived in
together
i watch you through the parlour window
your mouth moves
you make wild gestures
i do not understand what you think you see there
looming in front of your anger
if i can i shall send a letter:
*i am sorry, but you have lost me
to pyramids, sphinx, and mummified kings
i have picked up a handful of myself
slipped through my own fingers
have scattered
and gone*

Learning in spite
Christine Wessel

I understand where I am in this place.
The brown walls dripping with mediocrity,
The incessant reminder that I am as effective as a Q-tip on an eyeball.
I recognize that I am insignificant
Like rain the day after a monsoon.
Dreaded, feared, respected, unwanted.
Sometimes there can be too much—
In this place where the walls continue to close in
Creeping in
Caducity caging me in.
It's a sin to waste this education.
They'll gnaw off their own left legs before they listen.
A special few will absorb as much as their pores will allow.
Sponges who will spew out while they take more in.
And I will be a part of this liquidity.

Controlling the Masses
Christine Wessel

Sitting at a worn picnic table in a wide open field,
The woman teaches illiterate men how to read and write.
While she scribes for one man, the others stand to leave
With no explanation.
The remaining blue-eyed, dark-haired, soft-skinned man
Instructs the woman to write his story.
He tells of his life as a mercenary.
He adds that he is never happy,
He doesn't know why,
But he cannot feel.
The woman leans in and whispers—
We are test subjects, we are being watched, we aren't free to be happy.
The killing man and the teaching woman kiss.
He doesn't like her lip gloss because it tastes like cinnamon,
But he likes the feel of her salty skin.
They giggle.
She points out that he has now felt three things.
There is a connection.
Two scientists emerge from nowhere.
Furious that the killing machine and educator have met.
They weren't supposed to.
Strength and intelligence are a threat.
The two desire each other, but sense they cannot be together.
Why are they here? How do they get out?
The field is wide open.
Few can read and write.
They cannot be together.
His instinct is to fight.
Hers is to think.
The test subjects weren't supposed to meet.
This connection might suggest defeat.
And freedom is too dangerous.

Desecration
Anne Whitehouse

I placed it like a reminder
in the corner of my computer screen;
all day I kept coming back to it:
the web cam a mile underwater
recording clouds and plumes of filth
expelled like an explosive diarrhea
from the bowels of the earth,
convulsive, unstoppable,
polluting the soft, blue-green waters
and pure white sands
of the warm, salt sea,
its rich, teeming, varied life –
dolphins playing at dawn,
stealthy, sinuous sharks,
fish the colours of the rainbow,
vibrant corals and seaweeds,
mollusks and crustaceans,
the most magnificent birds
and intricate shells –
fouled and mired in the earth's shit.
The very substance of our greed
come back to contaminate the world,
until the last fires of internal combustion
are quenched.

Worldly Affairs (6): Today's Special
Changming Yuan

North Korean pickle soup
Iranian hard nuts
Venezuelan sour coffee
Main Courses:
American democracy steamed with socialism
Chinese communism fried with free market
Desserts:
Sushi with Oettinger
Curry with Brigadeiros
Fortune Cookie Slip Reads: Syria
Oops, here's another hidden one: c-h-i-n-a?

Fiction

Gray Matter **Dan Algara**

There are places I can't go. Fields and ripples of something called 'grey matter' that are closed off to me since – well, I can't remember that either. I may have lost them in the pool; my mother said I was so deep that I looked like a stick in the water. Maybe it was later.

I go to school. The doctors told us it was 'against the odds' that I'd learn anything. I like it. The kids are nice, my mom says I'm pretty, and I think it helps them forget the stuff I can't do. I can do most school things like reading and math, but I can't write. I don't remember the order of the words. It's too deep. Sometimes there are things that the teachers say that sink deeper into places that I can't get to. Deeper into the grey matter, I suppose. It makes me unable to learn. I don't know why a snake hisses, or even why a cloud appears like a white ghost in the sky. I was told many times, but those things are deep. I'll never get them back. Sometimes I wonder if I could get to those places that are now bottomless pits and get back some of what the pool took, but I can't, as hard as I try.

I wonder a lot. About things like birds flying (where are they going? are they afraid?), or leaves that die and fall to the ground (why does it happen? it must hurt). I know they are simple. I've been told many times that these things that happen are natural, but natural seems like an odd way to explain what I see.

Every morning my mother makes me a waffle. I won't have anything else. It makes me feel good to see the squares full with butter and syrup. I can see the whole thing happen and it doesn't happen fast. I understand it.

"Your mother loves you," she says to me.

I respond when I can. Sometimes I ignore her. I think she knows I hear her either way. Even if I couldn't hear anything – even if the pool took my ears, too – she would still say it. Anyway, sometimes it's hard for me to put all the things I can think into what I say. I think she knows I love her back.

"I love you, Mom," I say in return, just to be sure.

She likes it when I talk. It makes her cry. Even I know there are two reasons to cry, but I can never tell which kind she does.

"Your father will be here tonight. He has had a long shift and he wants to see you. He loves you, too."

"I don't want to see him," I tell her.

"What a thing to say, Mara. He loves you."

"Not like you, Mom. You stay with me."

"Your father works very hard. He cannot be here all the time like me."

Mom has tried to tell me why he can't be here. He makes money, she says, but I cannot see how it brings the things she says it does: waffles, blankets, and the car. I know he is not *here*, and *here* means love, I think.

"Can I play outside today?" I ask.

"I don't know – last time-

"I'll stay in the back. I like the hill. It's up high."

We live in a different house now. Our yard goes up and up to a hill that I can see the whole town from. I just sit.

My mother stares into the backyard from the kitchen window. I don't know why she does that; this house doesn't have a pool like our other one, but sometimes she looks out there like she still sees one.

"Oh, honey, maybe you can play inside today. We can call Sarah, and you can play house."

"I don't want it, Mom. I want to be alone, up high."

"Maybe I could go up the hill with you," she tells me, but I think her crying has switched to the other kind.

I hate that sort of crying and even though I wanted to be alone I say, "Alright."

There isn't much sunlight left. It is going down. It always seems to go down faster once it gets near the top of the hills.

"Do you think there's a heaven?" I say to her.

"I used to think so," Mom sighs.

"Sarah's mom says there is."

"It's a tough thing to prove."

"Maybe there's no heaven, like with harps and all happiness, but there's another place, where things are easy to understand."

"I hope so."

The sun goes down and it gets cold. Below, in the fields before the city, mist fills in the dips of the hills. Usually when I go inside it's before dark, but I want to stay. "If there is no heaven," I say, "then there's no bad place either. So all the bad people can be bad and if they don't get caught here they don't get punished at all. That's not fair."

"I guess," she sighs again, "but what about the things that are nobody's fault?" She kind of says this to someone else, but we are alone. "Bad things happen, too many bad things."

“Good things happen too, Mom,” I tell her and then think for a while. The sun is almost gone and an orange fountain springs up from behind the mountain before it disappears. “But if bad things mean there is *no* heaven, does it mean that good things make it real? Then it would depend on what there is more of. Is there more good or bad in the world?”

She kisses me on the head. “I don’t know the answers.”

“They’re too far in. I can’t get to them either. Too deep.”

“I think your father’s home. Let’s go in.”

My father expects a hug and I give it to him, but I don’t mean it. I think he knows I don’t. It makes me feel bad. I just can’t think of a way that he loves me. They say that you should love everyone, especially your parents. I don’t understand it. Maybe I can’t understand or maybe it’s not true. I’m not sure.

After all of the time is spent together, we go to bed. It’s raining tonight. I want to sleep in my mom’s bed, but it’s different when my father is here. He’s not here a lot. My mom says he fights fires, but I’m not sure. I didn’t know fires could fight, and it doesn’t make sense that he knew what to do after I was in the pool. Mom says he is the reason I’m alive. Water is the opposite of fire, I thought; how can he be an expert at both? She wants me to love him, but I can’t.

My father leaves again after a few days, and after a few more he comes back and we do the whole thing again where we have dinner, talk, then go to bed. I don’t want to sleep, so after they tuck me in, I fake that I am asleep for a while then I get up to look out the window. My door creaks and someone walks in. It’s my father.

“Hi,” he says.

I don’t feel like talking, so I return to the window.

“Your mom says you’ve been sitting on the hill a lot.”

“I like it. It’s high up. I can see things.”

He sits in the chair in the corner of the room, the rocker from when I was a baby. My father always liked the chair and I noticed a long time ago that he never sits anywhere else. It bothers me that he is in here with me and for some reason I say something that I never thought of saying before.

“Did you save me from the pool?”

He doesn’t answer me right away. It’s a little dark and I hear him sniff before he says to me, “I did.”

“Are you a water expert? Do you go to deep places when you go away?”

“I’m not an expert. I just know how to get water out of someone when they swallow too much.”

“I swallowed too much?”

“Yes.”

I still want to be alone, but I can't help talking to him. I look down and then there's another thing I have to say. It's like words are coming up from the places I could never get to before in my grey matter. I always wondered if the places that were too deep were blue instead of grey.

“What if I didn't want you to save me?”

My father sniffs a few more times, but doesn't say anything.

“Maybe there is more good in the world than Mom thinks and I could've gone to heaven.”

“I don't know,” he says, but his voice sounds higher than normal.

“Do you love me?”

“Yes.”

“Will you stay?”

My father doesn't say anything. He comes to the floor and gets on his knees. He is below me and I am above him. I think he's crying in the sad way when he tells me, “I will never leave you again.”

I think I understand more now.

Understanding the Limits of Limited Understanding

Michael J. Horacki

Smell the pitch? Feel it mingling with the salty air, burning your eyes and making your nose dribble? No, no, I know, there's a desk over there, and we're on the thirty-fifth floor, but believe you me, we're also sailing the high seas. Sorry to stretch the metaphor; when this greedy multinational trireme heads out to hijack capital or sink the competition trying, it draws its striking power not from the wind, but from the muscles of the supposedly free men chained to the oars below deck.

Here, I'll show you what I mean: "Hello, Thompson." There's no need to shout or scowl. Look, I'll terrify him with a friendly pat on the back and a superfluous arm jab. Pat, pat, wink, jab, "How's the family?" and it's on to business. Note the already present odour of James Thompson's perspiration; he knows that if he doesn't row his ass off I can do what I like with him: publicly humiliate, demote, fire, or worst of all, transfer to another office; for these people, being transferred to Moose Jaw is like being sold to a master who derives a great deal of pleasure from field-testing hand-whittled sodomy devices on his servants.

"Thompson, I'm looking forward to reviewing that account this afternoon." Feel the deck roll beneath your feet? Thompson can. He knows it, and I know it, but neither of us is letting on: we are supposed to review the Carlton account Wednesday, not today (Monday). I may look fat and friendly in a sincerely facetious sort of way, but take my word for it: if this were a Roman ship, I'd be seven feet tall with ripped abs, holding a twelve-ended whip in the gigantic hand at the end of my gargantuan praetorian arm, and Thompson here would be biting down on something hard.

"Sure, it should be all ready for you this afternoon. When should I come by?"

"Didn't we decide on three?" It's now ten.

"Right, three. Sounds good; three it is."

Thompson's never been any fun. No future; not as a human, anyway – maybe he has a future in a nice home for abused spaniels. No disrespect to spaniels.

"On second thought, Thompson, wasn't our meeting supposed to be on Wednesday?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter. I can have it ready for this afternoon. It's basically done now."

He doesn't realize it yet, but our friend Thompson is now fucked. I pause for a moment to let anxiety crawl up his spine. "Well, come to think of it, I think I am quite busy this afternoon." I pause again to let a feeling of relief settle. Relief must feel warm, for a tint appears in Thompson's cheeks, beside a repressed grin. Pause, pause, pause, pause, "But I *am* free *now*. It doesn't matter if things are a *little* rough. I don't need *absolute* perfection." Wink, superfluous punch in the arm, pause so Thompson has time to soil his pants abundantly, glance at my watch, "Oh, damn! On second thought, I have a meeting in fifteen. See you Wednesday, Thompson."

Thompson exits, and likely doesn't know how he should feel as the elevator drops into the bowels of accounts receivable, tossing his unsettled stomach into his mouth.

Do you see? Most of us have delusions about what we are. People in my position typically think, "Slavery ended; the world became democratic and generally tolerable at some point in the past. We do a service: people need to eat; they need to work; we give them a fair wage and basic dental." Right, sure, wonderful, all true. But is it the whole truth? Or does this evil feed on the rot that grows beneath superficial truth masquerading as profound truth? Basic dental? Even Roman slave owners tried to keep their more useful slaves healthy enough to battle to the death. If it's cheaper to replace you than keep you healthy, you don't have basic dental or anything else.

I think Marx underestimated the resiliency of a global capitalist market and opened the door for the communism we saw, disposing people against *real* communism in the process. He saw capitalism as a continual revolution, which is fine, but I can give a better analogy: capitalism is a great white shark in a feeding frenzy that eats until it's full, then turns its stomach inside out, draining itself of all it consumed, just so it can consume more.

Nonetheless, I can't believe that this system could last forever, and one must do what one can to bring it to a speedy end. I use my position as slave thrasher to alienate those poor unfortunate proles under my authority, teaching them to hate the current state of affairs as much as possible—throwing TNT into the fire, in the hope that there will be an explosion big enough to stifle the flames. Sure, on the day we're marched onto the stage and declared enemies of the people, I'll be remembered as excrement... but I'll have changed the world in my own little way. What have you done?

A mountain of money – that's all I can think as I watch him. Mr. Claude Riche, the President and CEO of *Trust Finacial*, who owns this building, occupies the penthouse. Rumour has it that he owns both the building and the company outright – there is no debt involved. Three floors go to *TF*; his business needn't pay rent, but certainly does for tax purposes; that is, Riche's landlord avatar makes money charging company-owner avatar's company rent. The penthouse is almost certainly 'paid for' through a complicated shell game that amounts to Riche housing for free. That's one floor for him, three for his business: four floors out of forty-six—or is it forty-five? The occasional lack of a thirteenth floor confuses me, and I can't remember whether *TF Tower* has one. Anyway, that means he's making money by renting out the other forty-plus floors. Then there's the money his business makes him. On top of this, he (or one of his avatars) can borrow a tremendous amount of money with the tower, the business, and/or related assets as collateral. Disgustingly wealthy people get better interest rates, incidentally; it has something to do with owning the banks.

Watch him as he flirts with Jessica Escravo, a fellow back whipper. I think she realizes she's a persecutor, but I don't think she realizes that she too is a slave. Everyone's subject to the same system, after all. Look at Escravo's loathsome self: thrusting out her breast like a robin in mating season, tilting her head from one side to the other each time she adopts a different kind of flirtatious grin. It's impossible to differentiate her forced from natural smiles – if there's a difference. Look at her long, black, lustrous hair; her suggestively swollen red lips; her trim waist. If only she had a soul, an interesting brain, a philosophical disposition, or whatever it is that makes worthwhile people worthwhile. Unfortunately for her, she won't find her soul at the end of the golden brick road she's skipping along, hand-in-hand with Riche.

But my analogy is flawed. She's not prancing her way through Oz. You need to realize something's missing before you seek the wizard; Jessica's so utterly soulless she probably

thinks she has a deeply profound soul, in the same way that a cockroach or philosophy undergraduate thinks it understands the universe when it looks at the stars, simply because it's incapable of understanding the limits of its limited understanding. Maybe I'm being too harsh – Marx was a philosophy undergraduate once. Anyway, soul or no, nice legs.

I am trying not to stare, or, more accurately, not to get caught staring, because I recently became engaged. I'm not quite sure how I came to be engaged, but it is one of those things I ostensibly am. Her name is Sophia. Sophia Zuiverheid. I sometimes wonder to what extent she's marrying me to get a pronounceable last name, and to what extent I've purchased her with my moderate wealth. The amazing thing about money is that, sometimes just having it gets you what you want without you even having to spend it. Don't get me wrong, I don't mean to imply Sophia's a thing I've purchased. True, capitalism turns all relationships into exchange relationships, and reduces all people to things, but this conversation need not necessarily be predicated on terms convenient for capitalism.

I should mention Sophia's beauty, which seems to make sense, as I'm exceedingly wonderful, yet our relationship does occasionally confuse me. Sophia has iridescent hazel eyes across which rolls a layer of mist when you don't give change to the homeless – even though this is a highly immoral act that props up a deplorable *status quo*. Sophia's hair is long and dirty blonde. When Sophia hiccups, she hiccups all afternoon, and eventually hiccups her soft hair into utter disarray. She manages to smile a lot, and usually means it, which boggles the mind.

But the really interesting point about Sophia is her unfathomable lifestyle. She manages to survive doing contract work as an interior decorator; she is paid by job, not by hour, *and* is her own boss. On top of this, she volunteers a great deal of her time and – shockingly – doesn't get paid for this at all. She even considers self promotion petty and refuses to endorse her business in casual conversation. To put it simply, I'm not sure how she fits into a rational economic model.

First there was intrigue, then more and more time was spent together. Eventually, my shifting state of infatuation turned into a permanent state of dumbfounded wonder. The dialectic was at its end; Sophia and I had synthesized. I didn't express my will to marry her in quite this way, and I could tell she appreciated it; she seems to prefer that I manipulate my words so they don't resemble my thoughts too precisely.

Anyway, back to Riche, one hand on his bald, pointed chin, the other folded across his stomach. He's trying to appear serious as Ms. Escravo explains something he doesn't care about. I am at least fifty percent sure he's staring at her lips whenever she looks away, and about eighty percent sure the two of them have exchanged inside information. But maybe Jessica's ploy to secure the best advantage requires that she not fornicate with Riche. Now levity returns to their conversation; Riche shifts onto his heels and begins smiling again. He is thin and vigorous, and can't be more than thirty-five years old. Sophia says he's revolting, but she's probably lying; after all, it's difficult to imagine a diagram comparing our relative wealth on which my net worth would be visible to the naked eye.

It's shocking, but if he wanted to, Mr. Riche could get a second tower without touching any of the money he's earned from the first tower. Obviously, Riche's wealth could virtually grow exponentially. I know, I know, it seems obvious, almost too obvious to warrant thought, but quite simply, there's only so much money in the world. When new money is printed without the old being destroyed, all the money in the system loses value. Maybe that's a better way to put it: not

that there's a fixed amount of money, but a fixed amount of value. The more value for him, the less for everyone else. How many Mr. Riches are there in the world? Make a modest estimate.

But the part I find the most interesting is that Riche long ago delegated all his duties to others, so he really does *nothing* for money. Sometimes he goes to meetings and whatnot, but his presence is utterly superfluous, and I think he only does it to satisfy a morbid sociological curiosity. Do you ever kill time upon the toilet, just relaxing, and feel like you're exploiting some loophole in the wage labour system? Mr. Riche could shit all day, every day and he would make no less money.

Don't you love nights like tonight? Stars twinkling, a silver sliver moon, and a crisp freshness in the air. It's ten, and I'm walking home from the office. My car's in the underground garage; I prefer not driving whenever I can. It's supposed to be nice again tomorrow, so I should be able to walk to work. The walk only takes fifteen minutes.

The trees are rustling from occasional gusts, and every once in a while a slight whiff of burning wood drifts into my nostrils. I'm not sure if the smell is a fire-place or a distant forest fire. Look at this piece of work. A man's been walking towards me for some time, but I hadn't really noticed. He stops. I stop. A silver flash, back and forth, dicing the beam of streetlight. Look at how calm those hazel eyes are.

"Give me your money and your watch, fatty. I'll take the briefcase, too."

All social relationships are economically driven, and this relationship is no different from all the others.

"Hurry up, bitch."

I'm looking him in the eye as I take off my watch and pull out my wallet. I'm at least as calm as he is. Why fret? It's just another transaction. I might as well be buying socks. He waves the knife back and forth in another simulated dicing. Swipe, swipe. "Would you like me to put them into the briefcase so you can carry them more easily?" It wasn't a joke. I can be very considerate.

He snatches the wallet, the watch, and then the briefcase. Here we stand. "The pin's 3-1-4-1-5, the first five digits of pi. I won't report it until morning; have a good time tonight."

His eyes are...

A blow. Another. Another.

I'm on the ground, an odd sensation vibrating in my teeth.

"Goddamned rich asshole." A kick in the ribs. Great.

He's off. Over a fence and into the shadows. Gone.

It's cold on the ground. A funny perspective from down here; this must be what the world's like for a dog.

The trireme. I can feel the deck roll beneath my feet, and can almost smell the mixture of salty air and sunlight that bleaches hair a silvery-blond. The sun is warm on my back. My back... enormous with frightening muscles – to say nothing of my terrifying whip. There are gulls in the sky, and a pleasant summer breeze blows gently. I jerk back into reality like a secondary student who drank unconscious, found herself inexplicably in a cold shower; a jolt, and on the ground again.

I try to go up on my right arm, but something's tearing. Nope, can't move. I'll have to wait for help. The only thing to. Sticky pools are forming. Some clouds are moving in, low fast and grey. Can't move. The only thing to do. Can't. I wonder if, what will, will she, how will sophia? I try yelling, but it hurts too, too damned. I'll just have to wait for hope Sophia Bound To come along just have to wait for someone born d to just have to so.

The Managing of Others' Lives

D. Krauss

Maddie stepped outside as the sun broke, collected the Post off the stoop (delivery guy was getting better), and took in a big breath. Ah, fresh air – well the freshest of the day, before the rush-hour morons vomited tons of particulates into the atmosphere. Why the government didn't just outlaw cars outright, she couldn't figure.

"Maybe soon," she chuckled as she scanned the headlines announcing the administration's newest endeavors. A sunbeam stroked her cheek and she walked down her driveway to observe the world.

The neighbourhood stirred. A couple of joggers met her approval. Stay in shape, keep healthy. A couple of dog walkers got a similar nod – animals properly leashed, tags visible. She hoped they were properly vaccinated, but didn't ask. Give the benefit of the doubt.

Maddie's gaze drifted up the street. She frowned. Some of the neighbours still had their outside lights on. Wasteful. The number of coal plants (and nuclear. Shudder) working overtime to cover such thoughtlessness appalled her. *Why don't they install timers or something? Like mine*, and she looked back at her door with satisfaction before continuing her street examination.

Now, what's that, a pickup in front of the Smiths'? Bad enough it was a truck and all the wretchedness that implied, but it was new to the neighborhood and roused her suspicion. As she peered at it, a feathery column of smoke drifted out the driver's side window.

Maddie gasped. Cigarettes! She could feel her lungs crusting already. "Well! We'll see about this!" and she marched in that direction.

The rising sun lit the occupant, a thirty-ish white man (of course) dressed in a black flannel shirt, reading a paper, the cancer delivery system dangling from his lips. "Joe's Construction" was lettered on the side of the truck. Of course.

"Excuse me," Maddie said.

Startled, the man dropped the paper and made a defensive lean away from her. "Ma'am?" he said, around the cigarette.

Oh, God, the Clint Eastwood type. All macho and leather-faced with bright blue eyes. A country gal's heart would melt. Fortunately, Maddie was no country gal. "Would you please put that out?"

The man blinked at her and then held the cigarette up. "This?"

Maddie prided herself on tolerating the stupid. "Yes, that," she said, patiently.

"Why?"

Her tolerance only went so far. "Many government studies," she enunciated each syllable so the moron would get it, "have validated the dangers of second-hand smoke."

He regarded her coolly. "Many other government studies," he enunciated his syllables, too, "have invalidated that validation. Especially for persons standing twenty-five yards away. In their driveway. Wearing a bathrobe." He leaned forward, peering at her sleeve. "Is that rayon?"

"Certainly not!" Maddie grabbed her robe tightly, mortally offended. "It's Egyptian cotton blend!"

The man tsked. "You are aware, are you not, of the exploitation of child workers by Delta landholders, just so you can have a robe that makes you feel noble?" The twinkle in his eye gave him away. "Don't you mock me, Joe or Jim Bob or whatever your name is!"

He laughed. "It's Joe, but you can call me Mr. Construction." He patted the side of his truck. "As for mocking you, no need. You're a pretty good self-parody."

"Self-ppp..." Maddie spluttered, Joe's little grin sending her blood pressure through the roof. "Listen, you," she snarled, leaning belligerently at his window, "I consider your breathed-out smoke as nothing short of assault and battery!"

"Then," he said, "you'll regard this as murder." He took in a lungful and blew a stream right in her face, topping it with a smoke ring.

"Gack!" Maddie flew back, clawing at her face and eyes, almost into the path of a passing car, which swerved. "Hey, watch it!" the driver yelled. Idiot! Couldn't he see that she was dying here?

Joe burst out laughing. "Careful there, missy!"

"I am calling the *police!*" Maddie shrieked and turned for home, almost running out of her slippers.

"Sure," Joe called after, "ask for Officer Bob. He owes me ten bucks," and laughed her all the way home.

Enraged, Maddie slammed into the house and grabbed the phone and, finally, after a very annoying wait on hold, got the desk sergeant. "Yes, ma'am." He sounded tired.

"I'll send a car."

Must have done that while she was on hold because an officer pulled up as she regained the porch. Joe got out, still smoking, and met the officer halfway. They talked quietly.

Maddie stormed up the street. "Why haven't you arrested him?" she yelled.

"On what charge, Mrs. Effington?" The officer regarded her over his mirrored sunglasses.

"He tried to kill me! He... he," Maddie shook an agitated finger, "he pushed me in front of a car!"

"Oh good Christ." Joe threw his cigarette down in the street.

"Don't you swear at me!" She bounded back, sure Joe was going to leap on her, and almost got clipped by another passing car.

The officer regarded all this mildly. "Mrs. Effington, would you please go back to your house?"

“But he’s a killer!”

“Mrs. Effington.”

She knew that tone and huffed and glared but spun on her heels and almost ran out of her slippers getting home. She turned at the door and saw the officer and Joe standing rather chummily. And she knew nothing would be done.

Maddie watched out her window as they talked and chuckled and made a couple of gestures in her direction, shook hands, and then left, the officer in his car, Joe into the Smiths’. She suddenly felt very tired and went to bed. About noon, she got back up and peered out her curtains. Now there were *three* pickup trucks. And a table saw in the driveway.

Of all the nerve.

Maddie marched down. Three Mexicans were at the table cutting tile. So, Mr. Construction, exploiting indigenous peoples and the desperate circumstances that drive them into illegal immigration, huh? Had him now. “*Yo puedo ayudarles!*” she declared in her high school Spanish.

The three looked up in surprise. “What’d she say?” The short fat one with the big eyes turned to the rail-thin one operating the saw.

“Sumpin’ about helpin’ us.” Rail-thin turned off the saw and nudged an ancient man with just a tiny fringe of grey hair on one side of his head. “Ask her what she wants, Gramps.”

Gramps rattled off a machine gun barrage of Spanish, bewildering Maddie. Gramps snorted. “She don’t speak Spanish.” He was the only one of the three that had an accent.

“Can we help you, lady?” Rail-thin looked at her.

“Aren’t you Mexicans?” she asked.

Rail thin shrugged. “I’m from Detroit. Leon’s from New York. Gramps is Guatemalan. Will he do? Or does it have to be a Mexican?”

Gramps looked at her expectantly and it suddenly occurred to Maddie that they thought she was picking them up. “Certainly not!” She bristled. Gramps was crestfallen. “Where’s Joe?”

“He’s getting us pizza. Why, you want some work done?” Now rail-thin looked expectant.

“No, not from him! He tried to kill me.”

“Oh,” Leon nodded at the others, “it’s the crazy lady.”

“I am *not* crazy!” She stamped her slipper at their knowing looks, not feeling the stone she hit. She felt nothing these days. “You work for a bad man! And that,” she pointed at the saw, “is too loud!”

They looked at each other and started laughing. Rail-thin turned the saw back on, shaking his head.

"It's too loud!" Maddie yelled over the noise. "You're putting too many vibrations in the air! It hurts the birds. It hurts people!"

Rail-thin shrugged, "Maybe. Ain't illegal, though." He picked up a tile.

"And that makes it okay to destroy the environment?" Such attitudes astonished her.

"Lady, go home. Please." Rail-thin was annoyed. "Joe told us to call the cops if you showed up and I don't really want to do that, soâ€¦!" And he gestured her away with the tile.

"It's not right. It's just not right." She stamped her slipper again, hitting another unfelt stone.

"Holy moly, lady." Leon blinked at her. "Maybe you do need a dose of Gramps here," and the old man raised his eyebrows suggestively, taking a step toward her.

She fled.

Their laughter chased her in the house and to the foyer closet, where she pulled out the baseball bat and stood hidden beside the china cabinet, waiting for the old man to show. He would not have her. No one but Don ever had or would.

After a while, she sat on the couch. After another while, she fell asleep.

When she woke, it was dark. Cautiously, she pulled back the curtain and looked. The trucks were gone, thank God. The Smiths' car was in the carport. Good. Their porch light was on. Not good.

She knocked on their door. "Oh no," Mr. Smith, as sallow and defeated as ever, said as he opened it.

"That crew you hired is a menace," she began, intending to segue into the porch light and what hazards both posed, but was interrupted.

"Who do you *think* you are?" Mrs. Smith, the source of Mr. Smith's defeat, bounded up, pantsuit and short hair and eyes on fire. "Just, really, who do you think you are?"

"I-" Maddie would have no problem answering that, but was not given a chance.

"You are some piece of work, you know?" Mrs. Smith's whole face was on fire. "You're up and down the street in your bathrobe, regardless of the weather, bothering the whole neighborhood every single blessed day. Well, when you start interfering in my business," big emphasis here, big thumb pointing back at her office-sensible vest, "then you've gone too far. If you *ever* come back here again, I'll have you arrested!" She threw Mr. Smith aside and grabbed the doorknob, "You belong in an asylum!" her last words before she slammed the door.

Maddie stood quietly for a moment, then walked down the Smiths' driveway. She turned back. "I've already been," she whispered, and went home.

Maddie first saw Donald Effington in September 1942 at a USO dance in Dubuque. He was all leather and blue eyes. He saw her at the same time and how two sets of eyes could lock and pass promises to each other across a packed basketball court, she never knew. She was waiting for him at the bottom of the gangplank at San Diego harbor in September 1945, and how their eyes found and locked among fifty thousand other flushed and ecstatic women and rangy, battle-beribboned Marines, she didn't know, either.

They farmed for a while, and then he GI-billed and there he was, a college graduate standing on a platform, newly minted engineer with a job in Washington, handsome and smiling, and she held up little Tommy and said, "See? That's your daddy." And across all those seated caps and gowns, his eyes found her.

She entered a world she had never envisioned. They moved in circles she'd never heard of but that he mastered, and he became a man of influence. His presence was enough to move mountains and resolve intractables, and a great clamour of acclaim followed him around.

He called her partner and helpmate but that wasn't true. She was beneficiary and observer, an acolyte in his temple, astonished at the god's doings.

"I've disappeared," she whispered to him one night, warm and safe in his bed. He stirred and held her and was mortified and concerned because he knew his giant soul swallowed others and he did not want the role of dream eater. "No," she said as she caressed his worried cheek, "it's good. I want it this way."

He was an indestructible force in a destructible time, when cities burned and youth sneered at foundations. He was unmoved by colossal tides and she anchored to him and life-lined their children and they rode high and safe through tempests undermining the very core of belief. Three sons with souls as gigantic launched on life's missions, two daughters firm and stoic and blazing trails.

And one day, shortly before their fiftieth, he coughed up blood. She stared at the sink in horror because it might as well have been hers. He laughed his indestructible laugh and went to the doctor and she buried him, and herself, six weeks later.

And she knew, just knew, that all the cars of lesser people, all their smirking cigarettes, their jets and rockets and chemical plants and strewn trash and loud music and too-bright lights had all gathered to take him (her) away. It shouldn't be allowed.

"Mom."

She opened her eyes. Tommy sat in the chair opposite, the morning light streaming over him and so much Don for a moment she was sure he'd returned.

"I got some calls, Mom. What have you been doing?"

There was really no need to explain. "I'm sorry," she said.

He said nothing, but took in her robe. "Mom, you have to shower, change clothes."

She nodded. Yes, she knew that, knew the importance of routine, even if she increasingly saw little use in it. She got up and did that and, to please him, selected a shift Tommy's darling wife Lucinda had bought for her last birthday. Another sign of contriteness. A sign she did not need another institution.

Tommy was not there and she looked out the window and saw him up the street talking to that Mr. Construction fellow. Joe stood with arms crossed and nodded every once in a while. She went to the kitchen and put on the kettle and had two steaming cups of tea waiting when Tommy came back.

"You look nice," he said and smiled and he was Don and her heart leapt and then broke again. They talked of small things, and then he stood, palm open. "Mom, please."

"I'll disappear," she said, but they were not the words she used with Don. "No, you won't, Mom; I'll make sure of that."

She did not argue. He could not possibly know what she meant, anyway. She did not look at him as she took and swallowed the pill. He nodded, satisfied, but warned her, one more incident, and she was coming to live with him.

He kissed her cheek and patted her shoulder and left and she lay on the couch and the blankness overtook her. That's what she meant.

At sunset, someone knocked on the door and she finally decided it required her attention so she opened it.

Joe stood there. "I just wanted to tell you," he said, looking away uncomfortably, "that I've moved the saw into the backyard. Less noise that way." He stared at her slow blinking eyes, his brow furrowing.

"Oh, yeah." He brightened. "These?" He pulled a cigarette pack out. "I'm quitting. Wife's been on me to do so and, well..." his voice trailed away, "there doesn't seem any more reasons not to."

He was quiet for a moment, said, "Hope you feel better," then walked to his truck parked in front of her house, got in, and drove away. She watched him out of sight, then closed the door and went into the kitchen. Tommy had laid out the next dosage and she quietly threw it away.

She would be gone for a day and then sick for another, but she'd be all right in two or three. She would see Don again. And save another Joe.

The Only Good Indian Will Tinkham

Pêche kicked a rock through the Rushmore workers' parking area. She spotted Bad Glove Hand adjusting the saddle on his horse, Henry Ford. Above them, on Mount Rushmore, the faces of Presidents Washington and Jefferson loomed. "How you doin', Bad Glove?" Pêche called out.

Johnny "Bad Glove" Hand turned and smiled. "Greetings," he said, tipping the bill of his baseball cap, which kept in place his long, black hair. "Say, I looked up *Pêche* in a French-English dictionary. Figured you were sick of people asking you about it."

"My father, who I never met, was French and called my mother his *petite pêche* and she just passed it on to me."

"All it said was: *fruit*," Bad Glove Hand went on. "I figured it meant peach, what with the spelling and folks calling you *Peaches*."

"Everybody thinks that, so I let 'em," Pêche said, playing with the horse's mane. "I like that you named him Henry Ford. It seems to fit."

Bad Glove Hand shrugged. "I figure, when horses are obsolete, or go by way of the buffalo, Henry Ford might return the favor and start naming automobiles after horses."

Pêche chuckled and waved to her husband Ernie, as he made his way down from the area on Mount Rushmore that would be Abraham Lincoln. "You know, Bad Glove, I've always wondered how you feel about working on this shrine to white men carved into an Indian mountain," she said, concentrating her attention on Henry Ford.

"An Indian mountain stolen by the *wašicu* of South Dakota and named after some New York lawyer who happened to be passing by at the time." Bad Glove Hand laughed without smiling.

"I haven't found anyone who can explain that one to me," Pêche admitted, then guessed: "*Wašicu*? White man?"

"Nothing gets by you," Bad Glove Hand chuckled. "Truth is, I'm just in it for the baseball." A Lakota Sioux and grandson to the treaty signing Bad Left Hand, Bad Glove Hand hit third in the Rushmore line-up and anyone who had seen him play first base understood the nickname. "And it's not like this Great Depression of yours doesn't affect the Indian, so I don't mind taking the *wašicu* money."

"I don't blame ya..." Pêche watched Ernie trudge over from the steps built into the side of Rushmore. He'd worn his dust mask all the way down the mountain, as if to prove to her he'd been using it all day. He had quit school at sixteen — often it showed — to work the monument and play shortstop for the Rushmore Memorial ballclub. He lifted up the mask and gave her a dopey, lovable grin. "Anyway," Bad Glove Hand continued, "I'm sure there are reasons why I shouldn't have worked on Washington and Jefferson, but I'm afraid I'm gonna have to draw the line at working on Lincoln. The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862, you know."

"No... I don't," Pêche confessed.

“The Santee Sioux got fed up with reservation life over there in Minnesota.” Bad Glove Hand tugged on a saddle strap. “So they went on a rampage, killing four or five hundred whites over some time — which, I’ll admit, never solves anything. Anyway, your great man Lincoln takes some time off from your Civil War and hand-picks thirty-eight Santee warriors and hangs them the day after your Christmas. Largest public lynching ever, even for you guys.” Bad Glove Hand seemed to pause for rebuttal and, hearing none, went on: “A week later comes that Emancipation Proclamation deal, frees your slaves to fight in your war, and — just like that — he’s a big hero. He and that bastard Sherman, why that —”

“William *Tecumseh* Sherman?” Ernie asked to the bemusement of both Pêche and Bad Glove Hand.

“Where’d you come up with *that* name?” Pêche asked.

“School, I guess,” Ernie answered with a shrug. “I liked that *Tecumseh* name.”

“Yes, your man, Sherman, named for a Shawnee warrior, and later he vows to exterminate all Indians. How do you like that?” Bad Glove Hand spat on the ground. “If he’d had the gumption for politics, he could’ve been President and would’ve been a cinch for the fifth spot on this mount, too. After the Civil War, they put him in charge of cleaning up the West — cleaning out the Indians — so the railroads could come through. He started by killing off the buffalo, like he did when he scorched the earth and the crops in the South on his way to Atlanta, taking away their source of food and starving them out. He didn’t care about women or children or the elders: his goal — and the government’s policy — was to rid the West of all Indians, herding them off and killing as many as possible in the process. ‘Only good Indian is a dead Indian’ — that was one of his. Clever bastard, huh? These days, everyone’s up in arms over this Hitler guy in Europe, gathering up and killing Jews for being Jews. And up in arms they should be! But where were they seventy years ago when Sherman was playing Hitler with the Indians?”

“Snakes alive! You’re always coming up with this stuff,” Ernie grumbled. “How do you know all this?”

Bad Glove Hand climbed atop Henry Ford and replied, “They might make us go to their *wašicu* schools but they can’t keep us from learning.” He gave the horse a little kick and Henry Ford slowly made his way down the trail.

“You’re coming over for dinner, right?” Pêche called out and Bad Glove Hand gave a little wave in response.

“*Wašicu*? White man?” Ernie guessed.

“Nothing gets by you,” Pêche giggled, slipping an arm around Ernie’s waist.

Pêche saw Bad Glove Hand coming through the yard. Entering the back door with a bottle in hand, he started pouring drinks before saying hello.

“Ernie, did you see that Borglum was already out looking for the right rock for your Roosevelt’s big head?” Bad Glove Hand called out, referring to the sculptor and Rushmore creator, Gutzon Borglum. He poured a drink and raised a toast to nothing at all.

“Is that what he was doing today?” Ernie asked, entering the kitchen. “I always get scared when I see the old man swinging from a harness.”

“Borglum can handle it, especially when it comes to your Rough Rider,” Bad Glove Hand said, sitting at the table. “Bad Left Hand used to say: ‘I was surprised by how much land they gave us back, but not surprised at all when they took it away again.’ To the Lakota, Teddy was just a thief, stealing back land that had been returned to us after being stolen before. When returned they called ‘em ‘reservations,’ and when he stole ‘em back he called ‘em ‘National Parks.’” Bad Glove Hand paused and shrugged. “Of course, we called it *sacred* even though we stole it from the Cheyenne just a hundred years before that. Don’t remember what they called it or who they stole it from.”

“You know,” Pêche said, “they talk about this being a memorial to Presidents — ignoring Susan B. Anthony, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse — but when you look at Teddy: he served twice, went for a third and lost, then went for a fourth and couldn’t even get nominated. How bad must he have been that second term?” “Rough Rider, war hero, and the Panama Canal will get you on the rock anytime,” Bad Glove Hand said, slugging from his glass. “Don’t hurt to be buddies with Borglum either.”

“Don’t hurt to be the only one of the four that anybody alive can remember,” Ernie laughed and raised a toast, presumably to the mountain.

Bad Glove Hand stood and pulled a piece of paper from his pocket. “I stopped in at the library and found a Teddy quote I just had to write down. Now, before I read this, picture him up there with your great white leaders — he’ll be the one with the glasses. And I quote: ‘I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe nine out of ten are, and I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth.’”

“He said *that*?” Pêche gasped. “Sounds like he gave it a lot of thought, too.”

“That was my thinking,” Bad Glove Hand agreed, still looking at the quote. “Nobody says ‘I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth’ like it’s a thought off the top of his head.”

“When did he say this?” Pêche asked. “Was he drunk in some bar?”

“Nope, he said it in a speech in New York in 1886. Fifteen years before he became President.”

“*Snakes alive...*” Ernie murmured.

Bad Glove Hand slammed down the remainder of his drink and poured another.

“How do the French say it? *Sacre bleu?*”

Contributors

Anne Whitehouse

Anne Whitehouse is the author of poetry collections: *The Surveyor's Hand*, *Blessings and Curses*, *Bear in Mind*, *One Sunday Morning*, and the forthcoming, *The Refrain*. Her novel *Fall Love* is now available free as an ebook from Smashwords and Feedbooks. Website: www.annewhitehouse.com

Contributions:

Desecration -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Cassidy McFadzean

Cassidy McFadzean is completing an MA in English and creative writing at the University of Regina. She is currently writing a collection of poems inspired by the Old English riddles of the Exeter Book, which infuse the non-human world with life and often speech. Her writing has appeared in *CV2*.

Contributions:

I spy a pair of eyes: a riddle -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Changming Yuan

Changming Yuan, (co-)author of *Chansons of a Chinaman* (2009) and *Three Poets* (2011) as well as a four-time Pushcart nominee, grew up in rural China and published several monographs before moving to Canada. With a Ph.D. in English from the University of Saskatchewan, Yuan teaches independently in Vancouver and has poetry appearing in 420 literary publications across 18 countries, including *Barrow Street*, *Best Canadian Poetry*, *BestNewPoemsOnline*, *CanLit*, *Grain*, *London Magazine*, *LRC*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *Poetry Kanto*, *Queen's Quarterly* and *Taj Mahal Review*.

Contributions:

Worldly Affairs (6): Today's Special -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Charlie Peters

Charlie Peters is a writer from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He is currently completing a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Acting at the University of Saskatchewan. His work has been published in *In Medias Res* and *Windscript* (a publication of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild).

Contributions:

Pigeon on a London Street -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Christine Wessel

I am a thirty-something-year-old mother and teacher. My roles, and experiences, inspire me to write. I am an avid reader who believes in the power of words, and in the importance of chasing dreams. I reside in Peterborough with my daughter, husband, and two cats.

Contributions:

Controlling the Masses -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Learning in spite -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Cory Baumgardner

Cory Baumgardner is an English major at the University of Saskatchewan.

Contributions:

A Shining Light -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Courtney Bates

Courtney Bates is a poet and MA candidate at the University of Regina. She is currently working on two collections of poetry: one of ecopoetry and one of poetic reinterpretations of fairy tales. She has been published in *FourW: An Australian Anthology* and is being mentored by Kathleen Wall, the author of *Blue Duets*.

Contributions:

Blood and Trees -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

D. Krauss

D. Krauss was born in Germany, adopted by a military family, and so became a US citizen in a roundabout way. He lived in Oklahoma and Alabama, somehow ending up in New Jersey where he lived every single Bruce Springsteen song. He joined the USAF and stayed twenty years longer than he expected. He has been: cotton picker, sod buster, a painter of roads, surgical orderly, weatherman (yes, a weatherman), librarian, a special agent, and a counterterrorist analyst. Dâ€™s been married over 36 years (yep, same woman) and has a wildman bass guitarist for a son.

Contributions:

The Managing of Others' Lives -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Dan Algara

Daniel Algara is a southern California native where he attended Life Pacific College majoring in philosophy, Greek, and Latin. He currently writes full time while traveling

the United States in search of the beautiful and strange while hopped up on diet Coke and a less than immutable collection of used books in his backpack.

Contributions:

Gray Matter -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Dave Margoshes

Dave Margoshes is a fiction writer and poet who lives in Regina. His poetry and stories are widely published in Canadian literary magazines. His new book of poetry, *The Horse Knows the Way*, came out last fall. "Mona Lisa 1998" is part of another collection, *Dimensions of an Orchard*, to be published in 2010. Another book of poetry, *Purity of Absence*, came out in 2001. A story collection, *Bix's Trumpet and Other Stories*, won Book of the Year at the 2007 Saskatchewan Book Awards.

Contributions:

Bat Mitzvah -- Issue Number 3, May 2008

Jesus at Ten -- Issue Number 3, May 2008

Mona Lisa 1998 -- Issue Number 4, May 2010

Brooklyn, 1952 -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

dee Hobsbawn-Smith

dee Hobsbawn-Smith is a poet, chef, journalist, and educator. Her poetry, fiction, and food writing has appeared in books, newspapers, magazines, and literary journals in Canada and the USA. After twenty-seven years in Calgary where for eight years she was the food columnist for the *Calgary Herald*, dee now lives in a hundred-year-old farmhouse on the family land west of Saskatoon with her partner. She joined the MFA program in writing as a student at the U of S in September 2012. Her fifth book, *Foodshed: An Edible Alberta Alphabet*, will be published by TouchWood Editions this spring.

Contributions:

Light fingered (Once a thief) -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Gary Chappell

Gary Chappell lives and writes poetry in Saskatoon. His poetry has been published in *Spring*, *FreeFall*, *Transition*, and *Leaf Press*. He currently serves as a board member for the Saskatoon Writers'™ Coop and is a member of the Obsessors poetry group.

Contributions:

Saskatoon 2020 A.D. -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Greg Stacey

Originally from Edmonton, Greg is a neuroscience grad student living in Montreal. He enjoys losing at chess, trips back to Edmonton, and watching good movies.

Contributions:

enough -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

The new place -- Issue Number 6, June 2013

Hilary Sideris

I have an MFA from The University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. My work has appeared or is forthcoming in journals such as *Arts & Letters*, *Cimarron Review*, *Confrontation*, *Connecticut Review*, *The Evansville Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Grey Sparrow*, *Gulf Coast*, *Mid-American Review*, *The Normal School Magazine*, *Poet Lore*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Willow Review*, and *Women's Studies Quarterly*, among many others. My first and third chapbooks, *The Orange Juice is Over* and *Gold & Other Fish*, have been published by Finishing Line Press, and my second chapbook, *Baby*, was published by Pudding House Press. I live in Brooklyn and work for The City University of New York, where I'm responsible for creating and coordinating programs for English language learners and nontraditional college students.

Contributions:

Dandelion -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Heather -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Holly Keeler

I currently work as a team manager in a long term care facility in Saskatoon. I enjoy living in Saskatoon with my husband and three daughters. I am a member of the Saskatoon Writer's Coop as well as the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild. I am involved in a writing group in Saskatoon that meet every two weeks to write and critique each other's work and arrange yearly workshops with Saskatchewan poets. I recently had a poem published in the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Volume Seven, October 2011 issue of *Spring*.

Contributions:

Life Under the War Memorial Bandstand: An Amputated Labour Day Sonata --
Issue Number 5, July 2012

James Tyner

James Tyner has been writing for only a few years, and still considers himself new to poetry. In that short time, he has won the Andres Montoya Scholarship, the Larry Levis Prize, the Ernesto Trejo Poetry Prize, and the Coal Hill Review Chapbook contest. His thesis, a book of poetry titled *Baptized in Dirt*, was voted most outstanding thesis of 2009 from California State University, Fresno. His writing takes place in Los Angeles and the California Central Valley, the two places that made him who he is. A struggling pacifist, Tyner writes poetry about the violent gang world he came from and the effects of violence around him in order to help him make sense of the world he lives in.

Contributions:
On Writing -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Jeanette Lynes

Jeanette Lynes is the author of three collections of poetry. She is currently writer in residence at Saskatoon Public Library.

Contributions:

The Fine Art of Collage or; T.S. Eliot Hits the Mosh Pit: *Curio: Grotesques and Satires from the Electronic Age* by Elizabeth Bachinsky -- Issue Number 1, April 2006
Three Triolets For A Friend Trying Out Internet Dating -- Issue Number 1, April 2006
Musing in Work Boots -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Lesley Washington

Lesley Washington lives and writes in Saskatoon. She is a member of the Saskatoon Writers' Coop and the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild, and her poetry has been published in *Room* and *Spring*.

Contributions:

Trace -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Mercedes Lawry

I've been publishing poetry for about thirty years in such journals as *Poetry*, *Rhino*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Folio*, *New Madrid*, *Seattle Review*, *Nimrod*, and *Crab Creek Review*. My chapbook *There are Crows in My Blood* was published by Pudding House in 2007 and my chapbook *Happy Darkness* was released by Finishing Line Press this past summer. I've received honors from the Seattle Arts Commission, Jack Straw Foundation, Artist Trust, and Richard Hugo House. I've also published fiction as well as stories and poems for children. Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I've lived in Seattle for over thirty years.

Contributions:

The Refuge of a Hill Town -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Merrill Edlund

Merrill Edlund's poetry and fiction have recently appeared in *Blue Skies Poetry*, *Fat Daddy's Farm*, *Joy Interrupted*, *an Anthology on Motherhood and Loss* (soon to be released), and *Worth* Architectural magazine. A mother of three grown children and one grandpuppy, she is a poet and writer of short stories, fiction, and creative nonfiction. She has an M Ed. in technology and teaches high school English and Creative Writing online.

Contributions:

The Prize Cat -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Milton P. Ehrlich

Milton P. Ehrlich, Ph.D., is an eighty-year-old psychologist who has been a summer resident of PEI for over forty years. He has published numerous poems in periodicals such as *The Antigone Review*, *Toronto Quarterly Review*, *Shofar Literary Journal*, *Rutherford Red Wheelbarrow*, *Journal of New Jersey Poets*, *Dream Fantasy International*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *The New York Times*.

Contributions:

Modi says Hello -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Nico Mara-McKay

Nico Mara-McKay is a writer living in Toronto. Her work has appeared in numerous journals and magazines, most recently in *Broken Pencil*, *The Antigone Review* and *Contemporary Verse 2*. She can be found on Twitter @plutopsyche. Website: nicomaramckay.com

Contributions:

Cut -- Issue Number 5, July 2012

Will Tinkham

Will Tinkham has published short fiction most recently in *D-Day 68th Anniversary Anthology* (mgversion2>datura press), *Skive Magazine: Americana*, *mgv2_69: Fifty Stars and A Maple Leaf*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, *A Small Good Magazine*, and *Talkin' Blues* (2010 B.J. Rolfzen Award). "The Only Good Indian" is an excerpt from an as-yet-unpublished novel. Website: willtinkham.blogspot.com

Contributions:

The Only Good Indian -- Issue Number 5, July 2012
