



THE
FIELDSTONE
REVIEW

ISSUE 1, 2006



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Editors' Note

Holly Luhning and David Craig Hutton

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Literary journals should be original and intellectually fulfilling. In this progressive online format, we hope that *TFR* adheres to this basic credo. As the journal evolves we will strive to include more multimedia aspects to each issue, such as audio and visual recordings, photography, and other visual art.

TFR began, in part, to bring together emerging and established writers and thinkers. With this, our first issue, we think we have achieved our goal. In our first edition you will find work from artists such as Jeanette Lynes and Glen Sorestad alongside pieces by promising writers like Alison Frost and Dianne Miller. You'll also find reviews of books emerging from some of Canada's innovative small presses.

We anticipate that *TFR* will be a long-lasting place for development, a forum to expose writers from diverse backgrounds to a creative format to showcase their work, and a place for discussion, ideas, and growth.

Enjoy the first issue,

Holly Luhning (Editor-in-Chief)

David Hutton (Managing Editor)

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POETRY
&
PROSE



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Three Triolets For A Friend Trying Out Internet Dating

Jeanette Lynes

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1. She Is Enamored

Beware the K-Mart of the heart --
The digital man reads you poems
over the phone? *Duh*. Please be smart,
beware the K-Mart of the heart;
he saw your post, he lyres his part --
he could be spawn of garden gnomes.
Beware! The K-Mart of the heart,
the digital man. Read this poem!

2. She Is Less Enamored

Is he a serial killer?
You flew to his ranch for dinner,
quite the spread, the music "Thriller."
Is he a serial killer?
He'd pictured, this rich oil driller,
you thinner, more of a winner.
Is he a serial killer?
You flew to his ranch for dinner.

3. She Is Hungry, Not Enamored In The Least

It's too bloody complicated --
you're on a diet now, but still,
the rancher was over-rated.
It's too bloody complicated.
He deemed your flesh fat, ill-fated;
The thought of him now tastes like swill.
It's too bloody complicated!
You're on a diet now, but, *still...*

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Roller Boogie (Wheelsies Roller Rink, 1982)

Kimmy Beach

word
permissions
media kit

I park Fernando my '67 Ford
Falcon Station Wagon (black
where it's not rusted)
in the lot next to London Bummy, Susan's '78 Nova
the place is full of muscles and beater wagons
idling revving cars full of teenagers
smoking drinking beer
I walk right past the lineup at the door
skates tossed over my shoulder
call *Hi Scott!* over everyone's heads
he buzzes me in through the lobby doors
I don't have to pay I work here

(I used to work concession but not anymore
everybody starts back there up to your neck
in burnt butter and spilled pop syrup
or worse spraying
that deodorant shit into sweaty rental skates
I like to dry-mop after the skaters have left
and sometimes Scott will let me change the record
now that I'm eighteen my favourite job is
Skate Cop I have a whistle
I blow when someone cuts across the rink or speed
-skates on kid's skate you could get hurt or run into
a kid if you start going the wrong direction just to be an
asshole you get whistled and there's no food on the rink
if something spills you can trip on that)

I'm not working tonight
tonight I'm here to skate
my hair is curled and fragranced
with *White Shoulders*
my *Boefemania* T-shirt tight over my breasts
Susan's already out there she sees me
from the rink and waves
Keith and Darren are playing foosball
near the skate rental booth

I never wore rentals bought my own
skates before I ever set foot on the rink
taught myself to skate backwards
in our big unfinished basement
avoided the drains where concrete dipped
mom's stocking feet overhead creaking on boards
from living room to kitchen
technopop on my cheap cassette player
turned up scratchy and distorted

wearing rentals is like wearing
tape on your glasses
the fuzziest boot covers in the world can't hide
dirty orange rental wheels
the feel of other people's sweat
moving into your socks

Scott spins *Celebration* by Kool and the Gang
Susan flirts with Chris
spins and skates backwards
constantly touching her
hair to keep it out of her eyes

I wave at Brian and Jackie sitting in the hard
orange booths along the edge of the rink
sipping Coke through straws
eating two-day-old popcorn
wrinkled Wieners
Scott glides out of the office
his whistle on a chain around his neck
he's nearly two feet taller than me
his skates on and me still in shoes

see you for slow skate she says
that's his snapper break
Chris will take over changing
the records so Scott can dance with me
I ask for *Cool Change* by Little River Band
and the Eagles *I Can't Tell You Why*
you got it he kisses the top of my head
skates to the DJ booth

Living on Video by Trans-X pumps
electronic from speakers
and on the rink
a parade of bell-bottoms widened
extra denim pieces added head after head of waving
feathered hair home perms
blonde highlights blue
sparkle eye shadow long chains on the boys
Nazareth T-shirts polyester and shoulder pads

I throw my denim jacket and Nikes into a locker
pin the key to the back pocket
of my brand-new Fancy Ass jeans
carry my skates to a red carpeted bench
brezze from my friends' revolutions
stirs my hair at the rinkside

my skates are white Sure-Grip high-tops
plate model Century Super XGL
with Precision Bearing wheels
they've got split leather linings, adjustable
trucks, and axles that won't lose it
when they're cranked wide open
I keep the axles oiled,
my toe stops tight, and my trucks
loose for better cornering
first thing I did was replace the factory Sure-Grip
wheels with top of the line All-American Dreams
those are the hottest wheels for 1982
it was worth the extra bucks I spent
for the looks I get from the guys
envious glares from girls
lots of them have All-American Plus
they're an okay wheel but
a solid step down from the Dreams
give you smooth ride and speed

I don't wear my
boot covers I like the beat-up look
of my skates the laces
have made black grooves in the leather
scuffs and wrinkles show I'm serious
not afraid to enter the speed skate contest
or dance with Chris, the best waltzer at the rink

I'd like to be skating with Darren I want the rough
look of my skates to match his
I glide to the can
my jeans are too new but otherwise
I'm looking good
my hair is perfect
straight at the back feathered sides
put on some Chocolate Lip Smackers
tuck the tube into my back pocket

I wait for Susan to come around
take two spins with her while I look for Darren
blue plastic floor worn under our wheels
red brick and dark orange walls
the disco ball spinning under a bank
of speakers at the centre

Katie is crying in the back corner again
Beth holding her shoulders
Darren's an asshole, Katie
you should break up with him
she won't do it
they've been having the same conversation
every night for three weeks
Katie and Darren fight a lot
but they always make up

as I round the next corner I see
Darren at the DJ booth talking to Scott
who's just put on *Rapture* by Blondie
Darren's been outside for a du Maurier
when I ride up next to him
he smells of tobacco and cool rain

I spin backwards, catch his eye,
and tilt my head at him
he joins me and we dance to the hot sounds
chatting about nothing
his new wheels I don't watch behind me
pull my hair behind my ears
he guides me occasionally
around slow skaters touching the hip
of my jeans to shift me over



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My family gives me prizes for my birthday

Heidi Greco

They know that I have everything
I could ever need, so instead
they give me flowers, in bunches, tied with ribbons.
Others by the bucketful, picked with love and scissors
scouted from the backyard in between the springtime rains.
Daffodils and lilacs, a vase of rainbowed tulips, softening
and floppy as cottontail ears.

Some
are even store-bought. Colourful *gerberas*,
leggy babies slooped in plastic straws. A blooming
African violet I will surely kill by June.

I have roomfuls of bouquets: mums with green salal,
leaves for every year of joy, buds to mark the tears.
But mostly cheery blossoms -- yellow, lots of orange
sunny colours to brighten the house, souvenirs of all
the noise and mess when they were small, reminders
how they brought me love, even then, in droopy clumps
dandelions, spilling out
from tiny sweated fists.

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Sprawl

Mike Barnes

Is there time for a small poem just now,
amid the numb or frenzied packing, the voices sounding
last-call? If so, here's one. You and I
speeding down off the Barrie snow plains
back to Toronto, cresting one of those long familiar hills
you said, "The sprawl," and then I saw it:
a vast fretwork of lights shimmering
to the horizon, unfurling
an umbrella of glow in miles of milky haze.
A city. Our city. It spelled us
with its intricacy, blithe power and extent,
and to think, we gushed in our speeding
black capsule down again, not even the smallest of the gleams
not planned, manufactured, installed and kept lit
by someone. We drove under that aura,
blinking up at it like mice at the Milky Way,
but Russian-dolled inside our awe
was the fact that "the sprawl," the phrase itself,
came from a novel we'd both read and loved.

That, too,
invoked a galaxy behind the rock, a sprawl inside the sprawl.

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Orange Light

Mike Barnes

Propped up on high white pillows
in the bed, he said:

I remember visiting her studio
that first time. Four floors up,
cold water down the hall.
I had to climb up the fire escape
because of another painter.
Dusty beams and ducts
criss-crossed the high brickwork,
and orange light seemed
always to be roaring
through the grimy, fretted windows.
Her fingers were always caked
with pigments-chrome yellows, whites-
and I remember thinking fleetingly,
I'll die of lead poisoning.

But you didn't, I remarked.
One of his daughters had come in
and asked if he needed anything
and when he said no
had kissed him on the forehead.

Well it wasn't for lack of trying,
he said smiling to himself.

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Presences/Absences

Glen Sorestad

What matters most
is the comfort
I know
because you
are here,

but even more
the knife
of fear I know
your absence
would bring.

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Morning Declaration

Glen Sorestad

This morning the northwester is a blustery declarative sentence replete with clausal gusts and punctuated with rainy exclamations.

The golf course is a silent thought; even omnipresent Canada geese have opted not to declare their plaintive intent,

gone to shelter somewhere beyond their utterance. Trees shake their leaves like pompom quotation marks.

Those in subordinate servitude to dogs have been taken out, thoroughly awakened and returned safe to their warm homes.

Only my partner and I, who insist on our fitness imperative, lean, two slashes into the rain and follow our syntactical route home.

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Mrs. Parker Has Accidents

Jenny Ryan

Sometimes her soul
slides out
like the hem of a slip
hanging,
glimpsed.

Sloppy, but sexy
a bra strap
she doesn't tuck in
right away.

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Postures, 5

Lindsay Zier-Vogel

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Posture One:

He stands with a sleeping spine,
a small and careful curve
that rounds itself like empty fingers from an unused palm.

Posture Two:

Thighs cross at knees
and his shoulders angle - south-west, north-east,
a pointed compass
with confused vertebrae falling somewhere underneath.

Posture Three:

Straight as a street,
laid in naked instead of asphalt,
he divides the mattress in equal triangles
and sleeps the morning's earliest light in two.

Posture Four:

Hands fit into pockets
as they fit into hands,
knees straight as elbows,
the only horizontal lines are his belt,
and his collarbone,
the rest track sky to ground,
north to south
and straight as untangled yarn.

Posture Five:

The back of the chair holds his head
and his feet (sandaled)
angle in sharp creases from the table
that holds both of our drinks.

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The visit

Dianne Miller

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I come to the cemetery
ironically, metonymically
named Mount Hope.
I can't remember where she's buried
though my mother showed me once--
Not on the hilltop where one son sleeps
beside his first wife, his second wife
beside her first husband close by.
Farther on, I pass the tombstone of his lover
Such a cozy place, all these stories
leaching from bones, draining into silence.

I find her at the bottom--my grandmother--
at the bottom of Mount Hope,
beside him of whom little was spoken
(in the end they had to watch him every minute
for fear he'd shoot them all).
I've come to ask her advice--this woman whose doleful eyes
reach beyond a faded photograph, all I have of hers--
That, and the farm I've just inherited,
the one she inherited from her father, and he from his.
I'm guessing she knows a lot, having lived
there as a girl, nursed her dying brother,
taken her chances with a man who once
tore an owl out of the sky with his whip.

At home she birthed a daughter, two sons,
taught them
'the less you have
the less you have to do'.
Must have seemed odd,
a scarcity of everything but chores--
milking, haying, planting, weeding, milking...

Today is hot and muggy.
Crickets sing.
Beside her grave, pale pink roses
planted in love or out of duty,
sun not quite burning through a veil of clouds
vale of tears, voila, voile, voy elle
I stand at the bottom of Mount Hope
at my grandmother Oradell's grave
and wait.

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the project's objectives, scope, and timeline. This document is intended for the project team and stakeholders.

The project aims to develop a new software application that will streamline the workflow and improve efficiency. The scope of the project includes the design, development, testing, and deployment of the application.

The project timeline is as follows: Design (2 weeks), Development (8 weeks), Testing (4 weeks), and Deployment (2 weeks). The total project duration is 16 weeks.

The project team consists of a Project Manager, a Business Analyst, a Software Engineer, and a QA Tester. The Project Manager is responsible for overall project management and coordination.

The Business Analyst is responsible for gathering requirements and analyzing the business process. The Software Engineer is responsible for the design and development of the application.

The QA Tester is responsible for testing the application to ensure it meets the requirements and is free of defects. The project team will meet weekly to discuss progress and address any issues.

The project budget is estimated to be \$100,000. The budget includes the cost of software licenses, hardware, and personnel. The project is expected to be completed within the budget.

The project risks are low. The main risk is the potential for scope creep, which will be managed by the Project Manager. The project is expected to be completed on time and within budget.

The project will be a success if it meets the requirements and is accepted by the users. The project team will monitor the project progress and report any issues to the Project Manager.

The project team is committed to delivering a high-quality software application that will meet the needs of the users. The project team will work hard to ensure the project is completed on time and within budget.

The project team is confident that the project will be a success. The project team will continue to work hard to ensure the project is completed on time and within budget.

The project team is grateful for the support and guidance of the Project Manager and stakeholders. The project team will continue to work hard to ensure the project is completed on time and within budget.

The project team is looking forward to the completion of the project and the successful deployment of the new software application. The project team will continue to work hard to ensure the project is completed on time and within budget.

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It was really sad on the day of Danny's funeral. Even the sky looked in mourning for him, said Dad. There were storm clouds over the mountains, and it rained a lot of levels came—I guess the whole senior class, and Danny's teachers, the other players on the basketball team, and Danny's coach. My mother came, too, and I had a brother of Danny's relatives show here from Yuma and Phoenix and all over the state. Some of them even came from Mexico.

Danny's mother asked me to stand beside her, next to Oscar. He wore his Marine dress uniform, and he stood at attention the whole time until the priest finished reading. Then Lenora stopped all of the crowd, she walked up to Danny's mother, and they kissed. She came over to me and kissed my cheek. Next she went up to Oscar. He bent down to whisper something special in her ear... Then something happened. Lenora started backing up, away from Oscar. After a few steps she stopped, all the time staring at Oscar's eyes like she was begging him for something, but his face was stone, so she swung around suddenly and started walking through the crowd. It was a big crowd. Pretty soon I couldn't see her no more, and we all walked back to our cars.

Later on at Danny's house, Oscar explained. He told me all about why Danny shot himself. It was because of Lenora. She had a boyfriend back in Texas. A few months ago, this boyfriend moved here to be close to her. He took a job in town, and Lenora started seeing him again, but she was seeing Danny too. She told Danny that she loved them both. He didn't know how to handle it.

"I told Danny," Oscar said, "deal with the guy or get rid of the bitch. I put the gun in his hand. It's all my fault," he said.

But I took the gun away, and then I gave it back to Danny. So who was really to blame? And if Danny had to die, what was the reason?

A couple of weeks passed, and my mother kept asking if I was all right. I didn't know what to tell her, and she didn't know what to do. Then one day she decided to call her sister in California. She talked about me like I wasn't even there, and after she hung up, she told me she'd decided. It was time for me to meet my 'Tia Teresa.

Up to then, I only knew about my tia from the stories I heard, and a picture of her in an album. She is a short lady with a beautiful face, like a fat angel. She's psychic, too. Everybody in the family says so, but if people don't know her, they think she's a witch.

To give an example, she was the first to know my grandpa died. She called my mother from California, and said to make the funeral arrangements. My mother got excited. She said, "What are you talking about? Apa, esta bien. He's in the other room." Then she went into the house to take a look, but grandpa was already dead in his big chair with a newspaper lying on his lap. Another time she called my mother and said to see the doctor right away. My mother said, "How come you want me to see a doctor?" But she figured she better go and be safe, so she went to the doctor and then she found out she had walking pneumonia.

Well, anyway, a week later, we took a bus to see my tia in California. My cousin met us at the Greyhound Station and drove us to my tia's house. When she heard her car, she came up the front door. I was carrying a couple of valves, but she stopped me, so I put them down. She stared up at my face for a long time. Then she held my face inside her hands, and she stared up into my eyes. When my mother was near, she said, "Cecilia, you are blessed. You are doubly blessed." She didn't ever want to let go of my face. Later on my mother explained that she's a little crazy but she's really good.

This was my first trip away from Tucson. I always heard that California isn't nice anymore because of all the gangs. And my tia lives on a street with a gang, but she told us not to worry, the gang protects the barrio. We could walk anywhere we want and be safe, except don't go north, she said. Every place she was okay.

Anyway, I didn't care about going out for a walk. There was a room just for me, and that's where I stayed most of the time. All day, my mother and my tia talked about me in the kitchen, so I closed the door and hung out in bed. I had such terrible thoughts. All my life, God had been there for me. But now, I didn't think He was anywhere. It seemed to me if I saw Danny try to shoot himself, I would stop him. And if I would do that, why wouldn't God—who's supposed to be so perfect, and see everything that happens, and love every single person?

I never had such thoughts or such a heavy, achy feeling in my chest. It must have been from loneliness.

Then one night I couldn't sleep at all. One, two, three in the morning. Finally I got out of bed. I was dressed already and tried to ring on my back, so I got up and went outside on the front porch. There was nothing going on. All the houses were dark and quiet. I started walking up the street. I didn't even know which way I was going. I must have walked for maybe an hour, and then I wondered if I was heading north, where my tia told me not to go. Which way was north? I didn't know that either.

I came to a place where the streetlights didn't work and people lived in darkness. The houses looked older here, and a lot of them had mean dogs. They came barking up to the fence and showed me their teeth. Bobomans and a couple of pit bulls, acting like they wanted to tear me apart. They made a bunch of noise, but nobody turned on a house light, so I guess they were used to it.

I walked so far that finally there was no more houses, just an empty street which led to a highway. That's where I stopped, like a hitchhiker, next to the highway entrance. My mouth said four o'clock in the morning, and I didn't even realize that I could ever find my way back. So I sat down on the curb, and I decided just to wait there until I could figure something out. This was very quiet night, and I was surprised I could be alone for so long in Southern California and not even see a car or another person. It was pretty miserable to wind up in a place like that. The sky was black without a single star. I figured, Oh well, I'll try one more time. I'll ask to God. So I said out loud, "God, if you are really up there, come down here and show Yourself. You wouldn't leave me here if you were still my friend."

I waited a long time, a whole hour, and He didn't show up. Finally, I got so tired that I crossed my arms over my knees and lowered my head. I think maybe I fell asleep. A car woke me up. At first I searched for away, but it came closer really fast. It came roaring toward me like maybe the muffler had a big hole. Soon it sounded so loud, I had to cover my ears. This car was dirty white, an old Chevy with one headlight. It was one of those antique cars from the Fifties at least, with a couple of tail fins. It even moved like a fish, like a whale bouncing over the waves. I guess it didn't have no shocks. It seemed to be heading for the highway, but when it got close to the entrance, the car slowed down. It drove straight up to me and stopped. The front end was shaking, and the tailpipe was coughing black smoke.

Then, whoever was driving out the engine, and the one headlight went out and everything got more silent than before. At first, it just stood there, parked like a ghost or without a driver. But finally the driver's door started creaking open. It was a banged up, the driver had to push it with his shoulder. Then his guy climbed out—kind of a short guy, but a muscle man. Through his wet shirt, I could see the lumps of muscle in his stomach and chest. He wore a dark bandana and an earring in one ear. And his eyes were half-closed and looked at me funny, like maybe he was on drugs or something. Walking up to me, he stumbled a little but he

I thought, Oh great. Now I'm going to get killed.

When he got to the curb, he stopped and looked at me over. "What's wrong with you?" he said.

"Nothing," I said. I just wanted him to leave.

"You said or something?" he said. Then, before I could answer, he said, "I came to tell you, God is real, man. It's true."

I didn't believe what I was hearing.

Then he said it again. And he told me I was very special and God had a plan just for me.

"Did God send you here?" I said.

"That's right," he said. "He sent me to tell you."

I figured there was no way this guy could know about my prayer, so I asked, "Are you an angel?"

That got him off. He laughed so hard, his voice broke, and then he started coughing, like a deep, long smoker's cough, for maybe a whole minute. Finally it died down. And then he got real serious, and he said, "How did you know I'm an angel?"

So I told him, I said, "I asked God to come here and talk to me."

"No, didn't he said, "This was your?" and he wiped his nose on the back of his hand.

"Well, He couldn't make it," the angel said, "so He sent me. He told me to tell you, He loves you, man. You got to believe me."

"Okay," I said because I thought I must be true.

Then he bent down to get closer, and he stared at me with his sleepy eyes and his brown leather face. "You made me very happy," he said. "This is a bitch. I go around this city, most people won't even talk to me. You're the first." Then he changed like to me. "What can you do?" And he walked back to the Chevy and climbed inside. He put the car in reverse and pulled away backwards. He drove so fast, he left a chunk of fire on the street. Then he swung the car around in a circle, screeching like a chicken, and shot down the street so fast that POOF! He just disappeared.

When the sun came out, I raised my head off my arms, so I must have been sleeping. But then I saw the tread from the angel's car, still printed on the street, and that proved he wasn't just a dream.

By now there were cars up and down the highway, flying by. It was time to go, so I started down the long empty street until I came to a Tenaro station. It was pretty big and took up a whole corner. There must have been at least a dozen pumps, and a big garage, and some holes in a store that sold everything. But there were locks on the doors of the display case, and a big wire cage over the outside windows, which didn't say too much for the neighborhood.

I wanted to ask the counter guy for directions, but I didn't know my tia's address. I didn't even know her last name. So all I could do was pee in the Men's Room and take a drink of water. By then, the day got very beautiful. Through the cage wire on the window, I could see a blue ocean of sky, and clouds like beaches of pink and white sand.

After I left the station, I seemed to know the way, and soon I came to a neighborhood that reminded me of my place. It had palm trees and fenced-in yards and nice houses. Across the street I saw a big palm tree, my favorite tree because it reminds me of one in the Bible, the Tree of Life. It doesn't have leaves, and it looks kind of dead except that it is the color of fresh young grass.

While I was looking at this tree, I heard dogs and chickens. Then a cock crowed, and I felt like I was back in Tucson. Even the names on the mailboxes were the names of my neighbors, Chavez, Hernandez, and Romero. But when I looked across the street again, there was my tia's house, and she was sitting on her front porch, waiting for me. So I crossed the street and climbed the porch stairs.

She asked me to sit with her awhile. My mother was still sleeping. "You had a good walk, mi hijo. You're better now," she said because she knew something happened. She said when I first came to her house, all she saw around me was darkness, but baby when I looked across the street, she saw me in a golden light. "Tell me," she said. "Tell me everything that happened."

She meant from the very beginning, so we sat on the porch, and I told her about Oscar and Carla and Benny Mendon. I explained about Danny and Lenora, how he shot himself in the head and how police took me away like it was my fault. And then told her what happened last night. How I asked Him to come down and see me, but He sent an angel instead.

This made my tia excited. She wanted to know the smallest things about the angel, even the color of his eyes, which I didn't see because it was too dark. She didn't even think it was strange that he drove a Chevy. She just listened to all, and then she said I must feel happy to be so special to God.

"What's wrong?" she said.

"He didn't come," I said. "I still don't know why He let Danny die. Do you know, tia?"

"No," she said. "I don't know that either."

I turned away from her toward the street.

"But if you want the answer," she said. "I can tell you what you have to do."

She led me into the house. Then she found a notebook, like the ones I use in school, and a pen, which she must have got from her dentist's office. Along the side of the pen, it said, ENJOY A PLEASANT DENTAL EXPERIENCE. She gave me the pen and the pen, and she told me to go to my room. "I want you to write everything," she said. "From the first thing you can remember."

And that's what I've been doing here all day, writing down the story of my life, up until six o'clock this morning. As it said that when I finish, I should read it over, so that's what I'm going to do next. Then she said to put the notebook away. And in five more years, I have to read it again. And then she told me to add all the new stuff that happened. She says to keep doing this every five years, and in time, it will start to make a little sense. By the end of my life, she said I will find the answer that I want in the story that I am writing.

I will read it back, she promised, and then I will understand why everything had to happen in such a way. Why I had to meet Carla first, and promise to marry her, before Maria and I fell in love. And why God, though He loves us all, watched Danny Romero get a bullet in his head.





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Just Another Story About Billy the Kid

Jan Conn

Through the ornate ceiling he shoots some bullets.
The sky is very yellow; sun indigo.
Puts his gun in his belt, whirls his peculiar hat
through the air.

Uncoiling as they go, garter snakes shed their luminous skins
and one by one depart their communal den.

Night flies past. He puts his face
perpendicular to this century and weeps.

A small explosion occurs behind a black door, then another.
When he sleeps he dreams of his former wives naked
in the dark, leaping from wildflower to wildflower.

He keeps lightning in a bottle, is stoked before evening.
Like a magnet he gathers action
and beautiful red-haired girls, their fizzed hair.

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Self-Portrait

Francine Sterle

(Toulouse-Lautrec)

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I disappear into the streets with my wide behind
and a nose like a potato. Only in Montmartre's
dance halls and dens does no one notice
a dwarf with drooling lips and a lisp.
Walking these rat-infested streets all night,
night after night, I drag my friends from the cabarets
to the circus to the cafés, move from light to light,
port to brandy, gin to vermouth.
It's in the brothels that I feel at home.
8 Rue d'Amboise. 24 Rue des Moulins.
The *égout des spermes*. Outcasts like myself.
Black-stockinged legs. Mouths red as a drip of blood.
Ingres believed the only way to possess a woman
was to paint her, and I want to paint every woman I see.
Look at them: naked and stretched out like animals.
They admit me everywhere and at any moment.
I watch them dressing or touching or taking a bath.
I'm a coffee pot with a big spout.
I'm digging my grave with my cock.
Degas thinks my work stinks of the pox,
but I draw what I see: a woman making a bed
or brushing her hair, someone talking in the salon,
playing cards, humming a song.
When they lie down together, you've never seen
such tenderness. They're like two birds
burying themselves in each others' feathers.
No one will ever love me like that.

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Virgin Sturgeon

Vivian Hansen

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In the time of Old Man who was then lean and tall as a lodgepole pine -- 1953 perhaps -- the Black Flies hatched along the South Saskatchewan River. They emerged from the river's lullaby, took on ferocity as they approached cattle, biting, drawing blood, killing. While they slept in the river's cocoon, we ate their pupae and larvae, river berries as sweet and succulent as Old Man's saskatoons.

We came to know of the poison through our gill slits -- the resonance of voice lying at the base of our useless tongues. They were channels to the common vision of wet, an eye in the ancient superorder of fishes Chondrostei. We were the king of all fish, the last that scouted the veins of the glaciers. Finding the sharp scent of the mud banks in the river, we dived and stayed.

The Black Flies harassed men and the creatures they owned. We fish of the Old Order have no such offense. We are bottom-feeders, elusive, yielding our eggs in the oldest profession of sacrifice. Old Man heard our story after the DDT spilled, listened to the slow passion of our death as we spit into mud trying to get back to the vein of the glaciers-above-the-river.

The rubber hoses were calibrated for DDT, filled with kerosene for three weeks before the Day of Poisoning, eroding the firmament of round sand. The slim snakes held the poison aimed for Black Flies. *The surly snakes overdosed downstream of the 25th Street Bridge, said Old Man, we found whitefish, trout, jackfish, pickerel, sturgeon.*

*Here's three cheers for the Virgin Sturgeon
Virgin Sturgeon is a fish*

Old Man sings, crooning memory that is cleft between rum and Saskatchewan river-sun.

Superorder Chondrostei, almost reclaiming legs, bewhiskered knowledge trying to escape the artery of an old glacier after the injection of DDT, the puncture of poison into the small downstream vein of a river.

*Virgin Sturgeon needs no urgin'
That's why caviar is my dish.*

Old Man sings this ceremonial song to remember the overdose that the scientists gave the river. He sings it, amazes himself with our presence, our twenty-foot length, our docility of no teeth.

There are so few of us left who float the dialect of gill, this third eye that saw the silt shift to kill the fly larvae. We drifted into a mud bath of DDT, the sharp scent of God gone.

Did I ever tell you what happened to the sturgeon along the Saskatchewan River when the DDT got into the river?

Old Man tells the story when he sings his ceremonial sturgeon song.

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Landlorn

Karen McElrea

Poor little mermaid,
wishing so hard
so long;
all she wanted
was to get out
of her wet things,
to get something
dry in her.

Utterly sick of fish and greens
in dreams she sank
her teeth into meals
still dotted with
bits of land,
a gristly something
that bled
down her chin.

She floated under her
tiresome stars, resenting
the intimacy of tides;
she stared up at the sky
and wondered what grass
would feel like, what a man's
hand would feel like, how she
would feel were she warm and real.

She appealed to the networks,
but the camera couldn't catch her;
their instruments failed
to register her soundings
so the mermaid went back
and sank deep,
resurfacing to lie cold
on her rock awhile

with the gods--who were,
after all, just gods--
bobbing around her;
those slippery gods
who looked away
as she dragged a blade down her tail,
and winced
when she didn't bleed.

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NON-FICTION

contrasting iris

Monday Curator
Iris is always black. Behaving her name, there is no hint of rainbow on her braided body, even in reflection. Golden wings have been looped from her sculpture and sit on her shoulders, and an arm has been removed. Iris is all body and breast, thigh and fold, with legs splayed shamelessly. She is delectably woman, unashamedly female.

And I want to be her.
I first saw her in Paris. My friend Joel and I were the epitome of American students abroad, young and over prepared and trying so desperately—despite our penchant for Diogenes and passed butter and soft sandwiches—not to seem too American. I spent days in an overutilized dorm, gluttonously devouring art and Nicolas copey. I thought, "Iris should be tall or beautiful, delicious things."

I remember walking back to the hotel the first night, down Boulevard de Clichy. Joel kept a steady pace, turning his chest protectively toward my shoulder when waves of bodies washed past. I drifted along with a desire to inhabit the photos of naked women, thighs spread, and the humors facing eye contact, courting me in English. "Let's go to a free tonight." I remember once hearing the words, "the bodies have whose eyes meet at all times, and judging of my position as the artist's damn pain against my skin might equal protection. I was off-put and unenthused and sure that I was at the center of his on a preview."

Standing in the Musée Rodin, under one-time home, seen bodies in various delightful connotations and dimensions. There were sculptures I knew like *Le Prisonier* and *Le Fugitif* but none that I'd never seen. These still, stone bodies seemed to want something very badly.

Iris felt somewhere in the succession of the falling and writhing and impossibly interesting bodies. "The Messenger of the Gods" had placed next. She was bronze black, with a compact body slightly smaller than my own. With no head and no right arm to impede her movement, I felt as if on a pocket—her legs spread wide, her neck at eye level. Her left arm and leg stretched together into the open as if she a single limb, like a dancer in mid-leap, movements from a figure of kinetic perfection. Her right leg bent below her, as if to spring her toward the ceiling. And in an impossible feat of grace, she balanced perfectly on the tip of her foot. There was a roughness to the sculpture, unfinished areas that suggested not voluptuous smoothness, but aggressive vitality. One angle was distinct, while the other showed into the hand-molded curve of her breast. It was as if Rodin had begun a sculpture of penitential defeat, but before completion she'd taken matter into her own hands and contained herself into a final form of impassibility.

I remember staring quietly, as if my gaze could ingest that unfinished form. I could stretch an arm and a leg, balance on only one toe and become a figure worthy of sculpture—or become sculpture. I would forsake my head to inhabit that blackness.

I spent the next three years without Iris. I finished school, moved to Florida, and moved again to Washington, D.C. I took the Metro everywhere, thrilled by a new life in a new city. I found myself eating happily at everyone around me. I took notes. A man with dark hair sits across from me. The hairs on his head are wisps of smoke. His skin is weathered, coming from his nose like wet paper. A woman stands in the air. Naked on the plump dark flesh just below her armpits are the words *RED CRY*. An Asian woman with floppy braids and orange, crumpled hair is whispering to her carouse—of dog/friend. Both are wearing scarves.

I sat cross-legged in my orange vinyl seat, headphones in, journal open, staring shamelessly.
I was 23 when I became a woman—not vogue in the bunched-up neighborhood—middle class of the work, but even in the everything-is-actually-pretending-and-facinating-on-I-stare-shamelessly scene. And nothing was coming from my staring. I thought I was looking for something beautiful. I thought I could find it in the will of the rain-faded daffodils outside of my house, or the people I passed on the sidewalk.

My mother taught me that it was impossible to stare, but upon grasping such conventional wisdom, I found no reason in it. I rationalized that I would not mind were someone to examine me similarly. I convinced myself that I would meet that gaze with my own. I found a deep pleasure in the act of looking, in the thrill that came with the eye contact. Staring on my addition, and perhaps if I'd stopped long enough to consider it, I'd realize it was Iris I was seeking.

One night, I found myself on a concrete bench, waiting for the next train. I'd been writing in my journal and missed my stop. It was late, but the platform was well lit, and the air thick with the smells of cigarettes. The next train had three minutes away—of it as he had before I was home. There, I had friends and a bottle of wine, and the alcohol of a fluorescent light in a black night. I inspected my reflection in the Plexiglas of the phone booth in front of me.

In my high school Biology class, I was taught, like every publicly educated child, that the eye works like a camera. Though I recognize the obvious comparison, I hate how that metaphor robs the organ of the beauty of its own language. Though I could not feel it, as I survey the vacant platform, I imagined my life continuing, permitting just the right amount of light to enter my pupil. The image in front of me—my pale hair and pink cheeks—was being focused by my iris and retina, then inverted and projected onto my retina. Layers upon layers of photoreceptive cells miraculously translate the billions of my nerves like you into an electric signal that my brain understands. But more specifically, it is the focus, the tiny dent in the center of the retina, that best describes Iris's design.

In the average retina, there are some 120 million rods, their population dwarfing a nearby seven million cones. But in the fovea, everything, even the dense web of blood vessels, is reflected so the cones have five times to absorb and process color, depth, and line. The rest of the retina processes all that peripheral, slight vision, and motion detection, but it is the fovea that does the real work of seeing, and my fovea are weak, easily lured into submission by a Kandinsky red, or the pure curve cut of Matisse's hair.

Justin and I slept in a bed that stretched out below my naked window. Across the narrow alley was a house with two windows in view of my own. Both windows framed air conditioning units and ceramic animal sculptures, so I could not see in. Across to the plump grey building, however, was unobstructed. In the morning, standing by my shower, I felt framed by my wide window. In the evenings, with my lamp on, I was ever aware of existing inside a male's view.

"Why do you care what the owners of a stone messenger think of you?" Justin asked as we walked past one day, observing cherubs and sheep and other cement creatures, most of whom were cracked and overgrown with vines.
"Good point," I laughed, as if this voided any judgments they could place on me. But I couldn't help wondering how I would react were my neighbors to step out of the front door in that moment. If I were forced to confront them outside of the safety of my room.

My neighbor's mother, a polished aristocrat, offered to make up all curtains. I promised Iris I would call her room with dimensions of my window. But I never mentioned it to her. I know that a lot of work to measure the frame, take curtains made and set, buy rods and rings and wall mounts. Surely after two months in my new home, my neighbors had already seen the dim and dusty and check my e-mail and sink my teeth into my boyfriend's shoulder. Ultimately, curtains were frivolous, weren't they?

I was wandering through the Hirshhorn Museum of contemporary art when I ran into her again. I turned the corner and there she sat, the only sculpture in the room, as if she had been there waiting for me, as if I'd always been there, though I knew she had not. I went to the Hirshhorn often, wherever I wanted to draw or walk alone, or ride my bike somewhere and simply look at something.

At first, when I saw her, I wasn't sure what to do. She was the same, still graceful, still lovely. I felt an immediate connection and immediately disarmed. I walked into the room, where Justin and I had spent hours sitting on the black leather couches. I sat down and looked at the window of the public of stone grey granite on the National Mall. I felt compelled to sit someone. I'd found her, but who would I tell? I could talk to her. I could talk to her but not touch her, implying that I had a part of her incomplete form individually: sleeping, shoulder, dandelion, breast, one arm, two feet, dimpled abdomen, open thigh.

People walked in front of and behind me, wandered around the room, and I felt that I should stop looking, that my gaze might appear too strong. But I did not. I walked up closer, examined her eyebrows, feet at the back, which faced the wall. It seemed that I should not look at anyone like this, not in public, not so closely and for so long, and someone so blatantly scandalous. But I stayed and let the reactions appease of my fovea.

After I found her, I wanted to know all about her. Her first appearance is in the *Field*. Iris is unapologetically skilled as a messenger because of her ability to inhabit the form of marble. Hunter-gatherer zones requiring messages to Iris, after which her name explains that Iris, "blackened and obeyed." She is loyal and compliant, to Zeus above all others, as in only a messenger, she is not allowed to venture there when she has been told away. After the hearing in Troy, her services are inequitably abandoned for those of Hermes in the Odyssey.

Lila Homer, Augustus Rodin had in mind a very specific occupation for his Iris. By imparting Iris with an imposing sexuality, Rodin reframed the responsibility of the messenger. She was all above a sculpture of the French Virgin Mary as a national monument to flag, commissioned by the French government. There she would serve as his lover, a liaison between Hipp and the dream, a link between sexuality and creativity. In her first conception, his had a head and wings, and was to rest on a cloud to deliver messages. But before the monument was completed and installed, interest and financial support waned. However, Rodin salvaged Iris, reducing her to what he believed were her essential parts. She abandoned the role of virgin, observer and was reborn as the muse, the exhibit itself. Through the server reduced her intended potential, she existed as an emblem of diversity for the rest fifty years, her sexuality more potent than even her creator imagined.

"If I see look at you," he said. The lights were out in my room, but lamplight from the alley flooded into my window. I'd been kneeling on the bed, reaching over to adjust the window screen. I knew in that position for a moment before balancing myself on the bed. I stayed still, knees bent below me, suddenly aware of wanting only pants and a bra—my stomach, thighs, chest, hips, all glowing.

"Turn a little," he said, watching my legs. I turned toward where to look, unable to make eye contact, grateful for the low light. No one had ever just asked to look at me. At first, my body seemed entirely separate from me, as if I was this thing I had to avoid, like a backpack, and then I thought of how I'd always wanted someone to look at me, to look back and not speak and not judge, or to judge me a little, but favorably. More than that, what I'd really wanted, always wanted for as long as I could remember, was for someone to find me beautiful—not poorly or interesting or gorgeous even—but completely aesthetic. Beautiful.

This is how, for a moment, I became Iris. For a moment, I lived being looked at, but I could not sustain it. I couldn't have imagined the honor and delight of looking at someone and seeing, without him saying, that he'd looked at me, that he could continue looking, indefinitely. "You're embarrassed," he teased. I said nothing in response. Though I could not feel her nose blowing across my chest, he grabbed me and I thought I could and get under the blowing across my chest. He grabbed me and I thought I could and get under the blowing across my chest.

We are not allowed to like the way we look. We are encouraged to be confident, comfortable with our appearance, but not proud, not vain. We are not supposed to judge others by their appearance, but are implicitly expected to judge ourselves, to name and number our flaws, to be able to answer when asked, what parts of our bodies we would change, were we granted access to plastic surgery or three magic wishes.

Admitting to myself that perhaps I am looking at others because I want to be looked at is difficult. But to deny it would be false. Some have hope must be in the belief that if I am looking for the beautiful parts in other people, someone is looking for them in me.

Freud said that voyeurism created tension through disavowal. The voyeur finds pleasure in both the object itself and in self-identification with the object. The delight of looking comes both in the sheer beauty of it, and the pleasure in finding parts of myself in her.

It is within this tension that Rodin lived, that anyone who creates must live. Not all art, at least in part, the product of vanity. We deserve our world, including from our movements, but isn't it our own vanity that inspires interpretation and recreation, drawing a circle, drawing a line, sculpting a form, writing, a sentence, and picturing a story. In this, we exhibit ourselves for the gawking eyes of the world.

Iris is a woman who can change her form at will, the shellfish sister of the ugly and unlovable Hesperus. Though it is reported that she was beautiful, caused by the rainbow and adorned with golden wings, I imagine her differently. My Iris sits overgrown blackberries by the roadside and though she is an aware of the power of the curve of her hips, she thinks little of it. She picks up flowers from grass and occurs women's needs in the underworld. She told Zeus that even if he could do her job, then get the hell out of Greece.

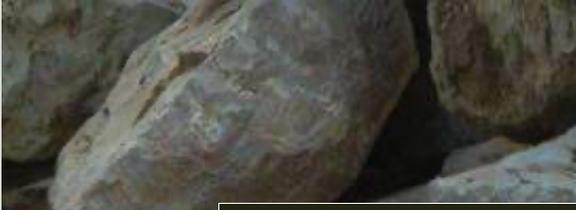
Justin and I ride our bikes to the Mall and lock them up beside the sculpture garden. We ride the narrow escalators to the third floor of the perfectly circular building, as we have countless times. We enter the gallery vestibule. I know where she is, tucked just inside a doorframe, hiding in the corner. I lead him to her.

Standing below her, Justin exclaims, "She's hot," he says softly. We have come here because I loved to see her again. I led him away from examining Iris's disproportionately large feet. They are exquisitely arched and black, and possess a quiet grace that is usually overlooked by her limbs. One leg is bent below her, the other stretched to the side. She sits on a pedestal no her torso is level with my eyes. Outside the slope of her shoulder is the air with my fingertip.

"You," he says—always one to appreciate the curve of a good line—but he looks away. "I cannot stop staring at it." His eyes are trained on the space between her thighs. I smile. It is good to see her again.

The background features a soft-focus photograph of tall, thin grasses with feathery seed heads. A large, thin black circle is centered on the page, containing a stylized grey graphic of wheat stalks on the left and a leafy branch on the right. The word "REVIEWS" is printed in a clean, black, sans-serif font across the center of the circle.

REVIEWS



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The Fine Art of Collage or: T.S. Eliot Hits the Mosh Pit: *Curio: Grotesques and Satires from the Electronic Age* by Elizabeth Bachinsky

Jeanette Lynes

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Curio: Grotesques and Satires from the Electronic Age. Elizabeth Bachinsky. Toronto: BookThug, 2005. ISBN 0 9737181 8 8. 111 pp. Pbk.

Published under Jay Millar's very cool BookThug imprint, Elizabeth Bachinsky's *Curio* is an energized, endlessly inventive, often brilliant collection - a memorable collage of shifting poetic stances and rhetorical tropes. Bachinsky has distanced herself considerably from what has been the typical debut collection of lyric-narrative, often confessional poems. The eight sections (plus one single-section, introductory prose poem entitled "On the Convention of Narrative in Literature") of her book are all quite different in both form and mood; they range, for example, from the spare, minimalist sequence of "Undressed And So Many Places to Go," to the faux-journals and epistolary discourse of "From the Secret Diaries of Antonin Artaud," to the palindromes (structured as double sonnets that unzip themselves and reverse) of "Spy Cam: Surveillance Series," to the Dadaist riffs of "The Pose Same Ran Am Sage."

Given this diversity, Bachinsky's collection has, as mentioned, more the feel of collage than 'the well-wrought urn,' and it's no accident that her book's epigraph is taken from the great collage artist, sound poet, and renegade Dadaist, Kurt Schwitters. Bachinsky's poetry is self-reflexive; her language is continually foregrounded, reinforcing this resonance between her aesthetic and the art of collage. When we look at a collage, our attention is drawn to the materials themselves; when we read Bachinsky, her language casts a powerful spell. Her poems explore representation, spectacle, mirrors. The collection's five palindrome poems - one of which appeared in Sandy Shreve and Kate Braid's terrific anthology, *In Fine Form* (2005) - are halls of mirrors in which we can never quite trust what we see; we're always looking back to see what has changed since we last looked. And the surveillance of the electronic age is like that, isn't it? These poetic "cams" Bachinsky has created are extraordinary not only for their formal verve, but for their suggestion of how form effects its own surveillance. Her poetic "cams" also pose an interesting philosophical question: can any reflection of the present moment wrest itself free from an already-recorded past? What do sonnets see when they look at themselves in the mirror? Read Bachinsky to find out.

Curio seems strongly invested in a critique of language and literary tradition. The range of diction in these poems is wild, the diversity of influence deliciously idiosyncratic. How often have we seen John Milton and Lisa Robertson acknowledged between the same covers? Bachinsky's willingness to range fearlessly through history sets her writing apart - or, at least places it in the company of equally daring poets like Robertson, Maine's Jennifer Moxley, and Eliot himself. Bachinsky's poems also remind me, at times, of work by American writer Karen Volkman. Bachinsky forges through the past, defamiliarizing contemporary poetic language in poems like "She is Blond Sin." I love the linguistic cognitive dissonance and sly eroticism created here when words like "dandy kid" (evocative of the nineteen forties Jimmy Stewart movies) and "wanton hidden clit" (a morphing of archaic and contemporary diction) bump up against each other and share poetic proximity. *Curio* is an exciting linguistic mosh pit of language derived from the past five hundred years.

Bachinsky's "Lead the Wants" is a tour de force, a madcap 'translation' of Eliot's "The Wasteland," one of the great collage poems in western literature. Bachinsky's poem, with its inclusion of K-Mart and R.E.M. seems, in a way, the logical conclusion of "The Wasteland." To cite two examples from Bachinsky:

O O O O shat takes pear he tang hi -

Or:

Witt witt witt
Guj guj guj guj guj
Record duos fly
Re: e, tu

I have to admit, it took me awhile to discover Eliot's "O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag" from Bachinsky's "O O O O shat takes pear he rang hi" (and even longer to track down Eliot's Shakespeherian riff to Ziegfeld's *Follies* of 1912). But echoes emerge; we begin to hear the past. Same with Eliot's transplanted classical bird call - "Twit twit twit/Jug jug jug jug jug jug," transplanted still further by Bachinsky as "Witt witt witt/Guj gujâC!," etc. Language is historicized, contextual. T. S. Eliot's "Wasteland," which sounded so strange to most of us who first studied it as undergraduates, comes to appear normalized, in time. Is this - ending up in a kind of linguistic suburbs - the fate of all poetic language? Hopefully not since, as Pound said, the poet's job is to 'make it new'. As part of her procedure for making it new, Bachinsky's driving questions seem to be: what can the status of poetic language be in the age of K-Mart, R.E.M., and the electronic revolution? Can the poet create anything more than a collage? What happened to Keats' well-wrought urn (or was that only ever a dream?). Will the Tower of Babel tip once and for all in the electronic age? Is the poetic past destined to be relegated to the status of mere *Curio*? Will the electronic revolution democratize language, or destroy it? Bachinsky is, I think, more interested in the process of exploring these questions than answering them - and, since she's a poet, I think this is as it should be.

Bachinsky should be lauded for raising big questions. We should also applaud her sheer moxie - who among us would have the courage to translate "The Wasteland"? For poets of my (slightly older) generation, Eliot's poem remains too canonically enshrined to touch. I don't think Bachinsky's conversation with Eliot in *Curio* shows disrespect; if anything, it bodes well for the future, bespeaks a revitalized dialogue, suggesting as it does that Canada's new poets are willing to venture where some of us more tyrannized by canonicity (and a residual colonialism? We just assumed Eliot was British, he seemed British!) dared not go. Great to see our new wave of poets decolonize their imaginations. Elizabeth's Bachinsky's 'conversations' with literary tradition, an integral part of *Curio*, are lots of fun. Her willingness to engage in them carries forward the energy of some of Canada's most interesting poetry; George Bowering has had some pretty nifty conversations with Keats and Rilke, to cite only one example. Elizabeth Bachinsky is one of our new bright lights. Next year, I'm going to assign my college students "The Wasteland" by Eliot and "Lead the Wants" by Bachinsky. I can't wait already.

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'you have to name the silence': *Songs to Kill a Whtikow* by Neal McLeod

Tyler McCreary and Richard Milligan

Songs to Kill a Whtikow Neal McLeod. Regina: Hagios Press, 2005
ISBN: 0973556765

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In his debut book, *Songs to Kill a Whtikow*, Neal McLeod speaks back to the darkness haunting us as individuals and collectivities. He courageously accomplishes a representation of this inhabitation of specters through a shifting sardonic, disdainful wit and deceptively simple humour in a volume that combines his poetry with plates of his visual art. The poems, like the images, elicit textured imaginings of the hurt and the degradation of collective dispossession and of personal losses that comprise a colonial legacy. But finally, *Songs to Kill a Whtikow* speaks to the sheer resiliency of the spirit in struggle against these oppressions.

This oppressive darkness enters McLeod's poetry most prominently in the titular figure of the whtikow. Whtikow is a cannibal. Antisocial in the extreme, the whtikow turns inward from society and consumes other beings for his own narrowly conceived benefit. Within his poetry and art, McLeod deploys the whtikow as a powerful metaphor for the greed and individualism consuming our society, which he describes as "the attempt to swallow the light from the sky of the world." But McLeod also connects whtikow directly with acts of colonialism and racism as in the concluding (and timely) juxtaposition of "Whtikow Wandering":

>cops who drive brothers
to cold places
whtikow wanders
in the grey, concrete forest

Among the Cree, whtikow stories are common. These stories emphasize the importance of sharing for collective survival, and contribute to the creation (and maintenance) of an egalitarian culture that restrains greed in pursuit of the common good. Contrary to the binaries inveighed by missionaries upon Indigenous communities, McLeod evokes an understanding of both good and evil dwelling in all things, including Christianity. Whtikow destroys social relations and upsets the order of things, but is also an important part of ourselves and of everyday relations. McLeod's poems challenge problematically strict binaries of good and evil, particularly interrupting the notion of evil as something eternal because it silences the reality that darkness "the whtikow" is embedded within us all: "my body / has also known / the fire of whtikow".

McLeod's poetry attempts to make sense of and transform this ever-present darkness through humour. He begins "Indian Love Poem" with a reversal reminiscent of the oft quoted Shakespearean sonnet: "her skin was golden brown / like KFC chicken." The invocation of branding as sardonic critique of (post)modern consumer culture is frequently deployed in the collection as it deals with contemporary modes of colonialism. The moment "when they opened KFC on the reserve" is treated humourously in a poem centered on the image of "Rez Dogz" eating "KFC bones." In "Suburban Castration", "suburban regularity" is mocked for its mundane rigidity as "Safeway savings cards" are aligned with "sex twice a week" in a landscape where "all the houses look the same / all the stories sound the same." Though these two poems maintain a light and witty tone, the intrusions of Safeway and KFC, like the more explicitly ominous "long steel lines [that] steal the sanctity of the earth," are registered as darkness, as "shadows / in a land polluted by a new presence." And, to be sure, the speaker in one poem declares, "I didn't want any fast food culture / shake and bake shamanism."

In his introduction, McLeod self-consciously fashions himself a whtikôhkan, or clown, following the storytelling tradition of his ancestors. McLeod translates "whtikôhkan" as an imitation of whtikow, a figure who opens spaces for healing through mimicry and reversal. His work interweaves picture and sound, giving form and name to the Whtikow that dwells within us all. After first identifying and exposing our poisons, McLeod dreams and sings of the potential to heal our wounds:

>to know the light
you have to pass
through the darkness
to know the words
you have to name the silence

It is through language and story that people come to know their place. However, in the distorted colonial landscape, knowing place has a different ontology. McLeod writes of the struggle for self-respect and awareness in this environment; and he writes of the fundamental disconnect that exists between our present society and the ground on which we stand. Through making light of the darkness, while holding the threads of memory from people of this land since time immemorial, McLeod presents new angles from which to understand his and our locations within the geography of our time.

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'Luck hassles the strung kite.' *Strung* by Brecken Rose Hancock

Holly Luhnig

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Strung. Brecken Rose Hancock. Design Jessica Butler. Saskatoon: JackPine Press, 2005. ISBN: 097379951X 19pp.

Strung is one of the latest releases from Saskatoon's JackPine Press, a publisher dedicated solely to chapbook production. Hancock's verse and Butler's design make *Strung* an arresting book, inside and out.

Hancock's eleven poems address issues of memory, family, grief, and loss. The first poem, "String Art Craft" introduces the string and ropes images that recur throughout the collection. The poem's speaker tells us "I made a picture of a sailboat / by twisting red string around pegs you'd nailed to a board." Sailboats, water, and childhood memories of swimming are laced into a meditation that "really, we should expect change," and the speaker calmly notes that "[i]n only two seasons Mom's / garden has grown over so I can't find the bluebells / she planted for my birthday." Hancock manages to discuss the emotional without becoming sentimental. Her speaker is precise about the losses and pain she suffers, but discusses her grief with an intellectual clarity that turns adversity into a space for a reflection and illustration of emotional strength and personal renewal.

For example, in "Hollyhocks by Fall" the speaker says she "asked you to notice the spring bulbs // planted along the fence, the passing of things that bloom / and the brown heads of the once-white tulips // sleeping in the soil." She notes that "losing a friend can seem small when compared / with the untiring way nature repeats itself." In the wake of personal loss, the speaker retains her composure and compassion for the person she is leaving; she reminds the other, "not to worry, every change is brilliant."

"Lag," the final poem, is the most striking piece in the collection. Here, Hancock's control of language and visual representation are extremely strong. The opening lines proclaim: "Grief is a door, strange how feral. It locks / twice, tooth in tooth against the jam, and seals / this house, an awful mess where all the / music plays at once." The speaker explains the abstract concept of grief in concrete and corporeal terms; Hancock describes these visual and aural experiences with rich language that envelops the reader's ear and threatens to disorientate while promising to deliver one safely through "this madness."

Jessica Bulter's design takes its cue from Hancock's description of the string sailboat in the opening poem; the book is fastened closed by wrapping "the string to the next peg, stilted constellation / wound by my hand." Small pegs are nailed to the front cover of the book, and the reader winds and unwinds a string around the series of pegs to open and close the book. The design is not only thematically appropriate for Hancock's work, it gives the reader the sense one is unwrapping some sort of textual treasure. As with all of JackPine's books, each of the 75 limited edition copies are hand-assembled, and the quality of *Strung*'s workmanship is high. This chapbook succeeds as a visual piece of art, as well as providing an intriguing sample of work from Hancock.

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CONTRIBUTORS



Introduction

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the project's objectives, scope, and methodology. It is intended for all stakeholders involved in the project, including team members, sponsors, and external partners.

The project aims to develop a robust and scalable solution that addresses the current challenges faced by the organization. The primary goal is to enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs while maintaining high quality and customer satisfaction.

The project is organized into several key phases, each with specific deliverables and milestones. The following sections detail the project's structure and the roles of the various teams involved.

By the end of the project, we expect to have implemented a solution that significantly improves our operational performance and provides a strong foundation for future growth and innovation.

We are committed to transparency and communication throughout the project lifecycle. Regular updates and reports will be provided to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed of the project's progress and any potential risks.

Thank you for your support and collaboration. We look forward to a successful project outcome.

Best regards,
[Name]

[Title]

[Contact Information]

[Date]

[Location]

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