

louden singletree

WRITING AND VISUAL ART *from the*
UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY



ISSUE 12 / SPRING 2020

louden singletree

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY'S JOURNAL
OF CONTEMPORARY WRITERS AND ARTISTS

The *Louden Singletree* is UFV's literary and visual arts journal. Since its inception in 2009, the *Louden Singletree* has been a forum in which students, alumni, faculty, and staff of the university can share their creative work.

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ISSUE 12

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Adèle Barclay

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Singletree
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SPECIAL THANKS TO

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to our sponsors for their financial contributions
that made publishing our magazine possible.

The *Louden Singletree* graciously thanks the following sponsors
for their aid in this year's publication.



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Editor's Note

Welcome to the twelfth edition of the *Louden Singletree*. We would like to acknowledge the traditional Stó:lō territory in which UFV and the production of this issue took place.

This year we received plenty of exceptional pieces of work including poetry, plays, prose, photography, and digital art. With coffees in hand and laptops in front of us, we spent an evening together going over all the wonderful submissions. It was a pleasure to read so many heartfelt and creative entries. We are very grateful to be part of such a vibrant and talented community where work like this is produced.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to Andrea MacPherson for her instrumental guidance for this issue, to Adèle Barclay for writing the foreword, and to all of the first readers who gave time during their winter break to the project. We are also very thankful to every single person who submitted their work and to everyone who reads and supports the *Louden Singletree*.

This year we chose the cover image because it depicts the powerful idea of self-sacrifice and its outcomes. It can be a form of sacrifice to bare all in front of an audience of strangers and share your deepest desires and innermost thoughts.

On behalf of our contributors, readers, and sponsors, please enjoy this edition of the *Louden Singletree*.

Louden Singletree Editorial Board 2020

FOREWORD

Writing As Slow Magic

By Adèle Barclay

Here are your waters and your watering place.

Drink and be whole again beyond confusion.

—Robert Frost

Drink the white

Waterfall the

cricket songs

—Morgan Parker

Whenever I lead creative writing workshops I invite participants to read aloud passages of writing that move them. It's always curious to see what poems, novels, essays, prayers, eulogies, diary entries people bring to the table—in those moments I feel like I get the briefest of glimpses into the currents that move underneath surfaces, a stealthy lava hissing.

Reading over the gorgeous, mysterious, playful, somber, savvy stories, essays, and poems in this issue of the *Louden Singletree* gave me a similar feeling of witnessing expanding and secret depths as though I eavesdropped on a rich and ongoing conversation. And in a way I have.

Parachuting into UFV's writing community this winter has been a humbling and beautiful experience. I've enjoyed getting to be the special guest star on campus and having the opportunity to meet and mentor writers in this community in a valley below mountains. In lectures, workshops, and readings, I've encountered so many students with dreams and questions, your many kinds of brightness. In turn, UFV has given me the space to think and write freely and deeply, which has been a ballast as I grieve the recent death of my sister. Knowing I had a place to come to

each week to engage with keen student writers gave me a renewed sense of purpose at a strange and vulnerable time. Thank you for your words and presences.

Making art while studying is intense! It's a circus stacked on top of the wild carnival that's already loaded with coursework and the other kinds of work that make up life. Many of you are keeping up a writing practice or jotting down ideas or vowing to write more. Either way, all of you reading this introduction are doing foundational work and planting the seeds. I promise you will see the results of your efforts eventually—likely in unexpected ways. Reading, writing, publishing, attending readings, showing up to lectures on hard days, and daydreaming are all part of the artistic process. Taking the time to read your fellow students' work in this magazine is a gift you give your peers and yourself.

Writing is a slow magic that unfurls over time, a conversational tide carried out by heart and mind. Whenever I turn to writing to broach a problem, I find very few answers though the questions I happen upon often feel like solutions. I feel grateful that my time here has brought me your questions about writing and living, allowing me to glimpse and eavesdrop on even more currents and possibilities.

COVER ARTWORK / KATIE DIESPECKER

Apart

Apart is an illustration which explores self-sacrifice. Many people can relate to helping or providing for others at the expense of their own well-being. They may feel that they cannot or *should* not take much time or thought for themselves, perhaps even feeling extreme guilt at the thought.

The subject in the image is literally pulling herself apart in her attempts to give to others. The flowers that bloom and spread from her wound are beautiful for the onlooker, but detrimental to herself. The muted colours and her facial expression are calm, as if she is unburdened by the fact that she has given all that she can.

SYDNEY HUTT

Sunkist

I dreamt a man with a meat mallet
mashed foggy faces into pulp; woke up
on a mattress that had rinse-cycled
my REM cycle till I stirred with the
spin. Decided to tumble dry, tearing
from tangled sheets.

In the kitchen, the refrigerator's daylight
hid behind the orange-juice moon,
setting floating flesh and fingerprints aglow.
My doctor said iron supplements are best
absorbed on an empty stomach, but citrus
helps too, so now Sunkist is constantly on my
grocery list. It slides down my throat all
concentrated cold, but I still feel the pill
through that plasma tang; perhaps these
languid red cells are why my nightmares
are so bloody. Maybe it's the way

my dad and I used to bond over William Peter
Blatty, Stephen King, Stanley Kubrick; we'd
skip sleep to watch Jack scream at Wendy.
Dad did the best impression, could twist
his smile into a terrifying "Here's Johnny!"
between door and frame. Too good; all play
and no work made him sit on the couch
for hours, staring blankly at a
screen. Even now, I leave the lights on.

RYLEE WOODS

Growing Pain

Our house is a garden.
Quiet and cool. Welcoming and private.
A hiding place;
 a refuge from July's heat;
 a cold and closed cell in January.
 A site of vibrant, blooming joy;
 a place to shrivel and rot.

Many things grow here:
basil grows by the bush
from a shining silver mixing bowl
for our breakfasts,
an avocado seed
sprouts one thin
pale stem, always politely asking
for the afternoon sun.
Devil's backbone litters
the floor and scatters to all corners,
trying to take root in
lamine and baseboard heaters.

Love has grown here,
prickled and fermented.
Rotten blackberries dot the floor like wounds.
Love that keeps us up at night, makes us sick.
Tastes like summer but leaves our fingers stained and sticky.

And hearty, crisp love that you can taste with your ears,
that we cooked into pies and forced into jars, desperate to preserve.
Love that turns to fly-ridden mush when left unattended.

Some things that grow here become unruly.
Their devious, creeping vines reach over the fence
and choke the neighbours' crops.
I've become brutal in my weeding.
I carry garden shears everywhere.
The plants in their many too-small pots
with their curled and crisp leaves
take rigorous coaxing just to live.
There is hardly any light.

I bought three new plants the week you left;
perhaps I will learn by example.

AASHA KHOYRATTY

lessons

“the bones of my ancestors
how they pull on me offering so many directions
yet how can I answer the many folded inside my body?
this body not my own a shared place of suffering” —Jónína Kirton, “unteth-
ered”

I know more about English literature
than I do about my Indian heritage.
A mixed-race kid, whitewashed—
my paternal grandparents wore a golden-brown hue
and spoke a language of which I only
ever learnt the swear words.
I was raised with white culture
and the things I know about Hinduism
I have learnt from professors.
the bones of my ancestors

lay in far away places
of which I have never stepped foot.
They all remain anonymous—
deaths of these slaves untraceable
nameless souls forgotten from the history books.
I find I am beginning to form an obsession—
it’s like a doorbell has been ringing for hours
and when I finally answer it, the forgotten souls
barge right in using no discretion
how they pull on me offering so many directions.

I looked to my ancestors for answers
but that's what they came to me for, too.
They hold a sense of outrage
demand reconciliation—to not be lost among
memories, their actions overpower
me—a great calamity, a knifepoint robbery
of which the ransom is to resurface forgotten
history. They all crowd my brain, swarming me with questions—
it's like a press conference in a sardine-can-packed lobby,
yet how can I answer the many folded inside my body?

They won't leave me alone, their minds
are set in stone: my mind is now their home sweet home.
The longer they decide to stay
the more I learn that there are some things
textbooks can't teach—the more I appreciate my name.
I'm done with the bargaining
the voices keep me comforted now
they and I have formed a sacred covenant
but until people start remembering
this body not my own a shared place of suffering.



ISABELLA DAGNINO

Somewhere on the Way

Somewhere on the Way is a look at my local environment and how I interact with it. I wanted to focus on where I grew up and show people what I see. Each place has a story, and I think any local could share something different about these spaces. As someone of mixed Indigenous, Latinx, and settler heritage, I wanted to also reflect on my relationship with the unceded territory we all occupy as a community and bring forward to the viewer some larger questions around the defining lines of what these spaces may mean to them and others.

RYLEE WOODS

The Day I Cut Your Hair

In mid-July, time either rushes by or slows to a halt. A river or a tide. This year it did both. The month was over as quick as it began, but the lushness of it stayed.

Each day was more dense and succulent than the last; I ate them up until they stuck in my throat like honey. I woke up coughing each morning in August.

Lola came over on a Sunday, rode her bike to my front door an hour after our shift at the grocery store ended. We only lived two blocks apart then.

We found an old electric razor in the basement that hadn't seen the light in years. The plastic had yellowed and it made this awful whining sound that the whole neighbourhood could hear. I pulled from the shed a thick orange extension cord and plugged it in inside the back door. We tumbled down the wobbly wooden steps to the backyard. The grass, just starting to brown, was soft and wilting under our bare feet. This was before the heat consumed everything.

The sun had just barely disappeared behind the house but the air was warm and swirled sweetly around us. Evening light illuminated the ocean, jagged and sparkling. Behind it, Quadra stood tall and stoic. Their blues and greens crisp and glowing like a photo of Earth from space. Above us, the top branches of the birch tree in the middle of the yard were still saturated, and the breeze set the leaves dancing with the sun. Lola sat cross-legged in front of me in the grass, a towel around her shoulders, the kitchen scissors on the ground beside her.

“Are you sure about this?” I asked. I watched her brush out her long golden hair

and begin to separate it. Her hands like spring cleaning, she moved methodically through the strands with some to be kept and some to be gotten rid of. She had a certainty that I find myself still dreaming of. “Your mom is gonna kill me.”

She laughed the way only someone at the age of seventeen can. Careless. Radiant. I took the scissors and deftly hacked through the hair she handed me. I left the knot on the grass beneath the birch tree and switched on the razor. The sound drowned out everything else. The only things that existed were my hands and her hair and the ocean and the grass and the air. We didn’t speak. When I was finished, her head was soft and glowing with newness. The silence, in the wake of such intensity, was astounding.

Everything changed after that week. Her hair disappeared from the yard and into birds’ nests. Smoke moved in; we didn’t see the sky for days.

I left the coast, and my life broke in half. I let it. I forgot the way my feet felt in the grass, forgot the way my hands were once capable.

I called Lola in October, the morning light in my bedroom thin and desperate, but her voice filled the room like the sun.

“The day I cut your hair,” I told her, “I tried to forget everything else.”

I am here, you are with me.

RHEAGAN MCDOUGALL LADE

What Are You Here For?

Burnt sienna seeps beneath hidden cracks,
upon the crumbling mountains,
wafting through the polluted air.

Dulling greenery entangles itself
throughout each mud boundary.

Mzungu.

Calloused hands reach out.
Curved backs turn.
Curious eyes wander.

Picking away at the posho
plastered beneath each fingernail.
Scars speckled up their spines.

Mzungu.

Calloused hands throw sticks.
Others throw daggers.

My hands too
are calloused.

RHEAGAN MCDUGALL LADE

For My Sister, Elaine

The valleys roar for the mountains.

The moon begs for forgiveness.

The oceans rip at each glimpse of the morning light
over and over again.

But the sun will not wake you from your sleep
as it shines brightly only upon
the faces of those who yearn
for the warmth, the grace.

The moon echoes into the night.
Your hands tremble.
Vulnerability takes the shape
of each finger.

One, two, three, four, five.

Atop the highest peak,
with your fists held high.
Never will I let her fall.

For the warmth, the grace
hit your cheeks
and the sun danced upon you and
your worn-down bodies.

Delicate threads of hair wisp
through the southern breeze.
Hers wild, untameable, like Mom's.
Yours pin-straight, like Dad's.

And at once,
nothing but the disappearing horizon
came yelling her name.

Now the moon chooses
to whisper her name
from the top of that mountain
where your mind drifts off
and your hands let loose.



AMY PENG

The Cat

I chose to draw a cat with a hoodie because I used to have a cat, and I really loved her. Although my cat has left me, I always dream about her beside me, so I imagine myself as a cat. The reason she is wearing the hoodie is because that is my favourite piece of clothing. In this project, I used acrylic paint, pencil, and paillettes to create the whole piece. I also mixed the acrylic paint with water to dilute it and make the colour shading for the background. For the cat's whiskers, I used the bright paillettes to make it look more outstanding and shiny. I also designed the letters on her hoodie with "UFV" and "Abbotsford," which represents myself, because I have a hoodie with "Abbotsford" on it.

BETH CANNON

Death Gambit

ACT I

SCENE III

“Code Blue” plays over speakers.

GARY: That must be him!

A moment later, CORNELIUS enters through the doorway. He is disoriented and staggers.

CORNELIUS: *(Notices GARY)* Gary? My best friend?

GARY: *(Formal nod of his head)* Cornelius.

CORNELIUS: Don't go all formal on me. You used to call me Linus, remember?

GARY: You'll have to forgive me. It's been fifty-six years.

CORNELIUS: How have you been?

GARY: Same old. I just wander around being dead. *(Pause)* How have you been?

CORNELIUS: I haven't been too bad, either. Started up that charity you had outlined, the one for the flightless bird organization.

GARY: I know. You called it the “Gary's Flightless Friends Foundation.”

CORNELIUS: Not a bad name, huh? I have to admit your plans were impeccable. I barely had to do anything, it took off all on its own. *(Pause)* What else did I do? I went to law school—

GARY: Which you barely passed.

CORNELIUS: Started up my own practice—

GARY: Didn't it get accused of corruption?

CORNELIUS: I got married a couple times—

GARY: And divorced a few more.

CORNELIUS: (*Annoyed*) I named my firstborn after you!

GARY: And I'm sure she loved going by Garyina.

CORNELIUS: It wasn't that bad. I felt worse for her kid. She named the poor boy Cornelius! As if that's a name to be proud of. I tried to advise her against it.

GARY: That's probably why she did it. Your advice has never been particularly good.

Tense pause.

CORNELIUS: (*Strained, with determined affability*) So this is the afterlife, huh? Must get pretty boring spending eternity here. I thought there'd be more ghosts in a hospital.

GARY: Spirits are picked up and escorted to the afterlife. Souls aren't supposed to stay on Earth; they can get a little crazy. Haunt houses. Kill teens. Get obsessed with revenge. Encourage global warming. You get the picture.

CORNELIUS: (*Looks around*) Then where's the Grim Reaper or whatever? Why am I not being escorted anywhere?

GARY: It'll be a couple hours before anyone picks us up. For now we're fugitives. At least, that's what the Agent of Death told me.

CORNELIUS: Don't you mean *Angel* of Death?

GARY: They prefer to go by Agent. Less denominational.

CORNELIUS: Why did this *Agent* tell you that and then leave? It should've just waited for me.

GARY: It *used* to be because Kane was a friend. Now, it's because I'm going to give him a five-star rating on HARP once I get into Heaven.

CORNELIUS: HARP?

GARY: Stands for "Helping Agents Reach Potential." If he gets a five-star review he might get a week off to spend with his girlfriend. He's let me wait for fifty-six

years so you and I could talk.

CORNELIUS: Talk? What's there to talk about?

GARY punches CORNELIUS.

GARY: You killed me!

CORNELIUS: You can't really blame me for that. I warned you the fence was electric.

GARY: After asking me to climb it.

CORNELIUS: It was your idea to sneak over and see if the military base really did have aliens.

GARY: You asked me to go with you! You begged me. And after I said no, you swore your brother saw military cars bringing in gross alien bodies.

CORNELIUS: You know how Geoff was, we never should have listened to him. And I was barely twenty. You were the older one.

GARY: By two months!

CORNELIUS: What do you want me to do? Say sorry you died? Fine! I'm sorry you died. You weren't the only one who lost something, though. I lost my best friend.

GARY: I died, and you lost your best friend.

CORNELIUS: I've said I'm sorry. There's nothing more I can do. If there was something I could do for you I'd do it in a heartbeat, you know that.

GARY: There might be something else you can do.

CORNELIUS: What is it?

GARY: Check your pockets.

CORNELIUS: (*Confused*) There was nothing in them except this crumpled receipt.

GARY snatches the receipt.

GARY: Let me read that. (*GARY reads receipt*) You got in.

CORNELIUS: Got in to what?

GARY: When I died Kane was going to take me Downstairs—

CORNELIUS: “Downstairs?” What the hell does “Downstairs” mean?

GARY: Hell is what it means. The Agents felt “Hell” was too triggering, so they changed it to “Downstairs.” Nobody says, “Go to downstairs.” (*Continuing story*) Anyways, Kane was going to take me Downstairs, when I explained that this was all a mistake and the whole electric fence debacle had been your idea and that I had been planning on founding a charity. He wasn’t all that impressed, so I punched him in the face and ran away.

CORNELIUS: You punched Death in the face?

GARY: It wasn’t that hard. I swear, Kane had never done a bench press in his life.

CORNELIUS: But didn’t you say this Kane-agent was your friend?

GARY: I saw him a few years later and he’d really levelled up. Got this fancy earpiece, and these Ray-Ban sunglasses. He looked like a bouncer for a real high-class club in L.A. I thought I was done for when he noticed me, but instead of dragging me Downstairs, he said you’d started up my foundation.

CORNELIUS: I wouldn’t let my brother from another mother be forgotten.

GARY: Kane agreed to wait until you died on the off chance you got into Heaven. He wasn’t sure that even the charity would get you in—you lived a wild life.

CORNELIUS: I got into Heaven?

GARY: And my gamble paid off. Now we can sort things out.

CORNELIUS: Sort what out? That I was involved in your death? We’ve already done that.

GARY: More like sorting out which of us goes to Heaven.

CORNELIUS: It’s my receipt.

GARY: I thought you said you’d do anything to make up for killing me.

CORNELIUS: I never expected my best friend would ask me to spend the rest of eternity in literal Hell.

GARY: I told you, it's called "Downstairs."

CORNELIUS: I'm sure that makes the eternal torment far more bearable.

GARY: A real friend would find it endurable simply knowing they'd fixed a grievous wrong.

CORNELIUS: We were twenty and drunk. You want me to suffer for eternity because of something that happened in our twenties.

GARY: You seemed unconcerned when it was *me* damned to Downstairs.

CORNELIUS: That's because you earned it.

GARY: It was my charity that got you that receipt.

CORNELIUS: You don't know that.

GARY: Yes, I do. You got in by five cents. And the only positive thing on this receipt is my foundation.

CORNELIUS grabs the receipt.

CORNELIUS: Where does it say that?

GARY: Just above where it says "please return to Heaven Inc. for refund."

CORNELIUS: Does that mean anything?

GARY: (*Shrugs*) Just an aesthetic, I'd guess. Give me the receipt.

GARY grabs the top of the receipt.

CORNELIUS: No! It's mine.

Loud tearing sound as the receipt rips in half.

GARY: Now look at what you've done! You ripped it.

CORNELIUS: Does it still count? What if it doesn't work anymore? I'll go to Hell. I can't go to Hell. I take heart medication.

GARY: I've told you, it's called "Downstairs." Look, I'll have my friend tape it up for me. Everything will be fine.

CORNELIUS: No. *I'll* have your friend tape it up, because it's my receipt.

GARY: He's my friend.

CORNELIUS: This isn't getting us anywhere. Why don't we settle this the old-fashioned way?

GARY: Where you ask me to go first and I end up electrocuted.

CORNELIUS: I said I was sorry! Do you want me to keep repeating that? This whole relationship is a broken record.

GARY: That's because you broke it and aren't willing to repair it.

CORNELIUS: I am willing to repair it. Sending me down under is a little extreme.

GARY: Downstairs. And no, doing this my way isn't extreme, it's reasonable.

CORNELIUS: Your way, where I end up going down the stairs without even a trial?

GARY: You want a trial? Fine. (*Punches out his fist. CORNELIUS flinches and cowers*) Rock. Paper. Scissors.

CORNELIUS: You want both our immortal souls to rest on the outcome of a game of chance? Why not just flip a coin?

GARY: Firstly, do you have a coin? No. I thought so, because there are no coins in the afterlife. And b) there is no way I'm leaving this to chance. Rock, paper, scissors is an art. You must evaluate your opponent and judge what their choice will be. There's no chance in that. Just man and science.

CORNELIUS: Fine. I forgot how horny you were for rock, paper, scissors.

GARY: Just play the damn game.

They play rock, paper, scissors. It ends as a tie.

GARY: Again.

They play rock, paper, scissors. It ends as a tie.

GARY: Again.

They play rock, paper, scissors, with the same outcome.

GARY: Again

They play rock, paper, scissors, with the same outcome

Continue playing rock, paper, scissors while the lights go dim.

SEQUEL ADAMSON

My Mom Says Tattoos Will Ruin Me, But I Want Them Anyway.

I hope there is more ink on my body than skin.
I want the black lines to spill across my corpse.
I want to be buried looking like a goddamn colouring book,
with scribbles all down the pages of my thighs,
covering the scars on my elbows,
concealing what I hate.
There are no limits to what my skin can hold.

I will create false symmetry for my hide;
weightless, but invisible it is not.
I will ruin my worth,
so my skin depreciates.
So that you will no longer want to touch me,
cast away my body like an old napkin
with the phone number of an ex written on it.
Filthy,
used,
crumpled.

My body was already ruined well before the art.
This is all I have left to make.

RHEAGAN MCDUGALL LADE

Empty Hope

Each of the four coloured sobriety coins
wrestle one another,
working their way
through the swirling haze
upon my broken-down palm.

Each worn edge
calls me back to another day,
another year.

Black

The rounding bump was beginning to weigh
down my aching back.
A glimpse in the mirror
was all it took—
I knew it was time to tell him.
It wasn't the definition of the newfound growth
upon my stomach—
it was the dark circles beneath my eyes,
the soreness from dry heaving
throughout the dark hours,
the lonely sobs from dusk to dawn.
In the mirror, a quick chug
God, please help me to accept the things
I cannot change.
A phone call.
I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier.

Nothing.
Are you there?
Silence.

Green
Her eyes twinkled in the eight o'clock light.
Her energy,
a burning firecracker.
Mine,
dwindling by the second.
A silent sip.
Her nails were painted the same colour
as the forest floor,
the same colour as mine.
Her perfect ringlets took charge,
bouncing through the crisp air.
Her grass-stained sneakers followed.
You can't catch me!
A distant silhouette.

Bronze
Her grasp loosened
while my grasp tightened
as they pulled her.
I stumbled across the sheet of grass.
They pulled her;
I had no control.
They showed her the way
to the medallion car.
A certain haze
shifted over the official-looking vehicle.
It drove away

as I sunk onto the floor
I'll try to catch you.

Red

The unfamiliar echo of emptiness settled
into what used to be our shared bedroom.
The shadow of her twin-sized bed
imprinted on the wall to my left,
newly vacant.
Courage, courage, courage.
There are things in my reach
I have control of—
A sunset sailing over the painted ocean
or a floating cranberry field.
An empty red wagon.

I set down each coin
and line them up,
darkest to lightest.
Then each shot—
one for the green moments,
one for the black nights,
one for the crimson-coloured ocean,
and one for the bronze reminders.
All for my little girl
until I left her behind
in exchange for those faded nights.
Wisdom dissipates into the musty air.
What is the difference?
I chug them back.
I'm sorry.

AASHA KHOYRATTY

if adultery were a criminal offence

a jury of twelve would find me guilty, sentence
me to two counts of life—one for each i destroyed
back to back in a minimum-security penitentiary

never would i admit to it, i'd refuse
to take the plea, my lovers
would have to pick me
out of a line and only one
of them would remember my name
and i would often wonder if the only reason
he could even identify me
was because i wore my guilt on my face

my husband would come to visit me
on christmas and easter but never
my birthday and i'd know it was
because he wanted to hurt me
and i'd know i deserved
it but a part of me would wonder
if i mean so little to him now that he forgets
the day i came into this world
and i'd wonder if he looks forward
to the day i leave it

and maybe by some awful stroke of luck
i'd get parole in my mid-seventies
and be able to go home to nothing
and no one
and finally realize the consequences
of my actions and finally realize
the hurt he must have felt
being alone in a world full of people

or maybe
i'd hang myself
in my prison cell
with a ripped and braided
off-white bedsheet
and maybe the guards
would find me before it was too late
or maybe
i'd finally get what i believed i deserved



LUKE PARDY

Vision

These images came to me in a dream. Literally.

The images I saw were of a man alone in a terrain of sand. His body was covered in the sand, almost as if he was one with the landscape. This was an image I could not shake from my mind and I had to set out to create it.

As I worked toward the creation of the photograph, the image I saw had me thinking about the art historical trope of Venus. Venus is a trope that has been used to link women's bodies and sexuality to nature. I have always had problems with the trope of the Venus for many reasons, one of them its reliance on an assumed heterosexual worldview.

In this image, I aimed to engage with the art historical trope of Venus, but by queering the usual ways we approach classical tropes.

To create this photograph I chose to use a 4x5 film camera, because not only does it have a link to the origins of photography, but it also fosters a more intimate process of creation between artist and subject. This intimacy is reflected in the resulting image, as it seems the last two existing humans are the subject and the viewer.

The creation of this image taught me that sometimes when you follow a mysterious dream you can learn more about yourself, the art form you love, and how you see the world.

AASHA KHOYRATTY

The Cycle

the product of a teen mom and a registered
sex offender, your mother thought
about termination but couldn't go through with it
a crying baby with no one to console
you, your mother would leave you with her mother
for a couple of hours that always turned
into a couple of days
you were raised on a balanced diet of neglect and abuse
you were taught not to take up space

eventually your grandmother got custody
and you made up for years of near-starvation
by stuffing your face with anything
that might fill the empty space inside of you
no one stopped you, just let you eat
a chubby inconsolable child
longing for someone to care
by age twelve you sought attention
from anyone and anywhere you could get it

men ten years older than you somehow gained
your trust and respect—a single needle of smack
from a pedophile proclaiming love
turned into a lifelong addiction
to anything that would take the edge off
next thing you know you're eighteen
and pregnant, taking up more space than ever
you know you don't want a child (*you are still a child*)
but you don't want an abortion either

DANAYE REINHARDT

Interrogation

The basement brings me in for questioning,
October morning. Wet leaves stick to my shoes.
The four shrinking walls still threaten my gaze.
You have the right to remain silent, the walls assure,
but they ooze out everything I've ever confided to them.

At seven years old, I watched the freezer hum.
Spiders crawled into corners, shelves arched their backs under paint cans,
sacredness bled from books.
I sang softly to the walls, sealed moments into the grout.
The water pipes shrieked above my head,
deadening the shouts upstairs.

Anything you say can and will be used against you, the spiders chant.
It is cold down here, a six-feet-under chill
that wraps its fingers around my throat,
choking my allegations, my breath.

My mother screamed accusations from upstairs, a guilty serenade
colliding with Dad. I sat on the cracked steps
that led up to divorced kitchen chairs, off-white walls hiding war.
I counted bent paint cans, black widows,
as machine-gun words shot at Dad.

Time doesn't exist for me here, doesn't heal me—
even now I smell musty boxes, overdue shame,
see his statue face taking the blame.

The room cracks me open, seals me shut—
how can a place be both damnation and deliverance?
October morning, the shelves have collapsed
under the weight of canned peaches, memories.

I carried the weight of battle armour; I wasn't even a soldier.
Sweat crawled up my shirt, my mother's muffled shouts
strangled the basement air;
the spiders ran.

How do you know the accused? the light bulb demands, flickering,
hanging from the beams.

I am static, gulping the same silence Dad consumed.
At seven, my solace appeared in upturned glass jars,
damp air, Christmas tree shoved in the corner,
broken appliances—her voice shook every cardboard box, every thought.

I've been gone too long and not long enough,
still bumping my head against the light bulb,
still scattering spiders with my moves.
Time needs to push forward, but
I'm still cutting her false charges out of family photos.

I run my hand against the concrete wall, stumble
to the stairs. History has ceased; there's nothing more for me here.
Even as I climb the steps, I still hear
the light bulb buzzing, crackling, hissing—
it will never fade, never halt—
How do you know the accused?

BETH CANNON

Disorder

*Isn't it amazing how
she can write the
most beautiful
phrases
but always says the strangest things?*
my mother asks, giving voice to my frustration.
Pointy trees wasn't what I'd meant.

Later I would make a list:
dignified, ancient, towering
majestic, conifer, pine, fir—
but just then,
my mind had taken all those
words hostage locking them
up behind a wall of fog
I couldn't penetrate. Leaving my mouth to
slide and stutter over the few words
I could scavenge, always saying
them wrong.

At twelve, I hated speaking.
Each sentence came out
rambling, disorganized,
with no delete option.
But the words to explain this
were hidden too. Instead, I

swallowed the shame of
knowing here was another
failure I couldn't control,
displayed for inspection.
Laughed with my parents,
and learned there's a
universe you can hide in a
joke.

Years later I learned about
how the brain can be miswired—
sensory processing
dysfunction—
all those missing
words had been
a symptom for my
diagnosis.

BETH CANNON

Fairy Tales

My mother read me stories
about the princess who
ate temptation's apple and
the prince who saved her.

I thought there might be a prince
out there for me if I just
protected myself from the apple,
 its glistening red skin
 juice that would spill
 down my chin stick to
 my fingers
 if I just took a bite.

I built my own walls
made a tower too
high to climb froze
my hunger
spat up seeds to plant bramble at its base
and waited for the one who would make me a queen.

But princes don't come when
there's no monster to slay, when the
princess is her own dragon.
I became all claws and
teeth—hungry

for anything beyond
grey stone and
bramble.

I've learned to scale
 my own walls,
 juice sticky on my
 fingers,
twisted thorns into a
flower crown and
called myself a queen.

Biographies

Sequel Adamson is in her second year at UFV. Sequel only writes when angry. She has a very short temper so she writes often. Her pastimes include avoiding large bugs and eating 99¢ ramen (but totally not because she's broke). Sequel has no tattoos...yet.

Beth Cannon is a student at UFV.

Isabella Dagnino is a fourth-year student at UFV pursuing a Bachelor in Fine Arts with a minor in Art History. She is of mixed Latinx, Indigenous, and settler heritage; much of her work consists of looking inwards and examining her background and how she as an artist and person interacts with community and the space around her. In the past her work has been featured in *The Cascade* and *The Zine*. Most recently she was one of the emerging artists included in The Reach Gallery Museum's Art on Demand 5.3 exhibition.

Katie Diespecker is an artist and UFV Alumni who currently lives in Halifax, NS. She likes experimenting with a variety of different materials and subjects, from life drawing to abstract painting. Themes in her work include nature, media, and internal human conditions and conflicts. Her work has been displayed at the Ranger Station Art Gallery in Harrison Hot Springs and the CityScape Community Art Space in Vancouver. She has also done design and illustration for UFV's Academic Success Centre.

Sydney Hutt is a fourth-year English major, writer, and mom to six-year-old twin girls. She loves the Victorian era, horror movies, big cups of tea, and long runs in the rain. You can find more of her writing featured on websites such as *A Practical Wedding*, *Thought Catalog*, *Motherly*, and in *Motherly's* new book *This Is Motherhood*, as well as on her personal blog: MySoulAjar.com.

Aasha Khoyratty is currently completing her second year of the BA program at UFV. She plans to graduate with a major in English, Creative Writing concentration, and a minor in Philosophy. After graduation, Aasha hopes to complete UFV's Bachelor of Education program so that she can make a living teaching high school English while continuing to pursue writing. This is Aasha's second year being featured in the *Louden Singletree*, an accomplishment she is very proud of and grateful for. In her free time, Aasha can be found reading, writing, binge watching Netflix, taking her dog for walks, and spending time with her family and friends.

Rheagan McDougall Lade is a twenty-year-old first-year student who is passionate about creating. She dabbles in mediums such as photography, painting, graphic design, and writing. She works to pursue her goal of working in the arts by pushing herself to create new and thought provoking works as much as possible.

Luke Pardy is a student at UFV.

Amy Peng is an international student at UFV, and currently taking up a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts. As an art student, she has trained to paint since she was ten years old. Due to her father being a portrait painter, her dream is to become a great artist like her father.

Danaye Reinhardt is a second-year UFV student. She writes short stories, poetry, and unfinished novels with varying levels of success. Danaye enjoys the feeling of insignificance under a dome of stars, the feeling of fulfillment in the last words of a story, and the feeling of clarity in knowing the future. She has yet to discover that third feeling.

Rylee Woods is in her second year at UFV. She studies English and biology, and aspires to become a midwife in the very distant future. In the meantime she reads, writes poetry, plants trees, laughs lots, and stays optimistic.

The *Louden Singletree* is UFV's literary and visual arts journal. Since its inception in 2009, the *Louden Singletree* has been a forum in which students, alumni, faculty, and staff of the university can share their creative work.

Contributors

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Sydney Hutt

Rylee Woods

Aasha Khoyratty

Isabella Dagnino

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