

louden singletree

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



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louden singletree

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louden singletree

ISSUE 5

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2012-2013 our most prominent years on campus.

Editors' Note

Welcome to the fifth issue of the *Louden Singletree*. Reaching five years has been an exciting milestone for our publication. We received more submissions than ever before, and from a broader scope of genres, including theatrical excerpts, creative non-fiction, and visual art. The shortlist was determined through a blind-reading process in which our volunteer readers voted on literature and visual art, and were asked to explain their reasoning based on three pillars: originality, creativity, and cohesion. From there, the editorial board reviewed the pieces to decide which would be selected for publication.

One of our goals this year was to increase the magazine's presence and availability in the communities surrounding UFV. As a result, the *Louden Singletree* will now be distributed to local schools, libraries, and businesses; this widens the range of exposure for UFV's talented creative community.

We would like to express our gratitude to Andrea MacPherson for her guidance as our faculty advisor—she has been the driving force behind the magazine's continued success over the past five years. We are also thankful to Lesley Poh and Linda Dahl for their support. It would have been impossible to pull together the publication without all the people who were involved in it.

Without further ado, enjoy the magazine!

Louden Singletree Editorial Board 2013

Five-Year Commemoration

Traditionally, a five-year anniversary is celebrated with gifts of wood. It seems appropriate, then, to offer up our newest issue of the *Louden Singletree* for this milestone.

In 2008, three students took on the onerous task of starting up a literary magazine for UFV. The idea had been in the works for some time before, but as with all great literary ventures, it seemed like more of a pipedream than an actual possibility. This editorial board and first group of readers were all volunteers, and after much hard work, long hours, and more than a few challenges, the *Louden Singletree* was published in 2009. Insert a great *hurrah!* here.

The yearly editorial board, which currently includes seven students, is now a directed study, offering practical publishing experience for the students involved. The editors have created a strong presence, participating in events including Welcome Back Day, the Mission Writers and Readers Festival, visiting classrooms to encourage student involvement, and hosting the yearly launch of the magazine. Now, in 2013, we are proud to see the emergence of the fifth and most ambitious issue of the *Louden Singletree* to date.

The *Louden Singletree* has become a yearly publication to look forward to, a showcase of the best literature and visual art that UFV has to offer. And we look forward to the next five years!

Andrea MacPherson

FACULTY ADVISOR

Foreword

Give up being a writer. Be an observer. Be a witness. Most mistakes by writers, young and old, may arise from trying too hard to be a writer, to be clever, to display one's facility with language or ideas. Forget it.

Powerful writing arises naturally from clear observation and simple language. Witness the world as an infant, full of curiosity, and write down what you see and hear. Show the world to itself. Be a mirror. The less you add the better. Paint the picture with a few bold strokes, not with extravagance.

In physics we notice that force, mass, and acceleration appear related in replicable patterns. Write like that. Observe people and circumstances until patterns become clear, then say so. If you find yourself confused, say so. Your honesty is more likely to set your reader's heart and mind aflame than any attempt to wrestle logic from the world's insanity. Expose the contradiction you witness; reveal the dilemma, conflict, and irony of the world without forcing an answer. Open the discourse—don't close it.

One gains little by being clever. Bury cleverness in the grave with fame and awards. These mean nothing substantial. Do your research, but don't strain to be an expert. The world doesn't need more experts. It needs more honest witnesses.

Have the courage to embarrass yourself. Don't say what is expected of you. Say what you see. Watch your own mind. Notice how delight and despair arise and fall as waves. Notice how, without your effort, sordid and noble thoughts claim you. Write that. If you can make yourself cry, if you can make yourself laugh, tell that story. The most personal becomes the most universal.

Don't be intimidated by the consequences of having a conscience. Expose your soft heart or outrage. You don't need to describe extraordinary suffering. Ordinary suffering will do. We don't need superheroes; we need ordinary heroes. We need people who face life with courage and integrity. Don't gush over your heroes or curse your villains. Show their humanity. Make your compassion unconditional. Write so a child can understand, so the carpenter nailing sheeting to the rafters in the rain can understand.

Forget about being a writer. Forget the intellect. It won't save us. That girl, walking up the sidewalk, clutching her coat at the crossing; that's what will save us.

Rex Weyler

WRITER IN RESIDENCE 2013

And so what if I sit for hours? Maybe it does not come bursting
out of me like Old Faithful, always on time for that 91-minute deadline.
Maybe it lazily arrives
like a leaky faucet: slow and painful. Drip—

by drip

by drip

by drip

You make it sound like words should just pour out of my pen, flowing
over and
over and
over. Is it a crime if all my pen can muster is a slow and infrequent...

drip?

You say I should not have to rewrite again
and again

and again,

but the words are like pieces of a puzzle
I've lost the box for. I don't know what I'm building
and I'm not sure the pieces even fit—
there are so many places the pieces can fit—
but I think that is what makes this puzzle so beautiful.
Who knows if I will ever finish? Is it even about the end
result?

You say I should not write

like somebody else.

I try to birth my writing from inside my body,
play host to a mess of a child, black and white,
name it Times New Roman,
but it's never truly mine.
It's adopted.

Who even knows the real parent at this point?

It could be Shakespeare

or Woolf

or Wilde

or even someone I had a brief affair with and forgot.
Perhaps the only person I've never had my way with
is this elusive mistress they call

“Original Thought.”

And yes, I'll admit, I'm guilty of whoring
my words to others like a greedy, soulless pimp.
I give out text like free samples at Costco,
making sure everyone gets a quick taste—

Did you like it?

What did you think?

Do you want more?

Perhaps you see this as weakness: that I need to be read
to fulfill my thirst, my unquenchable ego. And maybe
you are correct. Maybe I'm not giving out words like soup
to the poor. Maybe I stand to gain. But what good comes
from bottling up my words like jam for the winter
if the winter never comes?

I know I'm being hard on you, Bukowski. But I'm afraid.
What if I'm not one of the chosen ones? What if

I'm not a writer.

You tell me that there is no other way. That if it burns,
it burns

and that there is no other way.

But when I doubt every word as it comes off my fingers
and onto the page, when I look to the future and see nothing
but hard times and an empty life, when I feel like everything I read
burns brighter than anything I've ever written or ever could write,
I don't want to do it.

But I have to do it.

There is no other way.

GREGORY ELIASON

Little Wolf Snaggletooth

Once upon a time there lived a dear little wolf. Of all the wolves that lived in the forest, he was by far kindest and gentlest. Everyone who met him thought him quite an odd wolf, as he never snarled or snapped at so much as a fly. The only thing that made him seem scary was his left fang, which was giant and misshapen. It was because of this fang that he was given the name Little Wolf Snaggletooth.

One day his father came to him with a task. This was quite exciting for Little Wolf as he was never entrusted with anything important. All the other wolves thought he was too weak-hearted to be of much use.

“Little Wolf Snaggletooth, your grandfather is feeling quite ill. He can’t come on the hunt with us tonight,” his father said gruffly.

“Do you want me to hunt with you instead, Father?” Little Wolf asked.

“No, Little Wolf, you are not strong enough yet. I want you to take this basket of juicy bones to your grandfather’s cave on the other side of the forest.”

“Okay Father. I will bring them to him as fast as I can.”

“And remember, don’t go near the path that the humans take. Humans are feeble, but cunning. If you see any, don’t listen to what they have to say. Show them no mercy, Little Wolf. You are a wolf and wolves kill humans.”

“I promise I will stay off the path, Father.”

Little Wolf Snaggletooth picked up the basket of juicy bones in his mouth and set off through the deep woods to his grandfather’s cave. He ran steadily through the woods, darting between the trees. After a few minutes of this, all the fallen branches and rocks on the ground started to hurt his paws. He knew the path was nearby and decided to walk along it instead as he loved the feel of the smooth, packed dirt beneath his feet.

No sooner had Little Wolf found the pathway than he saw an old woman sitting on a stump next to the trail. She wore a simple grey dress and was clutching a small wooden cane. When she saw him, she slowly stood to greet him. As she did, the light from between the trees caught her dark eyes for a moment and they seemed to flicker, like a candle just before it is snuffed out.

“Why *hello*, Little Wolf Snaggletooth!” she said excitedly.

“Hello to you too, old woman,” Little Wolf replied.

“Where *are* you headed so quickly that you need to take the path?” she questioned eagerly.

“To Grandfather’s cave,” he replied.

“And what is that in your mouth, Little Wolf?” she quickly added.

He paused for a moment and looked over the old woman again. She showed definite signs of aging—her hands looked quite wrinkly and she trembled slightly as she clutched her cane. However, her face seemed deceptively youthful. Her lip curled slightly and her wide eyes seemed to pierce right through him. But being the kindest wolf in the forest, he politely answered her, while keeping his distance.

“Some juicy bones. My grandfather is not feeling well today.”

“And where *exactly* is this cave your grandfather is in?”

“It’s on the other side of the woods, near the winding stream. You might know it as the mossy hill,” Little Wolf Snaggletooth replied.

The old woman nodded and smiled as she thought to herself: *That young wolf will make a simply gorgeous new coat for my granddaughter. This old, sick wolf must be quite large, too, and he will make an even better coat for me! If I’m cunning enough, I can skin them both.*

Suddenly, the old woman started to cough and sputter as she released her cane and fell to the ground. Little Wolf let out a small yelp and rushed over to see what was wrong.

“Oh, Little Wolf Snaggletooth,” the old woman moaned, slowly climbing back to her feet, “I am feeling *quite* ill, myself. My granddaughter was supposed to bring me medicine, but she is so easily side-tracked and I’m afraid she must have forgotten! So I came out to the woods myself searching for some special mushrooms, but I’m feeling too frail to search anymore. Will you please help me?”

Little Wolf looked at the helpless old woman and couldn’t help but feel sorry for her. He decided his Grandfather was tough enough to wait a little longer for his bones. After hearing a detailed description of some very strange-sounding mushrooms, Little Wolf set off to find them.

He searched and searched and searched all over the woods. There were many small brown mushrooms and even some red and white ones, but there were no bright purple or soft, speckled blue ones as the old woman had described to him. Still, Little Wolf kept trying, not wanting to let the poor, sick old woman down.

Once Little Wolf had left her, the old woman snuck over to a nearby hollow tree and placed her cane inside, taking out her hidden bow, quiver and bag of knives. Then

without so much as a limp, she swiftly ran down the path to the winding stream where Grandfather's cave was. When she arrived, she drew her bow and loaded an arrow. "Hello," she grunted, lowering her voice. "Is anyone in there?"

"Who is it?" called back a frail-sounding Grandfather Wolf.

"It's me: Little Wolf Snaggletooth. I've brought some juicy bones to help you feel better."

"Please, come inside. I'm too tired to get up."

The old woman crept inside and saw the wolf lying on the floor of the cave, half asleep. She aimed her bow and shot him once in the head. Then, she took out the knives from her bag and started to skin him.

Meanwhile, Little Wolf was getting tired of running around searching for mushrooms. It started to get dark outside and it became harder to see. So, he decided to return to the path to find the old woman and tell her the bad news. However, when he got back to the stump, she was no longer there. He was confused, but remembering his original task, he continued his journey to Grandfather's cave. When he reached the cave entrance, Little Wolf Snaggletooth howled out a greeting as usual. However, there was no response.

"That is strange," Little Wolf said to himself. "Perhaps Grandfather is feeling worse than before."

He entered the cave and put down the basket of bones. Grandfather was lying on the floor, apparently asleep. He looked sickly, thin, and oddly misshapen, like a pile of dirty brown rags. There was also a thick, foul smell that filled the cave.

As Little Wolf got closer, he saw the end of a hunting bow poking out from under his Grandfather's fur.

"Oh, Grandfather, what a strange bow you have!"

"The better to *shoot* you with!" The old woman jumped out from under the freshly skinned wolf and aimed her bow right at Little Wolf Snaggletooth. She was dripping wet from the blood and all her clothes were stained a dark, crimson red. Her eyes seemed to burst out of her face and she was visibly panting, taking in huge, gasping breaths.

"Oh, what *nice* fur you have, Little Wolf," she said, slowly drawing her bow.

Just as she was about to fire an arrow, Little Wolf's father came charging in. He had come looking for his son when Little Wolf had not returned from Grandfather's cave that afternoon. With a menacing snarl and snap, he leapt straight at the old woman who, with a sinister look in her bulging, black eyes and a grin on her wrinkled, old face,

loosed an arrow which landed right between his eyes.

“*Hah!*” the old woman cackled, “I wanted your pelt, little one, but this other wolf is more than big enough to make a second coat for my granddaughter—and maybe some slippers as well! It will go very nicely with the red hood I shall make her out of these old clothes I’m wearing,” the woman said, starting to lower her bow.

Little Wolf Snaggletooth looked up at the woman and, for the first time, didn’t want to be a kind, gentle wolf anymore. The smell of his grandfather’s mangled corpse and the sight of his father, still twitching in agony, caused something to ignite within him. Mustering up all his sorrow and anger, he let out his best snarl.

However, it sounded more like a whimpering cry, full of pain and defeat. The old woman just stood there, blood slowly dripping off her stained dress, and laughed maniacally.

“Run along now, foolish wolf! You can never hurt me, even if you want to. You are too weak to kill a living thing.”

Knowing what she said was true, Little Wolf Snaggletooth ran all the way through the woods and back to his father’s cave. But he was never the same again.

From that day on, Little Wolf Snaggletooth cut himself off from the pack. He lived alone in his father’s cave and learned to fend for himself. Fuelled by pure rage and anguish, he hunted every single day, vowing never to return to the cave without a fresh kill in his mouth. At first it felt horrible to bite into the flesh of another living thing, but all he had to do was close his eyes and return to his grandfather’s cave with the old woman standing in front of him, drenched in the blood of his family. The rest was easy.

Soon Little Wolf was not so small anymore. As the months passed and he grew bigger, word of his new ferocity spread. Tales spread of a large, ruthless wolf, roaming the woods to kill. Each story was different than the next, apart from one factor: there was always mention of a large, misshapen fang, the sight of which was most gruesome and horrible. Every little boy and girl across the land knew to stick to the path and never go out at night. A name was given to him, the only name fitting for such a beast: the Wolf.

Now imagine the Wolf’s surprise when several years later he stumbled upon a small girl skipping through the forest with a basket, dressed in a red coat and hood. It didn’t take long for a familiar plan to formulate in his cold and calculating mind. He thought to himself: *Never again will you stray from the path and go into the woods...*

PANKAJ SHARMA

Speakeasy

Concrete seems an eternity away,
floating light-headed, crawl;
warm trickle of loss painting my collar—

It was a new city, silver screen adaptation:
I only wanted to test the nightlife,
glimpse the edges falter,
and catch whatever light fell through.

Few drinks to wake the bard,
new audience, not tired of my old tricks
or the way my inflection slips and consonants
suddenly drop as the moonshine tells the story.

Mayhem: a few ruffled feathers,
bigger birds grown territorial.
That new lark singing a little too loudly
so they gathered a few cats to find the end of his tune.

Only felt the first claw, luckily it dulled the connection;
pouring and purring of hailstones without end
until finally the song was muffled by swelling and blood.
They took only a few teeth; dignity maybe

No audience participation, but neither did they step in,
too wary of upsetting the balance of the nest.

Only took a day to dry off and for me to gather kindle,
set that nest aflame, orange light at midnight.

Didn't hear a lullaby for the city that's always awake.

CHRISSY COURTNEY

All that is left is his TV set



JESSIE SOMERS
Pelecanus



JAMES LINDE

Times like this

the words stay wound up tight in my head.
I find myself hunched over old guitar strings
and unravel their language instead.
Under the soft dark of ending days
thought is worth so much.
On the reels of instant replays
I trace the places God has touched.

JAMES LINDE

And How Shall I Presume?

I glanced back to see an early moon over my shoulder,
just there, alone above the berry farms,
white and quiet in the quickening dusk,
not saying a word, but looking like
there might be words between us
after all this time
(I dared to think of a smile!)
and the wind went rushing by.

Questions clumped in my throat.
For instance, I wanted to ask if she knew
where that evening wind flows—
where are its headwaters and tributaries,
waterfalls and cataracts;
can its deep pools be found,
rock-rimmed and crowded
by ferns and twisted willows,
and can they be fished—
if you think of such things,
or even like poetry.

I don't know
after all this time,
and I will say—
what will I say?
The wind is rushing by.

DANIELLE CHRISTIAN

Boat off the Caye



SHANNON McCONNELL

Fighting Mondays

a novel excerpt

I only spent about half an hour at Dad's bedside. There was only so much time I could spend deconstructing his face in my head. He slept the entire time and I had left Ben with Mom, which still seemed like an irresponsible choice.

When I got back to the house, Ben was sitting cross-legged on the couch in the living room eating a sandwich.

"Hey, what's up?" I asked as I tossed my keys down on the coffee table and sat down next to him.

"Not much. Just enjoying a tasty sandwich."

I looked down at the sandwich in his hands; there were definitely two pieces of bread, but I wasn't seeing anything inside.

"Is it grilled cheese?"

He looked down at it, like cheese would have been a good idea.

"Just some butter, man. I'm not like a chef or anything. I found the butter first and then when I was looking for a spoon, I found the bread and was like, why not, ya know?"

I shook my head at his logic. It was good to be conversing with someone who could actually talk, and was of a decent mental state. I wasn't too sure about the latter but given my current limited acquaintances, he was looking pretty well put-together.

"How's my mom? Did she get up or anything?"

"Yeah dude, she was looking for you. But I told her you were taking care of your old man, so I got her some ice water and told her about my project. I'm almost done sorting, you know."

"Really?" I was glad to hear that she had gotten up and had actually spent some time with Ben. It really should have been me who was here for when she got out of bed, and to make sure that she was at least functioning a little. But Ben was here, so that was better than nothing, I thought.

"Really. I have like five big buckets left and then I'll be ready."

"No, not your project. My mom."

"Oh, yeah, it's kind of like my grandpa used to say: that it didn't matter what colour someone dyed his hair, because as soon as you saw his eyebrows you knew he was

trying to hide something from the world.”

“Your grandpa had some interesting sayings.”

Ben bit a chunk off his sandwich and nodded.

“Totally. He was a barber before he retired.”

“Is this the grandpa that used to own your place?”

“Yeah, he also told me never to ask a woman if she wanted her moustache trimmed. Supposedly they don’t like you to mention it, even if they do have a lady-stache.”

“He sounds like a fascinating man,” I told him sarcastically as I leaned back into the couch, wondering when this conversation had gotten so derailed.

“You know it, dude. But yeah, your mom seems all right. Quiet, and looking like she walked through a car wash, but calm, which is good, right?”

“Yeah, that’s a good sign.” I rubbed my hand on my forehead, relieved that Mom was calmer now, back on her medication.

“So, what’s the deal with your Dad?” Ben asked, biting the last few crusty pieces of his sandwich. I looked over at the entry to the living room, in case Mom had been wandering around. I didn’t want her to overhear.

“He’s not good. In fact he’s really not good,” I exhaled deeply and folded my hands in front of me, my left thumb nervously rubbing my right thumb knuckle.

I lowered my voice. “They don’t think he’s going to get better, so I have to make the decision of what comes next. I’m probably going to have put him into long-term care.”

“Oh man, that sucks. It’s like he’s down to his last few buckets too, but like, you with life and stuff. Not just sorting.”

Ben was actually right. The more I thought about it, the more he was completely dead on. Dad was down to his last few buckets, and there was nothing I could really do but to make sure that he was in a place where they could help him sort his buckets without them being drained or knocked over in the night. Or maybe this was the brick wall I had to crash into to tell me that I should stay in Vancouver and help him sort them.

I got up and walked over to one of the bookshelves along the wall. There were knick-knacks and pictures Mom had collected over the years. I picked up the frame with my high school graduation picture in it and held it up so Ben could see.

“Oh dude, look at all that hair, it’s like they hadn’t invented scissors yet.”

He got up and grabbed the picture from my hand, and stared at it. He finally held it up next to my face.

“Why do you look so sad in this?”

I grabbed it from him and looked at myself. My blue eyes seemed to burn on the page in contrast to my blue cap and gown. I hadn't wanted to take the picture—it was a few weeks after the whole thing with Kevin—and I didn't even want to graduate, let alone have the moment documented forever.

“It's complicated. Some stuff happened and it was a big mess.”

“Bigger mess than you're in right now?” he asked, taking the picture back from my hands.

“Sort of. No, it was just different.”

I didn't want to talk about it right now, and not with Ben. We hadn't been friends for very long and I didn't want to smash the image of what kind of guy he thought I was. Even though I wasn't the guy I was back then, I didn't want anyone to get a glimpse of my former self.

Ben pulled out a small stack of dusty photos from behind a picture frame, those that weren't good enough to make the cut to be on display. The thick smell of dust hung in the air as he flipped through the photos and pulled one out of the pile.

“Was it because of this guy?”

It was a picture of Kevin and me, when we were about fourteen. When the photo was taken, Kevin was about six inches taller than I was and had his arm around my neck, holding me in a headlock as we made our best wrestler faces. We both looked different back then, but mostly there wasn't the same anger and chaos in my eyes that was so obvious in my graduation photo.

“Yes, it was sort of because of that guy.”

“He's the one in the coffee shop, right?” he asked. Ben looked back down at the photo and shook his head. “He had a seriously bad mullet.”

I grabbed the small stack of photos from his hands and put them back on the shelf. There were bigger things to deal with than trying to deconstruct my past one horrible photo at a time. I looked down at my watch. It was starting to get late, and I thought since I was staying with Mom now I should take Ben home. I just wanted to be alone for a while.

“Enough about mullets. I'm going to take you home in a few. I just need to check on Mom first.”

Ben shrugged and returned to the bookshelf to examine dust-covered photos and newspaper clippings that seemed to have been acquired over the years.

I went upstairs and stood in the hall outside my parents' room. The door was closed and I didn't know if I should knock and see if Mom was up. It was important for her

to get rest and to balance herself a bit after the emotional trauma she had endured in the last few days. She wouldn't be ready to hear about Dad, and I wasn't ready to have that conversation with her. I didn't know how much time he really had, but for now, it could wait. Keeping Mom calm and getting her back to a sort of balanced state was important. If only Dad had kept a step-by-step instruction book on how to keep Mom from a full-blown Chernobyl-sized meltdown, maybe I'd feel like I had a decent chance of helping her.

I put my hand on the doorknob but hesitated to open it. Instead, I put my ear to the door and listened. The house was pretty old, so the doors were thin enough that you could hear if people were talking or if there was a heavy snorer in the family. Mom wasn't much of a snorer, mostly only when she was sick, but I couldn't hear the sound of the TV. Since she now seemed to spend every waking moment watching TV, if I couldn't hear a show playing it was evidence enough for me to know she was sleeping.

I went back downstairs to the living room and grabbed my keys from the coffee table. Ben was still eyeing photos. He put the pictures back on the shelf, turned to me, and folded his arms.

"You know, I was thinking."

He tapped his pointer finger across his lips like he was deep in thought.

"First time ever?" I asked sarcastically. I wasn't interested in hearing an anecdote about Lego or hair or anything else right now. He needed to be taken home so I could get some rest after this long day.

"No, I'm serious, dude," he paused for a moment "It's like all you're doing these days is fighting Mondays."

"What? I don't want to hear about what your grandpa always says right now, okay? Can we just go?"

I unlocked the door, motioning for Ben to head out in front me. As he headed out, I went back into the living room and stood in front of the shelf with all the pictures. I dug around in my pocket and pulled out the fake leaf I had taken from the flowers Dad had gotten. It wasn't much, but I placed the leaf on the shelf amongst the knick-knacks. Dad needed to be here, one way or another.

"Okay, fine, but hear me out. This one is mine, not my grandpa's," Ben called from outside.

The key clicked in the deadbolt as I locked the front door, letting the screen door slam behind me as we walked down the front stairs to my car. Hopefully the slam didn't wake Mom up. I should have been more careful.

“Okay, so it’s like, every week people groan and complain about how terrible Monday is. It’s like the worst day of the week. Always. There’s one every week, but somehow the weekend messes things up and you forget about how difficult it was. After the weekend it’s like, ‘there it is again,’ and we still have zero idea how to deal with it.”

We got in the car, and I grabbed for my seatbelt. I shrugged at Ben and put my key in the ignition. Who knew if what he was saying even made any sense.

“Dude!” Ben exclaimed as he smacked me on the shoulder, “everything in your life right now is a Monday! Your mom, your dad, that chick in Seattle, that mullet guy from the coffee shop: they’re all Mondays. Some people only have to deal with a few in their life, and they know the weekend is coming up so they just take the easy way out and slide through them, never looking beyond the coming weekend. But you, dude, you’re stuck with a calendar full of them, like in that groundhog movie with that actor guy. You’re stuck.”

I couldn’t believe that Ben was giving me life advice. And it was more confusing that he was actually sort of making sense. So what if I was fighting Mondays? Ben said it himself: I was stuck. I’d been trying to make things right, but there were a lot of Mondays.

“You’ve got to fight them, man,” Ben blurted out, as if he was listening to my thoughts the whole time, “you don’t want to get stuck like me, in a perpetual Friday. Sure, it sounds like a great idea in theory; you never have to worry about Mondays—they never come. But neither does anything else. It’s like there’s so much hype that you plateau into mediocrity, and end up spending your days sorting Lego in your dead grandparents’ basement.”

It was weird hearing these things from Ben. I was pretty sure he didn’t know some of the words he used. But the guy had ways of surprising me at every turn. The tinge of sadness and regret in his voice when he said mediocrity hurt to hear.

“I hear you, man,” I told him.

We sat in silence for a few minutes as we waded through traffic back to his place. I was trying to digest everything he said. All of this was so big for me. The biggest Monday I’d fought was back when all that stuff went down in high school, and I knew that in comparison to now it was nothing. Although it still weighed on me. Now with a calendar full of Mondays, I had no choice but to fight them, and this was my chance to rip out of some of those pages for good.

Finally, I broke the silence; I had to know.

“Did you really think of all that yourself?”

Ben looked over at me, his face looked shocked, like I had accused him of murder or knocking off a bank or something.

“Of course I did.” He went silent and tapped his finger on the side of his head. “Okay, well maybe like eighty per cent. I watched an episode of Oprah with your mom.”

“Really?” I laughed.

He threw his hands up in frustration.

“Okay, maybe like forty per cent. There’s a reason I don’t have a TV. That woman is like kryptonite. She draws you in with all that wise stuff and then cuts you off after an hour and you’re left feeling like you’ve got a stomach full of ovaries!”

We laughed as I pulled up to his house.

“Ben, I don’t think you have a stomach full of ovaries.”

“Dude, I hope not. I bet they’re like weird Easter eggs or something. I don’t need anything like that.”

I watched him as he walked across the grass to the side door, jiggling his house keys in his hand. Even though Ben was stuck on Friday, I was glad he was around and that he was the only one that wasn’t one of my Mondays.

SHANNON McCONNELL

molly malone

dublin

at the end of grafton street molly stands
intricately and attentively encased in bronze
her expression indifferent
as she hawks her cart piled with baskets

wasn't she a fishmonger?
where are the fish?
nobody ponders such questions
details do not need to be accurate
yet she has been keenly encapsulated

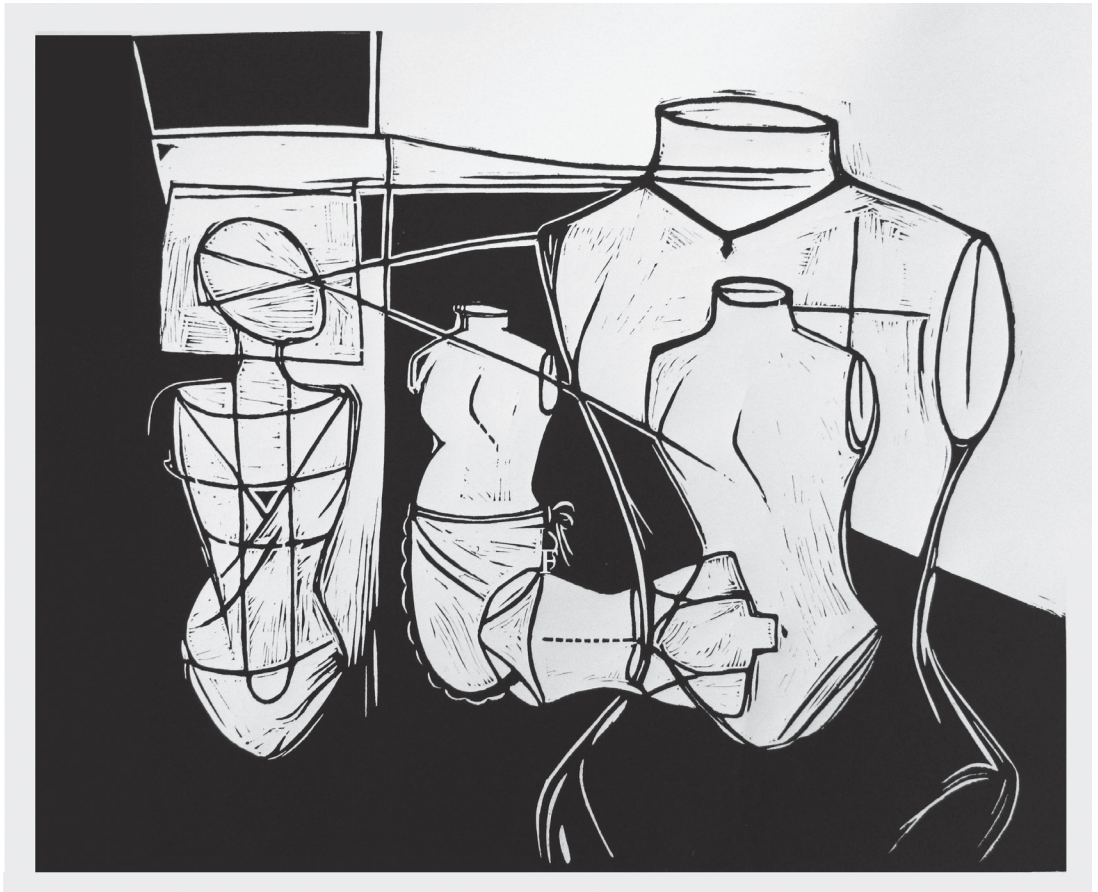
at the end of grafton street
molly stands in her 17th century dress
cut lower than the foam in an empty pint glass

her breasts suspended like ripened fruit from the branch
eager to be plucked and polished by tourists' hands
apparent by the gleam of fingerprints that coat her chest

at the end of grafton street molly stands
resurrected in bronze from her feverish death
eternally igniting fervour in onlookers

RENÉE HARTWIG

Female Figure



DANIELLE COLLINS

Organic Wave



KIRSTEN MACKAY

Fallen leaves

shatter beneath my feet
into a million transparent pieces.
If they weren't already dead,
I've put them out of their misery.

Musty clothes reek of nicotine
and stale cologne, whisky breath on my bare skin.
Dirty fingernails leave me with
mouldy green and rotten blue spots.

He all but killed me that fall.

The dusty window: my only escape.
I longingly watched the leaves fall
steadily to their death
one after the other
without consent.

At least I had a voice to scream.
I got to put up a fight.
The leaves—they get nothing,
violated by the wind without
a plea or chance to beg.
They suffer in silence.

He left me a dead soul.
An empty skeleton
forever caught in a nightmare,
desperately trying to escape.

I've since wondered if leaves
feel the same, cheated by nature,
begging for death.

I always finish them off
just in case.

KODIE CHERRILLE

In Between Seen and There

I invest everything into the eyes of passersby
fixed on nothing but the grey death
of Carbon Monoxide,
who rests his quiet breath
on the nothingness between street and sky.

The city streets are always such brilliant catastrophes
with tailgating cars in the night gleaming like the illuminated eyes
of furious angels.
Faces cling to the heads of pedestrians
as they borrow my sentiment,
if only for a moment.

There's a man sitting on a curb
that juts out into the hurried street,
reading a book its author never intended to write.
And I wonder if his mind wanders too
when he dwells on an elegant phrase
and his life flashes before his eyes
and his regrets erase the words
and his regrets become the words,
creating a book he never intended to write.

THOMAS NYTE

in high school

my parents, desperate to instill in me
a sense of propriety
introduced me to a boarding school girl
my bride to be

at the river
she and I smoked and wondered
if God or Edison
made more light

THOMAS NYTE

Strings

They shroud you;
black wrapped around
your waiting body and
one-track mind,
controlling movement,
altering perception.
Into gaping mouth and
down eager throat,
where they nestle in the
dark near
paperthin vocal cords,
preparing to strum
recycled words.

No escape
they scream at you
from billboards,
buildings, buses.
Computers assault you,
chintzy televisions
spew them from atop
living room altars
like shattered lines
in the sewer.

Yet you collapse, bite
sidewalks and carpets
with the teeth of your
torn-up knees
as you salivate,
drool, disgusting,
raise your arms,
beg them:

make me your marionette.

RENÉE HARTWIG

Eventually Mix With



ASHLEY BULTHUIS

Undercurrents



DESSA BAYROCK

Haikus and Fast Food

a novel excerpt

I'm driving my beater of a rusty pick-up the first time I see Cherry outside of our newly mutual workplace. It's pouring, and I'm on my way home after the longest shift of my life. We were caught in a rush and I was kept late on shift, and by the time I finally got out, all I could smell were cheeseburgers and all I could think of was the sound the window of the drive-thru made as it opened and closed.

Squeck. Open. *Squeeeeeeeeeeechhhhhhh...* Closed.

Squeck. Open.

The half-remembered sound is blending in with the sound of my windshield wipers when I glance over and see her coming up behind me to my right, barrelling up the sidewalk on a longboard. She's soaked, bent over, and intent. She looks like she's racing the world.

She stops at the same red light I'm stuck at, where she brakes reluctantly and shakes the water out of her bangs: a characteristically impatient gesture. I think about it for a second, and finally roll down my window.

Squeck. Squeck. Squeck. It's one of those windows you have to crank to get down.

"Hey," I yell uncertainly, conscious of the lane of traffic between us and the rain getting in my mouth. "Hey! Uh, Cherry?"

She looks over with a slow and lazy look.

"You want a ride?" I ask, faltering a little. I feel like a gazelle being sized up by a lion. After a second she picks up her board, shakes the rain out of her hair again, and crosses to my truck. The door opens with a cross between a snap and a squeal.

"Nice wheels," she comments sarcastically.

"You too," I say. She glances at the longboard in her lap.

I'm an idiot.

This is how our friendship begins.

It's a Friday night, about a month after I met Cherry. We're sitting in her kitchen, working our way through our third beers, discussing microwaves.

"No, no," I sigh, "you don't understand. Do you even know how microwaves work?"

It isn't magic. It isn't even particularly complex. The waves bounce around the food and vibrate the water molecules to the point that they heat up, which in turn heats up the food."

"Which would be why," she counters, "when I was watching television at the age of nine and saw a man kill himself by sticking his head in the microwave and turning it on, I was legitimately frightened because that could, certifiably, legitimately, scientifically, actually happen."

"I call you on too many adverbs."

"At least I don't use a death machine to heat up my breakfast."

"Come on, Cherry. You could kill yourself on a package of hash browns, for Christ's sake. There's nothing special about a microwave."

She even refuses to use microwaves at work. After I met her, I started avoiding them too. Not because I dislike them, but for the same reason you pick up an accent when you talk to someone foreign. You can't help it. It just transfers itself. We become the people around us.

The job is relatively simple: people tell me what they want to eat, I punch it into a computer, and tell them to have a nice day. Someone hands me a bag of food, I hand it to the people that want it, and tell them to have a nice day.

I pretend that by telling them to have a nice day twice I'll cancel myself out and their day will remain unaffected. It's all about balance—if you give something, you take it away. If you move something, you put it back. It's an odd kind of karma, but I'm conscious of what I'm taking out of the world and how it'll give it back to me. Likewise, I don't want to give people anything other than the food they ask for. In any case, it pays the bills.

It'd be easy to say that I hate my job, but I don't. A lot of people do. For a while I tried to be one of them. The long and the short of it is that it's really not all that awful.

Haikus are fairly simple: five syllables, seven syllables, five syllables again. I read somewhere once that to be considered a real haiku, there should be a reference to the season.

Cherry doesn't believe this in the slightest.

"We spend so much of our lives inside," she says, "it's absurd to believe we have to pay homage to the seasons any more. We have houses now. We have Gortex. We have cucumbers in the winter." She thinks leaves have been around so long that no one

could possibly have anything more to say about them, let alone in a haiku.

“It’s such a short form of a poem,” she told me once, “if you put an image like a leaf in there, you’re practically choking it to death.”

She says the haiku is the hipster’s pastoral landscape, and she is Monet. I’m not quite sure I get the metaphor. It’s very possible she doesn’t either.

This is food for those
hungover, late, or lazy.
Eat better later.

Cherry once got in trouble for writing haikus on the brown paper food bags. She was quick about it, and somehow slipped them in among perfectly normal bags, folding the tops so the haikus didn’t show.

No one knows for sure how many went through the window before a couple came back through the front and told Dawn about it. The wife was kind of steamed, but the husband obviously thought it was hilarious. At first they both thought it was a corporate marketing campaign.

Cherry said she couldn’t remember how many she’d done, but she promised she only gave “the really mean ones” to people who were impatient or rude.

“Sometimes you need a little bit of a jolt to stop being a jackass,” she reasoned. “Today, I was that jolt.”

For some reason, our manager didn’t find this comforting.

“But then again,” Cherry argued, “how mean can a haiku really be? It’s only seventeen syllables, for Christ’s sake.”

Dawn was going to try to write Cherry up for it, but couldn’t quite figure out how to classify it according to procedure. There’s no subheading under ‘misdemeanor’ for ‘haiku mischief’ after all.

I am paper bag.
Empty me, then discard me.
This is my whole life.

Imagine the salt
you are about to consume;
have a pleasant meal.

SHANE POTTER

Finding you

in an embroidered white dress,
contrasting black eyes
that, even still, caress
the landscape with surprise.
Pale, peaceful face,
tightly curled red hair,
with a rope necklace
above an overturned chair.

SHANA SMITH

Skin and Bones



COLIN BALLARD

Song of Youth

Sirens sing
the start of the night's life,
screeching by as strangers' backs
bump in from all sides.
On this downtown street
no one is famous
and a lonely boy can find himself in a crowd.
The crowd makes music:
a lurching, jerky symphony
of shotgunned beers, sweaty hair
and clumsy kisses, where teeth collide.

He's lost in a swarm of people with no purpose
but to sing the song of youth:
*our lives last forever, so we don't care;
let's make bad decisions and go anywhere.*
Responsibility rested on his shoulders,
before they got to him
and shoved a shot of tequila
right up his responsiwhatever.

He's swept up in the cloying thickness of it,
staggering through high school stories and hasty love letters
from people he'd prefer not to meet.
The song of the crowd is the thunder
to the lightning of bleach blonde bob-cut girls
begging for a blaze.

He's just a lonely boy;
all his friends have moved on,
so he joins in the chorus, grooves
with the twenty-somethings, and finds a home
in a useless night and a thrown empty bottle,
because when he asks where his friends have gone,
the crowd tells him:
We're your friends tonight.

We're your friends tonight.

ASHLEY KLASSEN

I am still alive

Passing under the golden spotlight of the streetlamp is a floating foil-skinned nutcracker that bows and twists in the wind's current. Its metallic ribbon transmits the weather's vibrations to the cold, bare hand of Ludwig. With his long, dark hair pinned up in a bun, and his elegant limbs covered with pink tights and puffy down-filled jacket sleeves, Ludwig battles the icy sidewalk. As he struggles to grasp both his sack of groceries and his floundering balloon, he is relieved to finally bask in the ambient glow of the art gallery that is situated beneath his loft. He disappears into a shadowed entrance, and climbs the stairs to suite 306.

Ludwig enters the room and turns the circular dimmer switch, flooding the room with light and transforming the vast front window into mirror-like glass. He adjusts his posture as he catches a glimpse of his reflection, and follows his movements as he sets down the rough, creased paper bag on the hardwood floor and secures the string of the bobbing, toothy nutcracker to the doorknob.

The landscape of the room is bare, its only ornamentation being the abundance of balloons in various states of satiation: some, round and plump, cling to the ceiling, some hover suspended as they begin to wilt, while others lie shriveled, their puckered flesh littering the floor. Ludwig abandons his winter clothes at the front door and travels toward the turntable that sits in the corner. He picks up a pair of pink satin pointe shoes from atop one of the waist-high speakers and proceeds to slip them on his battered feet as he balances like a flamingo. Every rough callous and fleshy, inflamed lesion scrapes against the inside of each ballet shoe as fresh battle scars are disturbed, pop, and begin to ooze.

The balloon corpses are then gracefully kicked out of the way as Ludwig dons his tulle skirt and retrieves his latest inflatable comrade from the doorknob. He kneels in front of the speakers as he raises the volume and lowers the needle of the turntable onto the spinning record. Ludwig holds the balloon against the reverberating speaker, and using it like a helium pillow, he rests the side of his head on the vibrating Mylar, feeling the symphony that fills his cavernous home.

As the sensations swirl through his body, he begins to recall staccato flashes from his childhood: lying belly down on the grand piano in his parents' studio, watching the footwork of young dancers as they mimicked the vibrations created by the black and

ivory keys; hugging the cool floor, his ear memorizing the hollow taps of multiple wooden toes as they dashed across the surface; relinquishing his pastel crinoline to his mother's firm hand, feeling the fine mesh burn the soft flesh of his fist as she violently seized it.

With a spasmodic furrow of his brow, Ludwig raises his head in puzzlement, sending the inflated nutcracker floating to the ceiling. He detects a foreign bass, and as he lifts the needle of the turntable and presses his cheek to the wall, the low rhythmic thumping confirms his suspicions. After months of residing in this rented warehouse space, the current vibrations speaking from within the building's cold brick walls are the first indications of life that Ludwig has perceived. Curious, he proceeds to the bathroom, climbing through the window and onto the fire escape. Turning his body to look up, he can see the radiant burn of light bleeding into the darkness. He follows the buzzing steel-grated steps to the open window.

Through the murky haze of social chain-smoking, Ludwig peers into the party crowd. The overwhelming vibrations radiating from the suite compel him to step off the fire escape and enter the scene. The colourful mass pulses as the bass booms, the arms of the crowd shifting intermittently to knock back drinks, puff cigarettes and twirl companions within the humid atmosphere.

In the corner, the band dances with their instruments, as fingers pluck, hands slide, feet bang. The beat travels across the floor, exploding in Ludwig's chest—exploding over everyone. A beautiful disease has infected the motley group as partygoers celebrate the holidays with a musical fever pulsating through their bodies, their heads shaking rhythmically. He walks through the dancers, his tutu gently brushing the denim vests, latex catsuits, and bare skin of the crowd. Surrounded by the throbbing beat he floats across the beer bottle-littered floor, carried along by the bohemian ensemble. As he reaches the front door with his costume intact, Ludwig pauses within the vibrant recital before turning the doorknob and exiting the performance undetected.

As Ludwig re-enters his unlocked suite he spies the paper bag on the floor. He sits cross-legged next to it, rifling through yellow rubber gloves and bunched bananas to find a package of picture postcards. Sprawling out on the hardwood, Ludwig plucks one of the postcards from the bundle and inspects the black and white image: bare, turned out feet on a marbled floor. Retrieving a pen, Ludwig composes a simple message on the reverse. Beside this inscription he copies a familiar address, one that will propel his words to the gloomy womb of a residence where his childhood memories were both conceived and caged. Taking care to omit a return address, he fixes a stamp to the sturdy paper, and sets it aside.

NICK UBELS

Dedication

“This is kind of a strange request,” I begin.

Anna shoots me a dark look from behind the large, three-sided oak desk that doubles as a checkout counter. Scattered bills and paperwork litter the desktop. There’s a stack of bookmarked volumes next to a MacBook paused in the middle of a nondescript CBS crime drama. Anna is in her mid-fifties and the proprietor of Anna’s Books, a sprawling used book emporium on Douglas Crescent, City of Langley, which is the location of this exchange. Whenever I enter a specialty vintage or antique store, I get paranoid; no matter how softly I step, I fear I might break something priceless. But I don’t have that feeling here. Still, Anna’s eyes, framed by a pair of bright pink spectacles and a billow of white hair, seem to indicate a mixture of concern for her own safety as well as for my mental well-being.

“I’m looking for a book with a really great dedication.”

She looks relieved. It turns out the geeky college kid isn’t interested in some kind of ill-conceived heist after all. Just dedications. Plus, as the placard on the door makes abundantly clear in bold, all-caps type: NO CASH LEFT ON PREMISES.

“Let me clarify: I mean personal dedications, like hand-written inscriptions.”

“I see. Well the first place you’re going to want to look is the children’s section.”

I guess it wasn’t such a peculiar demand after all. She directs me toward a wall of bright hardcovers, many of them the familiar yellow and blue of *Nancy Drew* and *The Hardy Boys* mysteries. Anna plucks one at random and examines the first few pages.

And so we set to work. I spend the better part of a Saturday afternoon scouring row after row for something elusive. Perhaps a glimpse into a long-lost childhood or some severed relationship. I want to enter a forgotten world, and used books seem like just the ticket. Anna tells me not to waste my time with the newer editions; people don’t bother with dedications anymore. I don’t know if I can quite explain what I am looking for, but I feel like I am on the right track.

I pull up to Anna’s Books just after two o’clock on a bright and brisk mid-autumn day. Even so, the entire street in front of Anna’s is literally overshadowed by a soul-killing four-storey townhouse development emblazoned with a single word: Serenade. Despite its romantic name, Serenade seems unlikely to inspire any lovelorn poetry.

Without an address or painstakingly-rendered directions from a regular customer, it strikes me that a place like Anna's would be nearly impossible to find; unlike all the other quietly aging buildings that populate Douglas Crescent, it's set back about twenty metres behind a cramped parking lot, tightly squeezed between two more prominent storefronts belonging to Stained Glass in the west and Prism Hair Design in the east. Stained Glass is, as its name would suggest, a shop where one can find glass art. Why so many locally owned businesses opt for such forthright monikers remains a mystery. The only thing directing the uninitiated towards the entrance of Anna's Books is a yellow sandwich board out on the sidewalk. It bears a faint stencil of Thumper, the rabbit from Walt Disney's *Bambi*, with an arrow beckoning shoppers inside. Potential copyright infringement notwithstanding, the 1942 icon probably succeeds in bringing in the moms-and-tots crowd, which turns out to be a fairly sizable portion of the used bookstore customer clientele.

Anna's Books is a peach single-storey stucco building with green trim and a small veranda supported by a weather-worn white metal lattice. There are a couple of massive, empty planters and what looks like a homemade wooden bench. A sign on the door tells passersby in flashing, multi-coloured lights that Anna's is OPEN.

I'm able to secure a parking spot after some wild and wide manoeuvring only made possible by the emptiness of the lot. When I step out of my car, I see a bored-looking Prism Hair Design employee dragging on a cigarette precisely three metres away from the nearest window or doorway and staring with dead-eyed admonition in my general direction. I nod a little too politely and proceed toward the door, my purpose firmly in mind.

Anna's selection of fifties' and sixties' pulp children's lit is unparalleled among Langley's used book retailers. The Kinks' 1968 single, "Picture Book," plays in my mind whenever I think about my parents as kids reading this kind of stuff. The nostalgia and simpler-time optimism kills me every time. There is a clear demarcation of gender roles in these old series. Astronauts, cowboys, super spies and detectives are all well represented in books marketed towards boys. Many lead characters are regular teens with secret double lives, like the protagonist of Jack Lancer's *Christopher Cool: Teen Agent* series. They're all written by men, or at least ghostwritten under male pen names. It's about half-and-half when it comes to girls' books. These volumes mostly deal with high school drama, pioneer life and adventures in the stable. The aforementioned *Nancy Drew* series is one of the few, but notable, exceptions to this rule. Not much has changed

in this regard. I have vivid memories of fighting with my sister over control for the TV whenever she wanted to watch another episode of *The Saddle Club*, the Australian horse serial she adored as a preteen.

I pick out another book from this section called *Timber Trail Riders: The Texas Tenderfoot*, by Michael Murray. Dusting off the glossy jacket, I stare at the cover illustration of an all-American teenage boy with an orange Western shirt, raven hair and a winning smile, standing proudly in front of a stable, his arm wrapped around the neck of a gorgeous brown and white stallion. Visible just inside the stable is a blonde girl in a green and white polka-dot dress brushing the mane of yet another horse. It's a happy scene. As I open the cover, the wood facsimile spine cracks dangerously and my nostrils are filled with the mouldy aroma of poorly-stored volumes all too familiar to anyone who ever frequented an elementary school library. Inside the front cover is written, in impressively clean handwriting considering the presumptive writer's age:

For your twelfth birthday
To Cathy
From Billy

I remember what Anna had told me moments earlier: "Most inscriptions aren't very long and aren't very personal. Kids' books are usually gifts from out-of-towners looking for a sure-fire hit with someone they know about more than they actually know." Exempting the inscription included above, this seems to hold true. Many of the books I look through contain little personal information and come from Auntie Janice, Grandpa Freeman, or simply Grandma. The addressees, however, seem inclined to include their full names and addresses on the following pages, suggesting some pride of ownership.

"Why would these people part with books that obviously contain so much sentimental value?" I ask Anna, who is currently examining a copy of John Blaine's sci-fi adventure *The Flying Stingaree* two bookcases to my right.

"Most of these books were traded in or sold to me by people other than the original owners."

"So by the time someone brings them in here, the dedication isn't quite so meaningful."

"That's right. In fact," she says, directing my attention to the book in her hands, "sometimes it'll be scratched out with a new inscription in its place."

I look at the inside flap to see what appears to be crudely crossed out with a black sharpie:

To Matthew
From the Jensons
On Your Birthday June 1969

And inscribed below in the same unsteady hand:

to jack my brother
from NATHAN.

“One of the most fascinating things to me,” says Anna, closing the book abruptly, “is the handwriting. Obviously, in this case, he was a pretty young writer. But some of the other books have incredible calligraphy. It’s really a lost art.”

I think about my own terrible penmanship and nod soberly. One of my friends has told me it looks eroded, like the tide has washed away the edges.

“I just remembered,” says Anna, snapping me back to reality. “Another category that often gets written in is religious books.”

“Bibles and that sort of thing?”

“Yeah, but more so the really preachy ones. You know, ‘God loves you and this will help you with your problems.’”

It’s about forty-five minutes later and I’m working solo. Anna has returned to her massive desk to read some sort of dog-eared true crime book. This, along with the earlier appearance of the indistinguishable crime drama and her spirited discussion with a regular customer about the merits of the genre suggests she’s a bit of a junkie for that sort of thing. Anna dutifully continues to chip away at the glossy black and red paperback in the idle time between new customers, who arrive at surprisingly regular intervals. At least once every quarter hour, someone enters the store, setting off the dulcet 8-bit electronic melody of the door buzzer. What’s even more surprising is that Anna seems to know each and every one personally. She makes recommendations, engages in small talk and happily busies herself by hunting through the racks.

Anna gives each of these customers her full, undivided attention. It’s obvious that she is devoted to what she does and that the interpersonal aspect of her job is as much a motivating factor as her love of literature. For the past five years, Anna has owned and operated her bookstore solo. She explains to me that she used to do the accounting for her husband’s landscaping business for fifteen years. Their success in one business allowed them to open another: Anna calls it, “a labour of love.”

I’m still wading through the religious section and Anna was right: it’s a gold mine

of dedications. Interestingly, these dedications do not seem to be limited to the older editions like the children's novels. I find inscriptions dated 2008, 1998, and 1990 on the top shelf. And these markings are generally a lot more detailed and motivational than those found in children's books. In Barbara Johnson's long-windedly-titled *Pain is Inevitable but Misery is Optional... So, Stick a Geranium in Your Hat and Be Happy!* I find the following message:

Dear Val,
Rejoice in the LORD
Always!
It should be easy
The Lord is always there
with you!
Love and Prayers,
Charlotte

These sorts of messages lead me to a profound realization: most dedications reveal a certain expectation the authors have for the recipients. Whether they want the addressees to overcome their problems, adhere to certain normative social patterns or achieve heretofore unimaginable success in life, these books contain personal messages that speak volumes about the nature of the relationship.

I stand at the counter with my two purchases in hand. The first is an abridged 1973 children's edition of *Treasure Island* to replace a similar copy I had as a child but was later destroyed by misuse. It bears an inscription that reads:

Merry Christmas to Jain from
Auntie Irene December 1976

The second is a first-edition copy of the paperback, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A Memorial*, published within months of FDR's death in 1945. The back cover bears a sticker that reads: "Share this book with someone in uniform." This was a particularly rewarding find. Having exhausted the manna of the children's and religious lit sections, I had branched out into the wider store with little hope of repeated success. My search was mostly fruitless, except for the book I now hold. It reads:

To Dad
With love on
Father's Day, 1945
Fred + Lorraine.

I have no way of knowing where these people are now, how their lives turned out, or whether they are living or deceased, but I count myself fortunate for this glimpse into their lives, a spark to set the imagination on fire. A book becomes a personal artifact on par with postcards, birthday missives, and photographs when someone inscribes it with meaning. A direct message to the recipient becomes a mysterious communiqué to be uncovered by someone else years later.

I place a twenty dollar bill on the countertop and rummage through my pockets for the extra seventy-five cents.

"Don't worry about it," Anna says, waving her hand in a rite of absolution. She places the books in a small plastic bag and hands it to me. "I hope you found what you're looking for."

Notes on Contributors

COLIN BALLARD is a fourth-year English student at UFV and plays drums in a band called the Lonely Cave Kings. He also likes growing facial hair and reading *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. He was inspired to write *Song of Youth* when he misheard the lyrics to LCD Soundsystem's "All my Friends." This illustrates two more important things about Colin: he loves music, and he misinterprets everything.

DESSA BAYROCK "UFV's number one shit-disturber." —Darren Blakeborough

JENNI BOLDT sought to express her grief and sorrow after the death of her newborn niece, Quinn Olivia, who was born without a beating heart or breath in her lungs. Instead of the long-awaited cry of a baby, the wail of an anguished mother was heard. Jenni expressed this through the application of paint on raw canvas in *Her Absence is Like the Sky*. An egg in its nest is symbolic of life and fertility, but an egg is also fragile, echoing the fragility of conception and birth of a child, whose absence is like the sky: spread over everything.

ASHLEY BULTHUIS was inspired by her love of art to teach private art lessons, to start an indoor mural painting business, and to study visual arts. *Undercurrents* mirrors our current technology-entrenched culture and warns to always be on the alert. The creature portrayed is an anglerfish, which emits light from its esca to attract unsuspecting prey. The piece shows how youth today are like naïve prey drawn in by the computer mouse only have their time swallowed by the biting glow of the screen.

KODIE CHERRILLE is a student at UFV.

DANIELLE CHRISTIAN is a fourth-year business student majoring in human resources management. She recently started her own photography business, danimc photography (@danimc31). *Boat off the Caye* was taken while vacationing in Caye Caulker, Belize in March 2011. The boat in the background and the turtle grass in the foreground caught her attention, so she captured them through two different mediums: photography using a DSLR, and digital art using Lightroom for the technical manipulation. She felt that it really came together in editing, as she wanted to make the turtle grass look as creepy as it felt while swimming through it.

DANIELLE COLLINS has an intense desire to explore organic patterns in her artwork. *Organic Wave* was created using charcoal and stresses the relationship between humans and nature.

CHRISSEY COURTNEY is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Fine Arts program at UFV. *All that is left is his TV set* is a single frame photograph captured through medium format film photography and traditional darkroom techniques to illustrate Shel Silverstein's poem, "Jimmy Jet and his TV set." She wanted to maintain Silverstein's sense of wit regarding our own morality and comment on the idea of losing control and being consumed by our vices. In the photograph, Jimmy Jet is an adult overtaken by nature who stares, mesmerized, at the only thing left in his life: his television.

GREGORY ELIASON is a student at UFV. When not attempting to write a Great Canadian Novel, he enjoys a variety of eclectic hobbies such as playing the ocarina and baking gluten free desserts.

RENÉE HARTWIG is studying English and visual arts at UFV. Both her works in this issue were created in Poland during her Study Abroad semester at the University of Arts in Poznan.

ASHLEY KLASSEN is an English and Visual Arts student. *I am still alive* is the third story in a four-story series entitled *The Holiday Suite*. All stories are interconnected and explore the transcendent nature of art in its many forms.

JAMES LINDE is a fifth year English student at UFV. His favourite fictional character is Puddleglum. Currently he is interested in owls, good coffee, and Aeschylus. "Sing sorrow, sorrow, but good win out in the end."

KIRSTEN MACKAY is excited to be a part of the Class of 2013 this semester after challenging herself to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts within three years, and hopes to combine all elements of her degree (creative writing, business, and communications) in an entrepreneurial endeavour. Kirsten loves travelling, dreaming, cuddling, running, hot yoga, green smoothies, and hanging out with her cat, Henry.

SHANNON McCONNELL is a recent graduate of UFV. *Molly Malone* was inspired by an awkward encounter with a large-breasted statue in the heart of Dublin, Ireland. *Fighting Mondays* is a coming-of-age story about Jacob, an elevator operator at the Space Needle in Seattle. When a family emergency arises, he must return to his home in Vancouver and face his broken past, leaving the girl of his dreams behind. Yes, there's a girl—isn't there always a girl?

THOMAS NYTE is a student at UFV.

SHANE POTTER is a student at UFV.

PANKAJ SHARMA is a student majoring in political science and minoring in English. He dreams of being sworn into office and having his first press release be original rap punchlines. *Speakeasy* is not based on real life events.

SHANA SMITH is in her fourth year at UFV. She is a music enthusiast, part-time English major and full-time day-dreamer. Art is one of her hobbies. She still believes in true love, in fairy tales, and possibly in unicorns.

JESSIE SOMERS graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from UFV in 2010 and since then, she has been teaching watercolour classes and painting hand-crafted fountain pens for several companies across the country. Her work has been featured in *Golf Illustrated* and is available for commission through her website: www.cloakworks.webs.com. Her piece *Pelecanus* is a charcoal study that was created as a gift for her mother's birthday in early 2012.

NICK UBELS the legend: he drives, he walks, he sits. The Highway of Heroes is lined with his lost commuter memories, and the echo of his squeaky shoes lingers in the halls of C-building. The stacks still have to suffer his angry end-of-semester typing. Nick Ubels, a lone wolf who has friends so he isn't very lonely, wrote *Dedication*.
—Amy Van Veen, Biographer

About *Louden Singletree*

Since its first issue in the spring of 2009, the *Louden Singletree* has showcased writing and visual art from the Fraser Valley. Poetry, fiction, drama, creative non-fiction, and visual art converge annually to create a new and exciting issue. In vision and in voice, the magazine strives for original perspective and evocative language from its contributors.

The name *Louden Singletree* was originally selected to acknowledge the agricultural history of the Fraser Valley, and refers to a specific make of a late nineteenth-century farm tool used to balance the pull from plough animals. The creators of the magazine adopted this image to symbolize UFV's creative voice, resounding from a carefully tilled land separate from the city lights and street noise. They envisioned a world to which the artist can return, stand as a single tree whose branches reach up into the starry expanse.

As the publication has evolved, so has its affinity with the singletree; UFV's literary and visual arts magazine continues to be the load-bearing leader bar that carries our artistic voice into the community.

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

Colin Ballard

Dessa Bayrock

Jenni Boldt

Ashley Bulthuis

Kodie Cherrille

Danielle Christian

Danielle Collins

Chrissy Courtney

Gregory Eliason

Renée Hartwig

Ashley Klassen

James Linde

Kirsten MacKay

Shannon McConnell

Thomas Nyte

Shane Potter

Pankaj Sharma

Shana Smith

Jessie Somers

Nick Ubels

