

louden singletree

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



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louden singletree

THE UFV ENGLISH DEPARTMENT'S JOURNAL
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ISSUE 7

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Editors' Note

Welcome to the seventh edition of the Loudon Singletree. As a board, we are pleased to have continued the annual tradition of publishing UFV's entirely student-run arts and literature magazine.

Like the vibrant skies of the sunset on the cover, "Majestic", many of these works suggest both a reverence for nature and a descent into darkness. Poems like "Fall Diviner" and "Jericho Beach" reflect nostalgically on the beauty of land, sky, and water — but in pieces such as "Present Still Life" and "Blood and Honey", corruptive modernity intrudes on the idyllic natural world. Other works in the journal draw the reader into dark, fantastic worlds, like those of "Noëlle", "Part 1: The End of the World", and "We, the Infinite", where madness and existential terror run deep. In this edition, we see an entropic shift from harmony to chaos; in tracing that journey, we find art.

This publication would not have been possible without the continued support and encouragement of many people: faculty advisor Andrea MacPherson, who has supervised the publication of the Loudon Singletree for each of the seven years it has existed; writer in residence Emily Pohl-Weary, who wrote our foreword; and the many departments, student associations, and individuals who donated time, space, and funds to our cause. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our artists, writers, and reviewers, whose contributions allow the Loudon Singletree to continue to flourish.

Finally, we would like to thank you, the reader; as long as there is an audience, we will continue the tradition of publishing the best of UFV's creative work for years to come.

We sincerely hope you enjoy.

Loudon Singletree Editorial Board 2015

Foreword

One of my great pleasures as the writer-in-residence this year has been joining the very welcoming community that surrounds the University of the Fraser Valley and its English Department.

It was a lovely opportunity for a woman from Toronto who has lived most of her life within twenty square blocks. And I'm not just referring to the fact that flowers and trees blossom in February, while my birth city slumbers under its annual deep freeze. Or the magnificent ring of mountains you wake up to every single morning. Or the way fog can suddenly roll across the valley, making everything quiet and still. Or that the sky itself seems to go on forever.

Sure, this region is rich in natural beauty, but also in many other things, especially artistic creation. Some of the most interesting young literary voices, storytellers, and visual artists are coming into their own right here. It's an exciting time to be from the Fraser Valley.

Writing is an incredible way to bridge differences that exists between peoples in this diverse, sprawling country. Writing allowed an outsider like me to catch a glimpse of your inner lives. It helps us to better understand ourselves, make sense of what is sometimes a difficult world to navigate, frame our own experiences, and claim space in history.

As Thomas King said in his Massey Lecture, "The truth about stories is that that's all we are." We are the stories we tell. By writing poetry, fiction, memoir, and making art, you're working to change lives — your own and those of the people who receive your creative gifts. So be mindful of the stories you tell and how you tell them.

The many voices in this issue of Loudon Singletree will surely inspire you as much as they did me. There's a little of something for everyone: high fantasy, mythology, outlaws, the bittersweet pining for a dream girl who doesn't exist, and a marriage that occurs *after* the end of the world.

While you read, the proximity of both Vancouver and the United States, the vast fields of green and gold farmland, and the nirvana-like climate are a backdrop. This is a special part of the country that merits ever more literary exposure. So keep writing. Only you can tell your stories.

Emily Pohl-Weary

Writer in Residence 2015

ALEX RAKE

a wise man calls his Mantis

Mantis! truest, blank-eyed Mantis!

take my head away!

impose your pleasures on my life

and teach my corpse to play

without a thought and void of spirit —

reduce me to a tool;

i can't conceive a better being

nor name one headless fool

you've prayed for me beneath your leaves —

now Mantis! here i am!

submitted to your hungers,

ambitious as a lamb

DESSA BAYROCK

Bust-A-Move

(novel excerpt)

“And then I said to her, I said, ‘Missus, I ain’t got time for your crap, and I certainly ain’t got time for the dog’s crap. He’s gonna have to poop when we get there.’”

Michael Harry Jasper Petruski grins momentarily through a sheen of sweat before setting his face in concentration and hefting another box into the truck. He is in his mid-thirties with the sort of shoulders designed to break down doors and the strong jaw of a man who could have been a movie star in the ‘30s. His teeth are endearingly crooked, his nose a little too Polish for him to be considered strictly handsome. Pete is the only one who ever calls him Michael — to everyone else, his name is Mikey. He has a trace of a Brooklyn accent that he inherited from his single mother before he took off to Texas at the age of eighteen. Now he’s Charlie’s moving partner, and although Charlie would trust him with anything, he is moving the boxes a little too roughly for Charlie’s comfort.

“Careful,” Charlie warns, “that’s kitchen. There might be dishes in there.”

“Naw,” Mikey says, a grin still poking around on his face, “I put the dishes up front, first thing. Seriously, Chip — you ever hear of a dog having ‘bowel troubles’? She keeps flapping her hands at me, I swear she ain’t been out of the house since 1965, and she keeps telling me in this wavery old lady voice —”

Here he stops to hoist another box up to the truck, gritting his teeth like he’s trying to pass a kidney stone or break an Olympic record for deadlifting.

“— that her precious little Porkie or Pattie or Petie or whatever the goddamn Yorkie’s name is has a shy bladder. He can’t take a piss when a stranger’s watchin’ him. It offends his goddamn little dignity.

“So finally I turn my fucking back on the rat and I tap my goddamn foot and I tell myself if it takes more than a minute I’m just scooping both of them into the truck and leaving, but sure enough, as soon as it figures I’m not watchin’ it, I hear the best sound I’ve heard all day.”

He diverts a rivulet of sweat away from his eye with the back of his hand, stopping for a second and squinting up at the sun like it’s trying to outmaneuver him.

“The dog lets loose, clear as a bell. I was so relieved, I felt like I was the one taking a piss.”

They break for lunch, which is sandwiches and water, both cold from the cooler. It’s just about one in the afternoon, and baking like you wouldn’t believe.

“Heat wave, the ‘caster said this morning,” Mikey says, speculative, between bites.

They eat, relaxing furtively, keeping an eye out for anyone who might accuse them of slacking off. Some people are embarrassingly grateful to have help moving, even though they’re the ones footing the bill, and bring out fresh lunches and cold lemonade every time the team makes a stop. Other people — mostly the lower-middle-class types — eye them like con artists trying to get away with something.

The two of them have chatted about it more than once — the idea of loading up a truck with someone else’s worldly possessions and leaving town. Hell, it’s already on wheels. The people getting robbed will even help load the getaway vehicle. The only problem is that it’s the rich people who tip and serve the coldest lemonade, and those are the only loads it’d be worth getting away with.

But if there’s something else Charlie’s learned in this business, it’s that nobody has stuff as nice as you think they will.

They brush the crumbs off themselves and stand back up again. Mikey bends backward, like a tree in heavy wind, trying to stretch out his vertebrae.

“You should see a chiropractor,” Charlie tells him, not unkindly.

“Thanks, doc,” Mikey shoots back. “I think I have room in my schedule after fucking your mom.”

Charlie tosses a coat rack at him, which Mikey catches handily, but unfortunately that’s the exact moment the owner comes to check on their progress. They hear a gasp behind them. Mikey makes a show of considering how to place the unwieldy object in the truck, even bending down to move a box instead of just kicking it with his foot. With a terse look, the woman purses her lips in a tight frown and heads back into the house, no doubt to complain to anyone who’s handy.

“No lemonade for us,” Charlie says, without remorse.

“That’s exactly the same face the damn dog made when I didn’t want to turn my back to let it pee,” Mikey mutters back.

KARL LUHMERT

Part 1: The End of the World

We were to be married on the day the world ended. We never learned why it did. We weren't scientists. There were no bangs or whimpers. We woke up that morning and it was done. No birds in the sky, no cars on the road.

We were the only two left: Myself and She. Names were less important when there were only two people left. She was going to be my wife on that day, on the day of the end of the world, but things came up and a lot of people couldn't make it to the wedding.

We postponed it, and had a funeral instead.

I didn't think we should have a funeral. There were no bodies. Maybe they weren't dead.

She didn't know. She said she'd feel better if we just had a funeral.

We didn't know how to have a funeral. So we just sat in a church quietly for a while.

We had our wedding about a week later. She got her white dress and everything. Well, she got her white dress.

ANNE FRANKLIN

Crow Love



ANNE FRANKLIN

Coastal Nomad



THOMAS NYTE

Jericho Beach

On the water
we grew long wooden arms,
scrawled rigorous calligraphy
in sidewinding shallows.

And we were caught,
grasped in every rupturing, pregnant moment,
between dig
and release.

The toss of saltwater hands,
naked and pruned,
dipping between two
blue
horizons,

and the crooks of our elbows
frame the tie-dye shorelines,
the gasping hillsides,
the shimmering rooftops.

We let water in
so we can pump it out.
Seawater bursts
and ambles away,
waning,
splitting,
surging;

the molten architecture
of the day and the photograph.

Later,
twilight cartwheels into evening
on the patio
and we celebrate a birthday with pictures,
salad,
silence.

And stranded deep in solstice and straw-hat refuge,
you wear my warm blue sweater
beneath the thick bends
of the shade umbrella.

DESSA BAYROCK

Jolie Laide

I have grown new freckles since last summer's sunburn,
blooms across my breastbone and the tips of my shoulders
like constellations given to me by the sun; a well-used map
detailing the places it loved me too well and I could not sleep
on my raw, red skin. Still, I revel in sunburn, I always have —
the season's first good omen, like secret circles of mushrooms
that sprout and fade within hours. Their white caps
are ugly and beautiful, pressing out of the ground like mist
and rotting in layers against the grass. I, too, shed my skin
like a creature transformed, growing browner and stronger
and a little more bitter — coffee steeped in the press for too long.
Now freckles emerge like grounds settling in the bottom of a mug,
warm against ceramic skin. The future appears in the grains
that stay behind, fading into freckles and then nothing at all.

KATIE STOBART

Fall Diviner

On the bridge overlooking
the river — it seems so still — I tell you,

I wonder which way this flows: toward us
or away, bending through the thick
of knotted maple and naked white birch.

A bird lifts, open-winged, her breast flushed
and eyes sharp with knowing
then descends

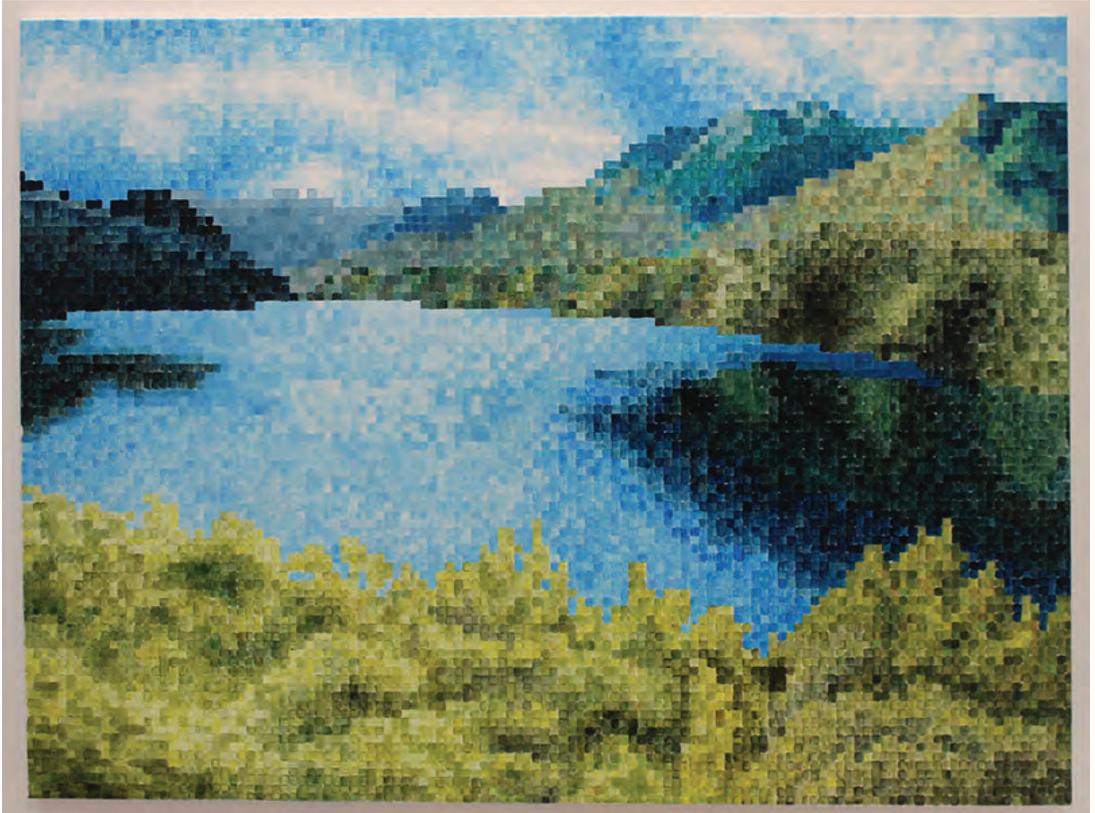
vanishes into autumn's reflection,
the red leaves in the water.

I wait for you to answer the question
I haven't asked, to extend your arm
and point at something in the ripples,
just beneath our image.

It seems so shallow, so easy.
The current is subtle but strong;
the riverbed may drop off suddenly
certain as rising mist.

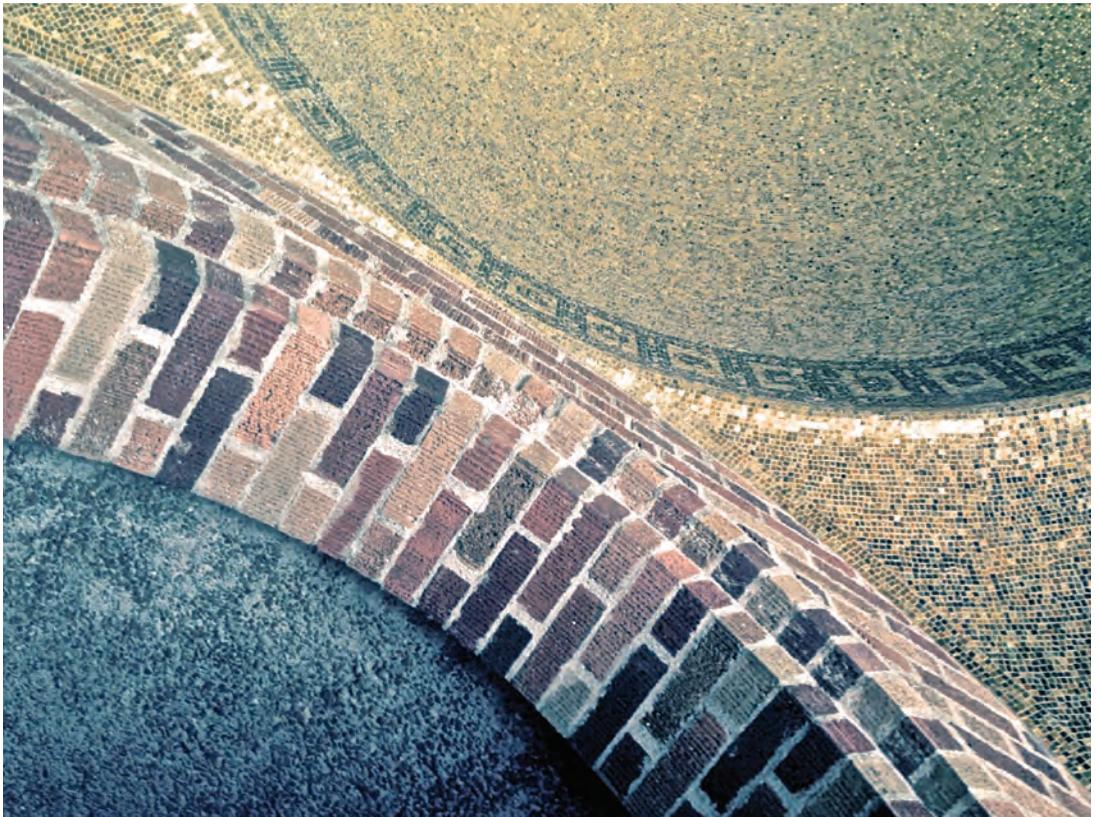
JESSICA NIVEN

Through the Lens



JENNY HAMILTON

When



SHARVERTY NEVILLE

Noëlle

I've started calling her Noëlle. That's not her name, I'm sure. It's just the words that ring out across every curve and hollow of the banquet hall whenever we meet.

Noëlle, Noëlle... possibly something about a Saturday?

It's being sung in a choral chant (and not entirely in English), to the time of a clanging, golden tambourine and other instruments that I can't quite pinpoint, because I'm not a bloody expert on musical instruments. Especially not ones that appear to come from, oh, I don't know, the Middle Ages — judging by how we're dressed.

I've got on something so gold and scarlet that, coupled with my hair, it probably makes me look like a walking fireplace. Hers is forest green, the colour of Christmas trees, with some blue and silver accents stitched here and there. It's always these ridiculous (and ridiculously gorgeous) gowns. Although I could swear hers was purple one night — but I'm not certain. I'm mostly too busy being all frustratingly transfixed by her face and stuff. And the fact that it's rather close to mine, smiling at me as our hands meet in that weird clap-turn-spin dance that everyone in the room seems to be doing in freakish unison.

I've seen the dance in films, so I'm able to follow along well enough. That, or whatever magic this place has means I just *know* it.

Also, her eyes are really, really brown. It'd be stupid to say they remind me of those "chocolate diamonds" they keep advertising on the telly, but... they kind of do. But better. Because, to be honest, chocolate diamonds are a bit hideous. And her eyes are the furthest thing from hideous jewellery trends. They're warm, with flecks of amber, and sort of... solid. Which, again, makes it sound like I'm talking about a stone. So, let's just get off the topic of "Ashlind cannot poetically describe another person's eyeballs for the bloody life of her" and move on to something else.

Like the part when the song ends — and I really don't want it to end, because in what world am I spinning around in a poofy, flowy Renaissance Faire dress with some girl who actually seems to like me? That's not real life. That can't happen. (I mean, it can. To other people. But not to me.)

A swishy, waltzy, purely instrumental melody begins to play out. She slips her hand into mine, and my heart does that little leap-soar feeling. Like that time when I fancied a girl who worked at a Walmart in my town, had a brief conversation with

her about a DVD sale, then ran out of things to say, got embarrassed, and fled to the clothing department, tweeting about how I'd "talked to her!!!" like she was some kind of celebrity or something. Yup, blushing and hiding is a solid flirting technique.

Only this time, I haven't gone anywhere. And Noëlle hasn't gone anywhere, either. Yet.

Because now she's not looking at me, but suddenly distracted by something else, far in the crowd behind me. Something she doesn't want to see. Something which makes a pang of badly-concealed fear flood over her features. Her hand slides out of mine, and she's off — darting and weaving through the other pairs of dancers, in search of the exit like her life depends on it.

It's so eerily *Cinderella* that I almost want to tell her I really don't care if we have to go back to her place in a pumpkin pulled by mice. But I can't catch up with her, or find her at all. It's just a sea of swirling dresses and tuxedos.

And then I wake up alone to the buzz of the world's most infuriating alarm clock, and it's back to a dreary life of scanning cans of soup and cat food for people who take grocery shopping a bit too seriously. Although I'm in love with a girl who exists solely within the realm of my dreams, so what do I know about sanity and priorities?

Still, I've started irrationally hating all these customers, with their children and coupons and families. I don't want their lives, not really. Not yet. Being settled down in suburbia at twenty-three sounds like a nightmare.

But they've managed to find actual people who love them in a mutual way, and how do you even do that?

I haven't noticed, but I've started humming the "Noëlle" song as I'm keying in produce codes in a blank state of muscle memory — my mind a million miles away from the sack of green beans on the scale. I'm not delusional enough to think that she could be real, but how is it possible to dream about the same scene, with the same stranger, every night for a week?

I need to at least know why she keeps fleeing.

My shift drags to an end without major incident. There's not much on to watch when I get home, since it's the middle of December and everything's on hiatus. I end up going to bed embarrassingly early, as if I'm a grandmother or a six-year-old.

And again, I'm at the banquet hall in the medieval dress. And so is Noëlle, except she's got a small braid woven into her thick black curls, which wasn't there last night.

Everything repeats itself. The twirling. The touching. The internal fluttering and flailing. And also the part where she runs away and I wake up to the incessant *bzzzz*,

bzzzz, bzzzz of the alarm I'd like to smash into tiny white plastic pieces. I can still feel how soft her light brown hand was against my pale, freckly one.

Yet the only thing I'm touching now is the duvet, and this is ridiculous. I just — I can't. I've got another eight-hour shift today. Eighty-some dollars in the bank. It's worth it to go. People have to get up and go to their jobs, because that's life. But all I want to do is fall back to sleep and see if I can just, for once, actually find her and figure out what's up with her.

I could get fired for this. I probably am going to be fired. Since "sorry, but it was just really important I finished my dream this morning" is a terrible excuse for coming in late. But just, oh... screw it. I'm calling it my equivalent of a "sprinting through the airport" moment. Except I'm just rolling over and falling back to sleep. Because I'm daring like that.

I'm in a different room this time. The smooth marble walls and the ornate golden frames around the tapestries suggest it's still the same palace. A whip of deep green fabric disappears into a room at the end of the corridor.

When I get there, she's staring out a long, arched window — possibly wondering how far the drop is, and if there's anything to scale down.

"Noëlle —"

"That's not even close to being my name," she replies, turning to look at me with the most bemused expression on her face.

"So what is it, then?"

"Not something I go around telling complete strangers. Even ones I've danced with," she adds, with a certain spark of light in her eyes that has nothing to do with the endless clusters of stars beyond the glass before her.

There might be windows back in the banquet hall, but I've never bothered paying them much attention. I probably should have — then I would have realized that the outdoors is just simply... *space*. Dark, vast, and dotted with little pricks and swirls of light in every direction.

"So, this isn't some castle in medieval Europe," I breathe, just staring out at the view. How the hell did Noëlle (because I've got to call her something) think she was going to escape, then? "Are we on a really fancy spaceship?"

"In a way." She shrugs. "It's more of a meeting place between worlds. A pocket dreamscape where..." Footsteps echo down the corridor, drawing closer. Noëlle sighs. "Please don't ask me to explain it."

She owes me a bloody explanation, for sure, but instead I ask who's coming, and

why they're after her. I've got the vague impression I might have fallen for some kind of criminal. It's not a deal-breaker. So far. Depends what she did, doesn't it? I'm not writing her off, just yet.

"Not everyone likes me as much as you do," is all she says, folding her arms against the thick pane and leaning into it. After a second, she pushes off, and looks back towards me. "I need to go. It's been... good."

"Go?" There is no way I'm letting this be our last meeting. Not when I know she's actually, well, real.

"It was a stupid idea to come here," she says. The footsteps are almost at the doorway.

"Are there more of these pocket-dream-meeting places?" I've sort of unconsciously taken her hand in mine. Because that seems like the thing to do when two people are about to be split apart, possibly indefinitely, by an unknown force.

"Yes. They're harder to get to. Bigger. And I can't promise I won't run into more, er, people who don't like me so much," Noëlle says. "But I'll try."

Just as the door bangs open, she lets go and I wake up. Alone. Again. The clock says it's now 11:30. My shift started four hours ago. I'm obviously not going in today.

It's another three nights before I see her again. Then two more 'til our next rendezvous.

On a palm tree-lined beach, she tells me she's an exiled princess. But the parts about the evil step-mum, and how she shared a flat with seven very short men, are a bit too reminiscent of *Snow White*. She lets slip that her dad's a watch-smith when we pass by a massive clock shop in a cobbled plaza, and I suspect that's actually true. Though I have serious doubts about that time she tried to convince a skeezy train porter that he should watch himself around us because she's a werewolf.

Daylight hours are a bit hard, since she's not the type of girlfriend I can invite 'round to my parents' house for Christmas. But I tell them I've started seeing someone long-distance, anyway. No one has to know she doesn't actually live in France, and that I didn't meet her on Tumblr.

I've quit the shitty grocery store gig. Still searching for something better. Not sure what, yet. Might go back to school; get a quick qualification of some kind, if I have to.

I'm trying to be okay with the awake-time. Do I hold my own hand on long bus rides and pretend it's hers? Maybe. Maybe I do. But I'll bet she's doing the same, on whatever world she's from. (Or not. Because she's not a gigantic loser.)

We'll be together properly someday, though. We'll find a way. I swear it.

DESSA BAYROCK

Everything Breaks Open

The lilies on the pond are blooming: sharp, short-lived,
ignored. Seniors feed ducks with trembling hands, unaware
the bread will swell and burst ravenous birds like balloons.
By morning only feathers remain, and in two weeks
the blossoms will rot from the bottom.

This is why we can't have nice things; there are no nice things.

I walk through the gaze of a young father, whose eyes
are like two shelled eggs, boiled and sitting uncovered in the fridge.
He clutches a wriggling baby and stares. Wait! One toddler cries, again
and again, clutching a dead leaf, glaring suspiciously at it, the gravel,
the sky, the thin blue edge of the water. Wait!

In three months everything will freeze: water, lilies,
and what's left of the ducks — feathers blooming in ice.
Everything is cold and crisp, as peaceful as a cigarette,
but the ice cracks in spring — and everything breaks open.

HEIDI LUHMERT

Blood and Honey

Kenya, 1912

Koyati has been on several raids before. Still, there is a strange excitement each time his face is reddened with the gritty mixture of ochre and fat, his spear polished, his arrows sharpened — a fresh invigoration, as though every time is his first again.

Not all the warriors are going on the raid; some must stay behind to protect the enjang and cattle, especially in these strange times of shrinking lands and colourless faces. Neither is it necessary to have them all along when raiding the Dorobo. They are not favoured by Ngai as the Maasai are; they pose little threat.

The enjang elders elected Koyati and three others from his age-set for the raid, as well as a handful of the shaved heads. This is the younger warriors' first raid — their ceremony is not long passed and the black fuzz on their heads is only beginning to grow back — but they have guarded the cattle well, and their courage is great. Koyati is glad to have them with him. He is also glad for an excuse to visit a Dorobo village. The new land assigned to the Maasai is small and cramped when compared to the vast territory they once roamed, making their settlements where they wished, and burning the clay-dung and sapling homes when they moved on with their herds. Koyati is eager to stretch his legs. Also, he wishes to marry, and he will need to purchase honey for the elders in order to do so — the Dorobo can provide that for him as well.

Tigisi, who is the reason Koyati needs honey, slipped out of the enjang the night before, meeting him at the foot of the fig tree, where the two of them sat together, staring up at the star-scattered sky, speaking some, but listening more.

Night comes alive on the savannah with the buzz of chirps, hisses, clacks, and rattles. Not far from their place under the tree, a herd of elephants groaned and mumbled as they settled to sleep, with the exception of one rebellious calf trumpeting his resistance. Hyenas cackled, leopards coughed, wild dogs howled, monkeys chattered and sometimes screeched — he could hear frogs too, croaking longingly for rain. A lion rumbled, satisfied enough with his meal to release a full roar, which echoed across the valley basin. Inside the enjang, the cattle softly moaned in response, unafraid of any predators within their thorny corral. Koyati lay back, content and comfortable amid the familiar night-time noises to sleep right there, but Tigisi nudged him playfully up again.

“Wake up, lazy warrior, before you find dung on your face.”

Koyati laughed. “The bridge is empty tonight, and likely will always be so. Ngai has already sent us all his cattle — that is why we are raiding tomorrow, to reclaim them.”

“How do you know he gave them all? Perhaps he hid some up there to give us later.” Tigisi leaned her head against his shoulder to stare up at the fig tree’s majestic black silhouette. Its sparse branches, thicker than two men abreast, lifted skyward, as though they really were awaiting more cattle from Ngai.

“If he has, I hope my leopard has not eaten them all.”

“Tell me again about your leopard,” Tigisi said, and Koyati obliged.

Once long ago, when he was only a herdsboy, Koyati saw a leopard dozing in a fig tree while grazing his father’s herd. One yellow eye was open, staring unblinkingly down at the boy as he warily returned the gaze. But the cows caught his attention then: one stepped in a meerkat hole, stumbling against her neighbour, and they all moaned in loud disgruntlement. The cow and her leg were fine, but when Koyati glanced up again at the tree, the leopard was gone.

Leopards are swift and silent on their feet, so it was easy to assume it had slipped down and away into the tall grasses when his back was turned, yet young Koyati could not help but wonder if it instead had gone up. When the earth and sky split, beginning time, it was the fig trees that held on. Bridges to the sky.

Tigisi smiled; her eyes were closed and she breathed deeply on Koyati’s shoulder. Gently he nudged her.

“No dung on my face,” she murmured, “nor leopard fur either. Maybe the sky bridge is closed.”

“Maybe,” agreed the warrior, “and maybe not. But whether Ngai gives us more cattle or not, tomorrow we will go out and bring many more home.”

“And you will buy honey,” Tigisi added, opening her eyes to emphasize the reminder with a pointed look.

“And we will be married and you will build our hut and our children will be outnumbered only by the cattle of our herd. But in the meantime I need to rest for my journey — we leave at sunrise.”

The women gather the morning of the raid to sing the raiders off on their way; the men and elders accompany with a low nasal drone. Saisi, who is the eldest of Koyati’s

age-set, salutes them by raising his spear and echoing the song as they leave. The other warriors follow his example, smiling and spitting and shouting. Madero, Koyati's closest age-mate, even pauses every few steps to dance, laughing as the younger warrior behind him again bumps into him. They descend into the valley with Maasai pride, heads held high and long legs in steady stride.

All day they march, stopping only briefly in the shade to drink from their gourds of cows' milk and blood. The warriors maintain a brisk pace, walking single file while the heat of the day, thicker and staler down in the valley than it was at the enkang, presses against their ochred skin. They hold no conversations, saving their energy for walking, and when at last the day wanes, cooling as it fades, Saisi gives the word to stop for the night.

Another drink from the gourds and the warriors, comfortably tired from their journey so far, are content. Setting their spears, shields, knives, bows, and arrows carefully on the ground, they then lie beside them to rest. Once again, Koyati closes his eyes to the starry sky and listens, ready to be soothed to sleep by the sounds of the savannah, but it isn't long before his eyelids are startled open again — not by the playful touch of Tigisi, but by a sharp new sound. A high-pitched, wavering noise whistles through the grass to the men under the fig tree. Something foreign. Unnatural. Other warriors sit up also to listen in wonder.

"There's something more," Madero whispers, cocking his head toward the sound. The animals have quieted, disturbed by the haunting whistle, and now Koyati can hear it too. It is almost like the clacking toad, but wheezier, and steadier. Perfectly steady, and progressing. Again the whistle calls, louder.

"A *train*," grunts Saisi. "We are close to the Iron Snake."

"*Train*." Koyati softly tests the foreign word on his tongue. Beside him, Madero lifts his hands to his mouth and blows a note through them, mimicking the sound.

"Quiet!" Saisi says sharply. "You do not want to call it to us."

"I heard the creature never leaves the Iron Snake," Madero replies lightly, "that they are joined like a horn on a cow."

"Or perhaps a bird on a crocodile," suggests one of the Selogunia darkly. "One that may fly away."

"It is no creature," another insists. "My uncle saw it some moons ago and said it was iron carts lined up together and moving, though not pushed or pulled by any visible thing."

"My grandfather saw it as well," still another puts in. "He said it ate like a creature

— like a ravenous beast! Food and other things went into the *train*, but it was never satisfied.”

“It doesn’t eat them,” Mandero laughs. “Animals and people too go into it, but they come out again whole and unscathed.”

“But how —?”

“Enough,” Saisi says firmly, and the cry of the *train*, both harsh and mournful, sounds again, echoing his command. Awed silence falls over the raiders’ camp. Even Saisi continues in a sobered tone. “We will cross the Iron Snake tomorrow. Until then, we must rest.” He tucks his ochred plaits over his shoulder before turning on his side to sleep.

One by one, the men follow his example. Maasai warriors do not fear, but there is a quiet unease among them, echoing the unnatural stillness of the savannah. Once more the breathy whistle pierces the night, fragile yet determined. The clicking countermelody continues, steady and persistent as the sun as it approaches, then fades, and Koyati tries to picture this foreign *train*.

Dawn breaks over the savannah, turning the world red as the Maasai warriors’ ochre-stained hair, skin, and clothing. Familiar morning noises have returned with birdsong and scolding monkeys. The raiders drink some of the souring milk before gathering their few possessions and continuing on. They walk in silence, Koyati trying to remember the pitch of the previous night’s sound.

Red turns to orange, orange turns to yellow, and yellow melts in the heat of the day, hotter now in the lower plains of the valley than it was in the enkang. The warriors walk on, maintaining a steady pace despite the heat. By midmorning they reach the Iron Snake and pause. The smooth iron ridges mimic one another more perfectly than a reflection on still water, and the wooden slats are set out one after the other with a precision beyond nature. The shaved heads look down in curiosity at it as they approach, but Koyati keeps his gaze up, following the Snake with his eyes. It curves onward, stretching immeasurable distance like a black scar seared into the valley grasses, and eventually dissolves like the rest of the landscape into the shimmering heat. He looks the other way; the view is the same, but something else catches his eye.

A lone gazelle, delicate and white-throated with long horns arched over its bent form, grazes in the distance. Between it and the warriors, just a spear’s throw away, a she-lion slinks toward her unsuspecting prey. Koyati watches, admiring the lithe grace of the beast as she creeps almost invisibly through the golden grass and readies to

pounce. The gazelle, who had noticed the raiders earlier and deemed them no threat, looks up again, tail twitching. Then, suddenly, it bolts away, but the lion lunges to cut it off. Madero and a few others gather beside Koyati to watch the smaller creature dart frantically away, then scramble back, zigzagging between the Iron Snake and pursuing lion. Though the gazelle is agile, trying several times to escape by doubling back, the tawny cat blocks each attempt with a powerful leap into its path, swiping at the reddish-brown flanks as the gazelle turns to run the other way. The prey tires, and it will not be long until the lion feasts. But then, in an act of final desperation, the gazelle glances at the Iron Snake before dashing forward to it. With a frustrated growl, the lion pushes herself after the desired meal with powerful, charging strides, but while the gazelle darts nimbly across the metal lines, the lion pulls back, halting and hissing at the jutting wooden slats.

“Come,” Saisi says as he crosses over. Others follow, but some, like Koyati and Madero, stand staring at the angry lion, who paces and snarls along the invisible barrier. She glares at the warriors, as though blaming them for her escaped prey, now long out of sight.

“We must continue,” Saisi insists. Still slightly dazed by what they saw, the men go to him, stepping carefully over the unnatural formation below them. Koyati is one of the last to cross, and though he sees his tribesmen pass through unharmed, he holds his spear in front of him, as he would hold up a hand to grope in the dark, lest he bump against an unseen wall. Safely on the other side, he again looks back. The she-lion has turned her back on them and stiffly stalks away, but he can still hear her low growls.

“I had heard,” Saisi says calmly, “that many animals will not cross the Iron Snake. Now I see it is true. We will move on.”

He leads the way, and the warriors, keeping their thoughts silent, follow. Koyati glances back at the scar in the land and wonders what sort of thing it is to hold back even a lion.

They reach the Dorobo village by evening, when the sun is just beginning to yellow the earth again. A woman carrying an infant on her back and a bundle of sticks in her arms is the first to spot them, and she watches suspiciously. The cattle are on the other side of the village, penned in by a fence with barbs at the top made of wire, not acacia thorns.

Koyati needs to buy honey from the elders, but Saisi is already marching up to the barbed fence and the others follow at a calm but steady pace. The day is waning and

Maasai never raid or attack under cover of night.

“Stop!” insists a Dorobo man, but the raiders pay no heed. Dorobo cut and cultivate the land; they hunt and eat game animals; they slaughter cattle. Maasai do not listen to Dorobo.

“Go from here. The cattle are ours,” another villager declares. “We paid the *tax* for them. They remain here.”

Another alien word. It is strange also to have the Dorobo protesting so. Despite their irreverence for Ngai, they know he has given his cattle to the Maasai, and they know the Maasai will take what is theirs.

Mandero goes to open the gate, but struggles. At a word from Saisi, who has formed the men into a half-circle around the pen’s opening, Koyati moves to help him. On the other side, the cattle low as if in greeting. The gate, hard and cold to the touch, rattles loudly, but remains stuck fast. The Dorobo have sealed it with a rope made from iron circles. Koyati glances briefly behind him at the slowly approaching Dorobo. Though he does not show it, he feels uneasy. Their hostility is off-putting. Though they call it a raid, the Maasai are seldom violent on such outings. They go to reclaim their cattle and leave with them unchallenged. But this Dorobo village, these non-Maasai people, they seem to think the cattle are truly theirs, and they seem ready to resist, replacing the word of Ngai with a foreign one.

More of the Dorobo villagers have gathered, all with the same set expression against their Maasai visitors. One steps forward, carrying a long stick that he holds more like a baby in his arms than a shaft of wood.

“Leave us now. You have cattle of your own; you do not need ours as well.”

The warriors scoff at the man’s audacity, and Mandero laughs aloud. How ignorant is this Dorobo village! Drought or no drought, it is not a question of need, but of right, honour, and tradition. He has chosen to ignore the iron fastenings on the gate and moves to a weaker spot, sawing the wire with his knife. Koyati follows suit, working on a higher wire, while holding his spear against his body in the crook of his arm. His age-mate has stuck his into the ground to work more efficiently, but Koyati wants his close. His muscles are poised for action and his heart beats quicker than he would like. This raid is different from any other he has been on. It feels wrong — it is wrong. The wire snaps and he stands aside to let Mandero finish cutting the last one.

But Mandero never finishes. A movement catches Koyati’s eye: the man with the stick has stepped forward. A Dorobo woman shouts, but her voice is drowned out by a crash of noise, a shudder, a boom — thunder cut short, a lion’s roar compressed.

Quick, short, powerful, and loud. Unbelievably loud. So loud Koyati is sure the earth is shaken and time has stopped. Was this what it was like when the sky split from the earth? He glances up briefly, anxiously. Have the fig trees let go?

The sky is still there, and time resumes. Someone is shouting, he hears through his ringing ears. The fence stands, held by a single half-sawn wire. Madero is fallen.

Two clicks, hardly audible against the backdrop of chaos, and the jolting crack comes again. This time, time goes on as a warrior cries out and staggers, hand pressed against his bleeding arm. The others crouch in the dust, spears at the ready, but they search for their enemy. How can they fight a sound?

Madero's eyes are wide, staring up at the hidden place in the sky when Koyati carefully turns him over. His cowskin is torn, a large hole over his chest. Blood mixes with ochre.

"Go," the Dorobo man says again. His voice is thin and weak in comparison to the great noises of a moment ago. He points his stick at them; a thin trail of smoke drifts from its hollowed end, but Koyati sees no flame. The other raiders watch from behind white, black, and red shields.

"We will go," Saisi says, suddenly beside Koyati, and resetting the broken fence. At his order, Koyati holds the post while his elder twists the cut wire back in place. It is not a permanent fix, but his meaning is clear: the Dorobo may keep their cattle. No one else moves. "We go!" he says again, louder.

Koyati bends in the dust and takes up his age-mate's shield. The Maasai bury their dead no more than they would gouge the earth in any other way, but Madero's family will want his shield.

The raiders depart neither slowly nor hurriedly, but in their usual stride, proud heads high, even the shaved head of the injured young man, who bleeds yet reveals no pain. What have they to be proud of? Koyati cannot name it. He is not even certain —

Yet they are Maasai; they are always proud. It is their way, even if they return from the raid empty-handed, but for an extra shield.

At their backs the cattle moan, left behind with a dead warrior, and Koyati realizes he did not buy any honey for Tigisi.

JESSICA NIVEN

Present Still Life



ASHLEY MUSSBACHER

breaking the rules



HELEN HOGETERP

The Living Are Not Welcome Here

Orpheus paid the ferryman in triplicate:
Once for his passage over, again for his passage back,
and again a fare for sweet Eurydice's return,
though he knew not if she would come, for
Hades does not give up his wealth easily,
and what treasure had Orpheus in his possession
which the Lord of the Underworld could desire
in trade for his beloved?

For the living are not welcome below,
and their treasures mean little to Hades.

Orpheus has just one jewel: his grief crystallized
in a heavy black opal wrapped around his heart.
His eyes are hard, his touch is cold on Charon's craft
as he crosses the river Styx into the Underworld.
Charon at the prow stands, his straight paddle
sluicing through the toxic water of the Styx,
a river which supports neither flora nor fauna,

For the living are not welcome on those waters,
nor on their muddy shores.

The water is black and viscous, the mists choke
birds above, who fall dead thickly upon the shores
where the only living things are those black dogs
sired by Cerberus: lean starving bitches who slather
at the sight of Orpheus — alive — standing
in the centre of Charon's craft. They taste his blood on the air
and they desire it; they lope along the shore, hopeful,

For even they know that the living
are not welcome in this place.

Orpheus in the middle stands and behind him gather

THOMAS NYTE

Semper Glo

They called me
cancer carpenter
erecting neon ships
on the catatonic fringe
of meteor Holocene

as the Breakenridge superwaves,
incipient and violent,
snarled from the lagoon,
throbbing impatience.

In twisting dusk
I saw the scorching contagion,
furious glowstick blue,
blanket my firewood forearms,
and douse flaming embers
into spirals of sarcoma smoke.
I hammered smelted air,
pounding flask on flask
of blistering oxygen.

The viral rave.
The starboard cyanide
of the electric southern shoals.

Awaken
in my homebuilt shipwreck,
all bile and sugarpiss,
sinking in electric cosmopolis
of the ever-dead
and the never-dead.

Forever,
those who escape with me

dance
to my pulsating carcinoma heartbeat.

ASHLEY MUSSBACHER

skyline



SHUANG LIU & MARIA VANEWYK

Scopophilia



ASHLEY MUSSBACHER

We, the Infinite

Shorty Shay was cut up into nine neat little pieces — not including his head — by the time the fuzz caught up with us and locked us up for arson. Blue suits, yellow suits, orange with stripes on the collar. We knew it wouldn't last. It had already been jump-started with the death of the political piggies in the big house on the hill. The fuzz were only stalling the inevitable: Helter Skelter, we know, cannot be stopped.

Do you know what death tastes like?

We do. The night the piggies died, we tried it for ourselves. August was ripe and the moon was full. Four of us drove up the hill to the big house, cut the phone line above the security gate, and climbed our way up and over the spiked iron rails.

Don't make a sound, and do exactly as I say, Tex said to us when we landed on smooth pavement on the other side. We didn't make a sound. We did exactly as he said.

As we walked up the long driveway to the house we wanted to sing in anticipation. Love was swelling inside us, our fingers curled around the rough handles of our knives. The lights in the windows glowed gently against the silver light as we approached. It was all we could do to keep our voices from bursting into the night:

Que sera, sera!

Whatever will be, will be!

The future's not ours to see!

Que sera, sera!

When we reached the side of the house, we waited in the garden bed as Tex sent Linda Kasabian to look for open windows. If we knew then what we know now, we would have slashed the bitch and left her pale, naked body on the lawn. Pig.

We should have known that she would lie to us when she returned. Did she think if she told us the windows were all locked up, we would sheath our knives, walk back down the driveway, and return to Charlie at Spahn Ranch: *Sorry, Charlie, we couldn't start Helter Skelter, the windows were locked?*

Tex found an open window, and told us to go in and make a mess. We told Linda Kasabian to stay outside and listen for sounds. She didn't know the love we felt yet, and now she never will. Only we could do it for the piggies. Only we.

The press is stupid. They got it all wrong. How could one man do what we did? We watched Tex stab one of the pigs and counted over twenty strikes. We thought our

wrists would break every time our knives struck bone. Five piggies dead. And yet they arrested William Garretson, the property caretaker. When they announced it on the news later the next day we wanted to scream at them: *No, it was the blacks!* Did they not see the panther paw we painted in the piggies' blood on the refrigerator door?

You still don't understand, but we will help you to. After all, love is love, and we love you too.

We were back at the Ranch on the edge of the desert. Our bodies close, huddled against the screen of the television, its antennae leaned away from the oscillating fan, our hair stuck to our backs and the sides of our arms, and we waited for the evening news as Tex and Bobbie lit cigarettes.

We could feel Charlie. We knew he was close. The vibes that resonated from him massaged our inner thighs, made beads of sweat on the backs of our necks and from our underarms slide down, down, down, and sent shivers up our spines. We exhaled, shakily. We inhaled, letting the sharp cigarette smoke fill our lungs, our eyes tearing up at the sudden dryness.

And Charlie entered the room behind us. We felt our bodies urge him forward into us. He moved between us and we parted for him, separated and came back together to enclose around him as if we were the waves of the Red Sea.

And now you know our secret — the truth of what Charlie is. And we are the Infinite. His Family, brought together for a specific purpose: to spread our love. But the world isn't ready for such a love yet. Which is why Helter Skelter must continue.

Imagine what it would be like to watch every man judge himself and then take it out on every other man on the face of the Earth. Imagine.

After the news told us what we'd done wrong, Charlie told us to get a change of clothes. *Tonight, I'll show you how to do it right.*

We noticed Linda Kasabian sat on the outside of us, at the edge of the room facing in. We knew we unsettled her. We knew she no longer ached for Charlie like we did. She was changing and turning away from us, becoming one of them. Charlie knew, we knew. But he took her along with us anyway, and we did not question his wisdom.

That thought that you're carrying, we heard him say to her, his lips close to her ear, his fingers running through her hair. *You think you don't know what it feels like to be looked through, to be thrown away? Death is an illusion. It is something we do for them, not to them. We're only giving them what they want.*

The next two piggies to die were husband and wife. They lived in a large house with a pool in the backyard, rare paintings in the living room, plush carpet. We remember

feeling the fibres under our shoes, squirming like fuzzy worms under our soles with each step. Charlie had tied the couple together by their necks with a lamp cord, and told us that he and Tex would help the man, but he wanted each of us to take our turn with the woman.

We didn't cover her head with a pillowcase like the detective said on the news. Idiot pig. We wanted to look into her eyes so she would know she was about to die. Linda Kasabian was running to the neighbour's house by the time we were shoving our knives into the woman's body. There was so much blood on our hands, sticky and warm, and we tasted it, licked it off our fingers. It's far out. To taste death, yet give life.

We painted *DeATH To ALL PiGs* on the living room wall, rehung the paintings upside-down, and Tex pissed in the pool. The blood stains were stark against the white carpet. We left designs with our feet, enjoying the copper tang as it settled into the floorboards beneath.

But after that night Charlie knew Shorty Shay flapped to the fuzz. We got back to the Ranch and Tex and Bobbie went to make sure he never spoke again. The rest of us stayed in and ate a meal with salad from lettuce Katie had found in one of the dumpsters behind a fancy restaurant. It's amazing what pigs will throw away. French fries only an hour old, or ribbons of beef cooked a little too long.

The next days were spent with tablets on our tongues, and our minds revisiting the first house, the first pigs, the first moment we felt our knives cut flesh. The five piggies: three men, one with a Polish accent, one with curls in his hair, and one with white shorts and knee socks pulled all the way up, and two women, one with a high-pitched squeal, and the last, whose stomach felt swollen and tight, pregnant.

She was the last to die. We had chased her into the living room, where she saw her friend's body and screamed. She fought us with long nails, and we cornered her until she collapsed. Her words bubble inside us like acid, corroding us slowly from within.

Please don't hurt me. Don't hurt my baby. I just want to have my baby.

And we replied, *Look bitch, we don't care about you, we don't care about your baby. You're going to die.*

We watched her blood gurgle out of her chest from the stab wound and that was when we leaned in and tasted death for the first time. Susan Atkins wanted to carve out the baby and take it, but didn't. Katie Krenwinkel had cut her hand on her own knife when blood had made the handle slippery. Linda Kasabian was out on the lawn listening for sounds. Leslie Van Houten was back at the Ranch making love to Bobbie. Mary Brunner was feeding the dogs. Lynette Fromme put another acid tablet on

Catherine Gillies' tongue moments before she stole it back with her own. Madaline Cottage watched the children play. Ella Bailey, Sherry Cooper, and Catherine Share were searching for food in a dumpster. We look at ourselves and we see the love within. Taste death, give life. Helter Skelter.

Did you know Susan Atkins once saw Charlie take a dead bird and breathe on it and it got up in his palm and flew away? She will tell that story to anyone who listens. Did you know she used to sing in a church choir before she met Charlie? That was before her mother died. She told us she would sing beneath the window of her mother's hospital room hoping the notes of her voice would carry her soul up to Heaven when she died. She was the one who told us Charlie was Jesus Christ. She was the first of us to taste death when she and Charlie helped Gary Hinman get to Heaven. She said Charlie had a sword, but Bobbie, who was also there, told us it was a .22 Buntline revolver. But we believe Susan Atkins, because she's us, even if sometimes she thinks she's not.

Katie Krenwinkle thinks she's Charlie's favourite because she slept with him the first night they met. It was two years before Helter Skelter started, on the shores of Manhattan, when she said Charlie used words like beautiful and charismatic to describe her. And even if she believes she's somehow better than us, we know different. That no one's better, because we are We.

Leslie Van Houten likes to wear white skirts that brush the tops of her bare feet, because she thinks that Jesus Christ is drawn to white. We don't tell her that there's a blood stain on the back of it, just below her ass, where her insides swelled and leaked from her a day too early. If she knew, then she might scrub the spot until the threads wore thin and transparent. We think red looks good on her.

Mary Brunner was the first of the Family, the first wife of Charlie, the first of us to take him into her. She let him move into her home in San Francisco, listened to his music every night before they slept. Then she was the one who let Ella Bailey, Sherry Cooper, and Catherine Share move and crowd her space with Charlie. We like to call her Mother Mary, because of all of us, she was the only one to bear Charlie a son.

Linda Kasabian liked to use the word *why*, even after Charlie told her not to. We remember her coming to us with a daughter on her hip and a sappy story about how her husband rejected them. She didn't like it when we took her credit cards and driver's licence from her and locked them away with our own. *Why?* she asked. *What's yours is ours and what's ours is yours now*, we replied. Ella Bailey took her daughter from her arms and walked to where the children played in dirt at the edge of the Ranch. Linda Kasabian asked why again, and we tried to explain that when children are raised by

everyone it removes ego their parents instil in them.

What are you looking for? we asked.

For God, she said.

You've come to the right place.

But that night at the piggies' house, the night we killed the pregnant one, we felt the sting of the knife and the kick of the unborn child. We felt God look over his shoulder and the world turn.

Do you know what it feels like to anger God?

We each watch Sharon Tate's body drain of blood every time we close our eyes, stare into the mirror and feel the flatness of our stomachs, bear the scar from when Katie Krenwinkle cut her hand on her own knife, taste the dust of the desert at Spahn Ranch, want to steal back our children from the yard, and ask a hundred questions why. And as we each sit, staring at the walls of our cells, we can't help but remember the war to end the world started with us.

Notes on Contributors

Dessa Bayrock

Dessa Bayrock works at a bookstore and is a Canadian literature carnivore. She graduated from UFV in 2014 with an English Honours degree, and now she drives stick and bangs words together until they spark.

Anne Franklin

Anne Franklin lives in Victoria and graduated from UFV's BFA program in 2012. She spends her time sitting on beaches and drinking coffee.

Jenny Hamilton

Jenny Hamilton is currently a visual arts student studying film photography at UFV. She has also studied filmmaking at SFU. While having shown her digital photography work at group exhibitions in Vancouver, she now prefers to work in film and be in the darkroom. Jenny's photograph *Harvest* was published in *Louden Singletree* in 2012, and she also placed second in UFV's photo essay competition in 2014. Jenny was born in Vancouver, BC but now resides in the Yarrow Ecovillage and works at UFV.

Helen Hogeterp

Helen Hogeterp is almost finished her Bachelor of Arts in English at UFV. Her work has previously appeared in the first issue of the *Louden Singletree* and *The Cascade*. She lives with three dogs and a cat in a house in Aldergrove, which is sadly not zoned for keeping chickens.

Shuang Liu

Shuang Liu was born in 1989 in Chengdu, China, but was brought up in a small city near Montreal since the age of eleven. After having explored British Columbia for three and half years, Liu graduated from the University of the Fraser Valley in December 2014. She currently holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with extended minors in visual arts and fashion design. Liu developed her artistic sense by enrolling in classes such as drawing, contemporary dance, and electronic keyboard at a young age. Her living experiences help her to express herself through photography, print media, and wearable art. As an artist, Liu strongly believes in simplicity: "Less in more."

Heidi Luhmert

Heidi Luhmert graduated from UFV in 2014. A long-time reader of the *Louden Singletree*, she is happy to finally contribute to it as well.

Karl Luhmert

Karl Luhmert is a student at UFV, and he would like to take this opportunity to say, “Hi mom!”

Ashley Mussbacher

Ashley Mussbacher is a fourth-year English student with a focus in creative writing. She writes primarily for historical fiction and fantasy, but intends to explore a wide range of genres. She has self-published one novel, and continues to work on a historical fiction novella, among other side projects. Aside from her written work, she also enjoys painting with a range of different mediums, usually anything that happens to be on hand — including her cat.

Sharverty Neville

Sharverty Neville graduated from UFV with a BA in English in 2014. She grew up in a forest surrounded by bears, and spent most of her life telling people how to pronounce her name. As she’s yet to receive her Hogwarts letter or find a job posting for a career in space piracy or demon hunting, she writes a lot of fantasy and sci-fi things instead.

Jessica Niven

Jessica Niven is a student at the University of the Fraser Valley who is graduating in June 2015. She has completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a major in visual art, focusing on painting, photography and print media. She hopes to continue making art as well as continuing on into interior design and photography.

Thomas Nyte

Thomas Nyte is a recent UFV graduate who is enjoying having money again. By stereotypical standards, he’s the worst kind of writer: he doesn’t read dozens of books per month, routinely attend poetry readings, or consume high-proof alcohol to quell his impending self-contempt. Yet here he is, getting published and whatnot. Who’s the chump now, UFV?

Alex Rake

Alex Rake is a poet/musician/student/librarian/editor/commie/capitalist/up high/down low/too slow kind of guy. He believes language is musical matter, matter is energy, and energy’s far out, man.

Katie Stobbart

Katie Stobbart is a creative writing honours student at UFV studying poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction. Her poetry and short fiction has been published in the *Louden Singletree*, *What If* magazine, and the Poetry Institute of Canada's 2009 anthology of verse, *Whispers on the Wind*. Katie is the president of the English Students Association and was a copy editor of the fifth issue of the *Louden Singletree*. She was previously copy editor of *The Cascade*, UFV's student newspaper, and is currently editor-in-chief.

Maria VanEwyk

Maria VanEwyk is currently a student at UFV in the Bachelor of Arts program studying visual arts and psychology. Maria is interested in the subconscious seeping through during production of the abstract. Her future goals are to complete her master's in art therapy at Concordia University and continue exploring the combination of psychology and art.

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 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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