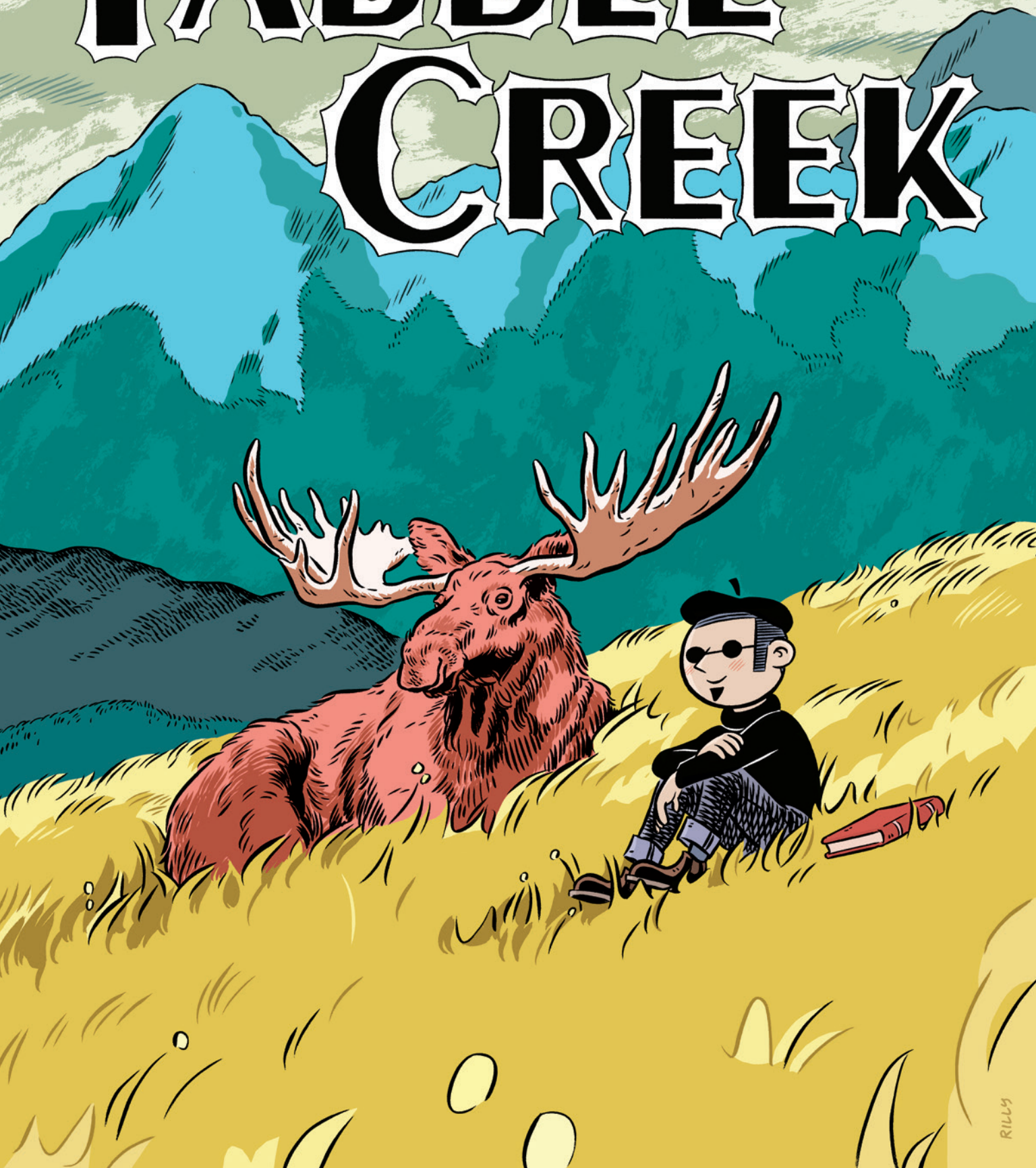


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TADDLE CREEK

THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY NUMBER

NO. 40, WINTER, 2017-18



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THE CONTRIBUTORS

Sarah Gilbert (The Ephemera, p. 5) teaches in the English department at Dawson College, in Montreal.

Yasuko Thanh ("Birds of Paradise," p. 8) is working on a memoir, titled *Mistakes to Run With*. Her novel, *Mysterious Frangrance of the Yellow Mountains*, won the 2016 Rogers Writers Trust Fiction Prize.

Stuart Ross ("Strength and Confidence," p. 11) won the Canadian Jewish Literary Award, in the poetry category, for his collection *A Sparrow Came Down Resplendent*. His latest book is *Pockets*, a novel-in-prose-poems.

Alfred Holden ("A Man and His World," p. 12) is a contributing editor of *Taddle Creek*, and a former reporter and editor at the *Toronto Star*. He has contributed to the magazine since 1997.

Derek McCormack (The Shopping Cart, p. 19) has contributed to the magazine since 1997. His most recent novel is *The Well-Dressed Wound*.

Noah Van Sciver ("Cool Comics Club (of Ohio)," p. 20) is an award-winning cartoonist and the creator of the comic book series *Blammo*. He is a regular contributor to *Mad*, and has created five graphic novels, including the Fante Bukowski graphic novella series.

Michael Christie ("The Marathon of Hope," p. 22) is the author of the story collection *The Beggar's Garden*, the novel *If I Fall, If I Die*, and a forthcoming novel that may be titled *Greenwood*. He has contributed to the magazine since 2012.

Chris Chambers ("Baguette, Pigeon, Peregrine," p. 25) has been publishing poems—many of them about pigeons—in *Taddle Creek* since 1997. His latest collection is *Thrillows and Despairors*.

Brett Popplewell (The Race Track, p. 27) is the bestselling author of someone else's book, and the editor and publisher of Canada's most-decorated small illustrated literary humour magazine, the *Feathertale Review*.

Janet Rogers (The Gallery, p. 28) is a Mohawk-Tuscarora writer from Six Nations of the Grand River. She works in the genres of poetry, spoken word performance poetry, video poetry, and recorded poetry with music.

Mona Awad ("If That's All There Is," p. 36) won the Amazon.ca Best First Novel Award for her debut novel, *13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl*, which was also short-listed for the Giller Prize.

Allison LaSorda ("The Pocket," p. 39) has recently published poems in the *Fiddlehead* and *Shenandoah*, and on *Hazlitt*. Her debut collection, *Stray*, was published in 2017.

Elana Wolff ("Swoon," p. 41) is a writer, editor, translator, and designer and facilitator of social art courses. Her fifth solo collection of poems, *Everything Reminds You of Something Else*, was published this spring. She has contributed to the magazine since 2000.

Sue Carter (The Books, p. 47) is the editor-in-chief of *Quill and Quire*, and the books columnist for *Metro*.

Dave Lapp (*People Around Here*, p. 48) has contributed to the magazine since 2001.

Matthew Daley (illustrations) is a freelance illustrator and *Taddle Creek's* in-house fiction drawer. His books include the self-published *The Yule Lads*, a Christmas-themed picture book, written with his wife, Lindsay Gibb. He has contributed to the magazine since 2009.

Conan Tobias is the editor-in-chief and founder of *Taddle Creek*, and the senior editor of *Quill and Quire*. His profile of the cartoonist and illustrator Lou Skuce, from *Taddle Creek* No. 37, recently was awarded honourable mention at the Heritage Toronto Awards.

Ethan Rilly (The Cover) is the creator of the comic *Pope Hats*. His first graphic novel, *Young Frances*, will be published in 2018. He has contributed to the magazine since 2010.



"The popular favourite."

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THE MAIL

UNEXPECTED REUNION

I picked up *Taddle Creek* for the first time a couple of weeks ago, and it was a little surreal for me to see a picture of my late husband, Fred Mandel (who died in 1996, at the age of forty-seven), at the Atlantic National Exhibition's Red Cross booth ("Roller Coaster Ride," No. 39). It was his clothing that caught my eye. I remembered every article down to the shoes, but what really sealed the deal was his placement of his arms and hands on the counter (I looked at this photo many times). That picture was taken when we were dating, in the seventies. I was in the hospital having my tonsils removed, and he went on a trip out east, so the picture would have been taken before we were married. But, that's definitely Fred.

MARIE MANDEL
Toronto

SOLDIER ON

I would like to attest, as a colleague of Alfred Holden's at the *Toronto Star* for many years, that he will be sorely missed as the epitome of the many unsung heroes at that newspaper who battled to get important stories and opinion pieces published, often against great odds ("Lessons From the Reporters' Trenches," No. 38).

Alfred's retirement should be lamented. It is sadly typical of the departure of knowledgeable, hard-working, ethical, unappreciated, and largely anonymous editors vitally important to readers who love the *Star* and still rely on it as a rare trusted source of local, national, and international news and commentary in one package.

The departure of each member of his cohort of gatekeepers chips away at what makes the *Star* different and special and credible. Alfred's departure will leave a bigger chip than most.

In his recent column, Alf mentions the public's blithe acceptance of "social control in the newsroom" as a given these days. He speculates that his contention that a newspaper like the *Star* can be an instrument of social change was perhaps under-appreciated by his audience when he spoke at the University of Vermont several years ago. As an academic who

researched the social influences on decision-making in the *Toronto Star* newsroom (and experienced them first-hand as an employee), I can agree with him that many fine reporters and editors there have successfully fought the good fight to get important issues discussed in the paper and on-line, no matter how unsexy or politically incorrect they may be to those focused mainly on attracting eyeballs and clicks.

Alf was a good soldier in that fight. Here's hoping he will thrive and continue to publish in his post-*Star* career.

JOE FOX
Toronto

MERDE

I was ready to subscribe to your magazine until I read the last paragraph in your letter to future subscribers. If you are publishing a literary magazine, you should be aware that *tabernac* is a very common swear word in the French language. You should also know that most of the swear words in the French language are words against the Roman Catholic Church. The exception is "fuck," which is the same in all languages.

I will need time to reconsider subscribing. A correction, while probably impossible, is necessary.

HELEN REID
Via E-mail

Nothing is impossible, Helen, though, in this case, it is unnecessary, as Taddle Creek was well aware of the word's various meanings when its subscription campaign was mailed to unsuspecting non-readers this March.

A REAL HEAD FOR EGG CREAM?

Re: *Sharon Wilensky Makes an Egg Cream* (YouTube).

This is what I picked up from the video: It's O.K. to rip off the paying customer with a sorry-ass cream head that mixes with the milk and seltzer because that's how you like it. No one else's tradition applies but your own. That's my take. Authenticity out the window! Not Fox's U-Bet chocolate, two-per-cent low-fat milk, a flat, muddy head. Really?

STEPPING LIGHTLY
via YouTube

Gleðileg jól!



The Yule Lads is an illustrated tale of the 13 troll-like characters who, according to Icelandic Folklore, visit houses around the winter holiday season to steal things and harass children.

Illustrated by Matthew Daley and written by Lindsay Gibb, the book is a tribute to creepy children's tales.

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THE EPHEMERA



MAN ABOUT TOWN

Michel Rabagliati's Paul takes a walk through Montreal's history.

BY SARAH GILBERT

On a Monday afternoon earlier this fall, a man named Mathieu took a stroll through Montreal's Plateau. He paused behind the Mont-Royal Metro station, looked up, and took in a giant cartoon affixed to a brick wall. The panel depicted, in bold strokes, the Gibeau Orange Julep drive-in, on Decarie Boulevard, surrounded by vintage tail-finned cars. A greaser with a familiar-looking face sat in a convertible, waving at a waitress on roller skates.

"*C'est Paul!*" several people called out as they walked past. The image is one of a dozen twelve-by-six-foot panels that make up the walking tour *Paul à Montreal*, which features various points in the city's

history, and stars Paul, the popular Quebec comic book character created by Michel Rabagliati.

"Of course I know Paul!" Mathieu said, as if talking about a real person. "I've known him since I was little." He looked up again at the comic. "It's cool. It really shows the evolution of Montreal. If someone graffiti's these, I'll be very angry." (Most of the panels are well out of reach, at least twelve feet from the ground. The two that sit at eye level have, in fact, been tagged—and restored—repeatedly.)

Rabagliati himself soon pulled up on a bicycle, ready to take a walk through Montreal's past. He wore a grey T-shirt featuring the geodesic dome of Buck-

minster Fuller's Expo 67 American pavilion, which seemed appropriate attire for a chronicler of the city's history.

Rabagliati referred to his project—which was installed in August and is on display until the end of the year—as "historical fantasy," due to the liberties he took in combining notable moments from a ten- to twenty-year span in each scene. The first panel, located at the Laurier Metro station, depicts the 1642 settlement of Ville-Marie. At its centre, a woman drops a red polka-dotted apron. Paul tries to return the lost article, but the woman is elusive. Their missed connection continues through all twelve panels, leapfrogging from one era to the next, before Paul finally catches up to the object of his chivalry, in 2017. "I needed a story that would work for children, and tourists who don't speak French," Rabagliati said.

Montreal has always been a major character in Rabagliati's work—his stories,

which take place at different times in Paul's life, have a melancholy appreciation of the past, and depict specific sentimental aspects of the city, from the Expo grounds to the grand Eaton's Ninth Floor restaurant to the narrow Cinema Parallèle on the Main. Rabagliati initially balked when Frédéric Gauthier, the co-owner of La Pastèque, which has published the French editions of all eight Paul books to date, approached him about undertaking a public art project for this year's three-hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of Montreal's founding. Rabagliati's thirty-year marriage had ended recently. He was lonely and depressed, and working on a new book in which Paul, Rabagliati's thinly veiled alter ego, is recently divorced, lonely, and depressed. Gauthier persevered, and Rabagliati spent the next four months researching and drawing. (La Pastèque released a coffee-table edition of Paul à Montreal, including forty extra drawings, in November.)

A woman with a baby noticed Rabagliati on the corner of rue Berri and called out, "Quelle chance, meeting you here! C'est incroyable!" Rabagliati smiled and handed her a map of the walking tour he fished out of his knapsack. "Papa will be so excited!" the woman told her baby.

On rue Marie-Anne, in front of a panel depicting the first trip of the Metro, a slim blond woman exited a storefront office and introduced herself as a designer. "Are you looking at your drawings? Félicitations! People stop here all the time to look at your work. They should put your face up there!"

"I'm sort of a cult figure," admitted the cartoonist, after the woman had walked away. "Although I don't feel like one."

Rabagliati zigzagged toward Parc La Fontaine, following his *parcours* through small streets and down alleys. The tour has been so successful residents of the sleepy rue Demers (home of Panel No. 5: the nineteen-thirties) have complained about noise from the influx of pedestrians.

Along the route, people stopped, checked their maps, looked up, and took pictures.

"Look at that!"

"We used to go there, didn't we?"

"Do you remember those signs?"

In the middle of Laurier, an older couple risked traffic to get a good look at a panel depicting the facades of Old Montreal. Later, they sat on a shady bench in Parc La Fontaine, near the end of the tour, and shared a bag of chips. "I haven't

been here in fifty-eight years," the man said. "The *quartier* has changed a lot. But I recognized the house where a girl I liked used to live. I still remember her name: Raymonde Labelle." He pronounced the name with a reverence that suggested it still held magic for him. "We played spin the bottle."

It was a perfect Paul à Montreal mo-

ment. As Paul travels through time, he crosses into Montrealers' own personal history of the neighbourhood.

"I love my city," Rabagliati said. "I don't need to take a plane anywhere. I take vacation and go to Marché Jean-Talon and talk to people. Or I go to the park. I'm an awful traveller. When I'm away, I want to come back as soon as possible." ♦

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

Ten Foot Henry's tall tale.

BY CONAN TOBIAS



The staff of Ten Foot Henry were busy serving a nearly full house during a recent Sunday evening visit. Patrons of the popular restaurant, which opened in 2016, in the century-old Eagle Block, in Calgary's Victoria Park area, enjoyed plates of tomatoes and feta on toast, spaghetti pomodoro, and green beans with honey. Few paid much attention to the venue's eponymous mascot: a ten-foot-high plywood effigy of a Depression-era comic strip character, bolted to the wall just off the dining room. "We don't get asked what the story behind him is as often as I thought we might," said Aja Lapointe, who owns the restaurant with her husband, Stephen Smee. "I'd say about eighty-five per cent of our guests don't know about or care about the connection."

Henry was created in 1932, by Carl Anderson, an illustrator from Madison, Wisconsin, who for many years had more success as a cabinetmaker than he did drawing comics. Anderson's character is a boy of grade-school age, usually outfitted in a red shirt and short pants. Henry's clothing, combined with his long face and peanut-shaped bald head, gives him the appearance of an old man dressed up as Charlie Brown for Halloween. Henry lives a fairly idyllic childhood of fishing, afternoon movies, and ice-cream cones. He's also unusually randy for a child, especially as portrayed by John Liney, An-

derson's former assistant who took over the weekday strip in 1942. The character originally appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* before drawing the attention of William Randolph Hearst, who signed Anderson to create a daily *Henry* strip, which still appears in newspapers today, though new installments stopped being produced in 1995.

In 1981, Blake Brooker, the co-founder of the performance theatre One Yellow Rabbit, commissioned a friend to create Henry's larger-than-life Prairie counterpart, which he propped up in his yard, overlooking the Macleod Trail expressway. Brooker outfitted Henry with a series of thought bubbles, featuring messages like "Depressing, isn't it?"—commentary for passing commuters during the peak of the oil boom that was then shaping Calgary's inner city. Brooker's choice of characters is ironic, considering, outside of a few instances, Anderson's character is mute, speaking only in pantomime.

Brooker later loaned Henry out to a Sixth Avenue dance club, which took the name 10 Foot Henry's as a tribute. (The singer Janet Panic was so inspired by the club—which also hosted acts such as Art Bergmann and 54-40—she named a band after it.) The club closed in 1986, and Henry eventually found his way to another music venue, the Night Gallery, located on the second floor of the Eagle Block, a

building with a long history in the arts. It initially was built as home to a chapter of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, a club for those involved in the performing arts. In more recent years, it has housed a series of music venues, most notably the Night Gallery, where Henry lived until the club closed, in 2005, making his home life somewhat unstable as a result.

Lapointe was not immediately sold on the Eagle Block when she and Smee began looking for a space to open their first restaurant. "All I saw was a money pit," she said. "But my husband tried to make me see its potential, and I'm so glad that he did." The couple quickly discovered and became enamoured by the story of the Henry cutout. "We were going to be opening a contemporary, casual restaurant, but we wanted to have some kind of back story and utilize the history of the space," Lapointe said. "Since he lived here for so long, when we were looking at this space, we thought he was a colourful bit of Calgary—ana lot of people didn't know about." Lapointe and Smee contacted Brooker, who agreed the restaurant was an appropriate place for Henry's next adventure. A hallway leading from the bright, contemporary dining room toward the bathrooms was the only area with ceilings high enough to accommodate the figure. The location also allows diners to take pictures without bothering other guests.

"We like that we're able to perpetuate this now thirty-six-year-old story," said Lapointe, who drew most of the Henrys that accent the restaurant, with the exception of a large mural near the entrance that was traced from an Anderson original. "It makes people kind of smile and laugh. The cards we give out with our bills are original Carl Anderson *Henry* comics. Both my husband and I like the idea of taking the pomp and circumstance and pretention out of dining. I think in the past twenty years we started to get pretty pretentious. We love that the name of the restaurant doesn't speak to what we're doing within the four walls. We like having a playful menu that doesn't fit in a box."

Henry's future is secure for at least another fifteen years, the length of Lapointe and Smee's lease. Lapointe calls the restaurant a long-term project, though she will be temporarily stepping aside soon, when the couple welcomes their first child. Will the baby be named Henry?

"Definitely not," Lapointe said, without hesitation. "We already have a Henry." ❖



LAST TICKET TO RIDE

Letting go of the Centreville carousel.

BY CONAN TOBIAS

In mid-September, as southern Ontario began to experience an unusually late stretch of warm summer weather, Ann Elliott made the one-hour drive from her home, in Ajax, Ontario, to the Toronto Islands ferry dock, accompanied by her daughter, Janet, and granddaughter, LeeAnn. Elliott, who turned eighty-eight at the end of the month, wanted to take a final ride on the Centreville Amusement Park carousel, before it was disassembled and shipped to its new owners, in Carmel, Indiana. The line to ride wasn't especially long, and Elliott soon swung herself onto a horse, with only minor assistance from LeeAnn. Janet stood outside the fence and took photos as her mother smiled and laughed for the ride's three-minute duration. "Mum took me maybe once a year, maybe more, to the islands," Elliott said. "I can't remember any ride but the merry-go-round."

Toronto's islands and mainland waterfront have a long history of amusement, dating back to the nineteenth century, including parks at Sunnyside and Hanlan's Point. The park at Centre Island is the only one remaining. Centreville's carousel was built in 1907, by the G. A. Dentzel Carousel Company, of Philadelphia, and purchased by Centreville in 1966. It features an eclectic mix of fifty-two hand-carved animal mounts, including

ostriches, house cats, and, of course, horses. Only a hundred and fifty carousels like it remain in the world.

Severe flooding on the islands this summer forced Centreville to remain closed for most of the season. Representatives of William Beasley Enterprises, the company that runs the park, said selling off assets such as the carousel became necessary to make up the six million dollars in damages and eight million dollars in lost revenue Centreville suffered. As a result, officials from Carmel agreed to purchase the carousel for three million dollars, but, in late September, that city's finance committee voted down the purchase, and the deal was cancelled. Beasley said it planned to look for another buyer.

Elliott, who grew up in Toronto, has made riding the city's carousels a family tradition. In the nineteen-sixties, "I took my daughter, Janet, and her older brother, Bruce, frequently. Then I remember going with my two grandchildren." This was her first visit in nearly two decades. "I'm really sad to see it go," she said. "I have two snapshots, dated '1940, Centre Island,' of my best friend and her mother, and Mum and me and another girlfriend. Just water behind us. I am sure we would have ridden the merry-go-round that day." ❖

BIRDS OF PARADISE

BY YASUKO THANH

When Chris died, I went to live in the forest. Some nights there are five or six of us, sometimes just Tims and me. I'm the only girl. Tims tends to philosophize the bad stuff away, like today, when he slipped on some stones crossing the creek because he had a bottle of wine up his sleeve.

"Shit happens," he said, bleeding away. "Shit happens to everybody, right?"

I've joined a kind of community. We pick through other people's recycling. Or we ride shopping carts down the hillside. The hills we choose to ride are steep. I mean hella steep. The steeper the better. Not San Francisco steep, but if we could find some like that it'd be sick. The closest the Lower Mainland's got to San Fran hills are in North Van. Land of mountains and the kingliest scenery you ever laid eyes on. The mountains and the sky—a little piece of heaven. On a sunny day the sky is so blue against the clouds you'd think you were looking at a Van Gogh painting.

Being a picker's not bad: you can find treasures in other people's garbage, like last week when another picker gave us a brand new pair of Pierre Cardin shoes, never worn, still in their box, that he'd found next to someone's recycling. "Not my size. Want them?" Tims put them on right away, even though they looked kind of funny with his Tilley hat, AC/DC shirt, and cargo shorts, but he wore them, no socks and all, and put his old sneakers next to another recycling box for someone else to find.

I watched Tims riding the hill in his brand-new Pierre Cardins on the shopping cart he'd been collecting empties in, thinking those soles will last about forever. Which is good, since he uses his feet to brake and steer. He party-yelled, "Woo-ooo!" Raised his fist.

Some people sort their returnables and leave them in a bag next to their recycling for us. Other times we have to dig through their blue boxes, but it's no big deal. Most people ignore us. Not too many tell us to leave their property. Sometimes people even ask us if we want to wait while they go into their basements to grab us some more beer cans.

I found a cookbook and an old toy chest from what must have been the nineteen-fifties. The outside was a bit banged up, but the inside still had that beautiful old paper on it, a bit yellowed, with great cartoon pictures of farm animals and stuff. It had a strap to close it and a pretty Lucite handle. Now I carry my extra clothes in it.

I'm thinking about the freedom of nothing left to lose. That's where adventure begins, learning to live in the moment. I never worry about the future because I don't look too far ahead. I ask myself, "How do you feel this second?"—not a minute ago or a minute from now. Even if I'm freaked out, I force myself to look at the present. I tell myself that this way of life is a liberation.

Since Chris died, we, or especially me, started thinking of weird shit we could do to talk to him again, like having a séance or something. What I really wanted to know was where the heck had he gone? Why did he die? Why did he have to leave us on a day as pretty as a painting?

I asked Tims how he felt about opening a line of communication. Tims was too drunk at the time to answer. He sat with a stupid elfin grin on his face, looking into the flickering light of the Coleman lantern, our pseudo campfire.

"Fuck," I said under my breath. "Fuck," I said again, louder this time. "Don't you believe in ghosts?"

"Ghosts?"

Tims waved his beer in front of his face, as if he were trying to cast a spell. He'd been nursing this last one for twenty minutes—it was probably warm.

Moron. I downed my beer, crushed the can, and chucked it into the bushes. Tims the waste case wasn't going to help me, and didn't seem to give a shit, even though Chris was dead. I stood up.

"This is fuckin' boring."

Tims raised his finger, as if about to say something important. Then, he said, "Yeah, well, so? What the fuck you want to do about it?"

"I don't know," I said. "*Something.*"

"What do you suggest?"

"I'm tired of sitting around."

I grabbed another beer.

I figured if we just started walking, walking out of the forest, to somewhere, anywhere, something would occur to us. Something would happen. If we walked far enough, it had to. We'd walk right into it.

The day of the accident we were on Hastings Street. Maybe there was black ice on the road, I don't know. I heard the squeal of car tires and the sound of a windshield shattering. By the time I'd spun around, the white Honda was kissing a telephone pole and the car that hit it had revved out of control and was stuck in reverse, doing doughnuts in the Main and Hastings intersection. The breath of people who stood around made white puffs in the air. I remember watching it the way you watch a movie: you keep pressing Rewind, hoping you'll notice something different, something that will shed light on the rest. But you can't stop real life, hit Pause, freeze time.

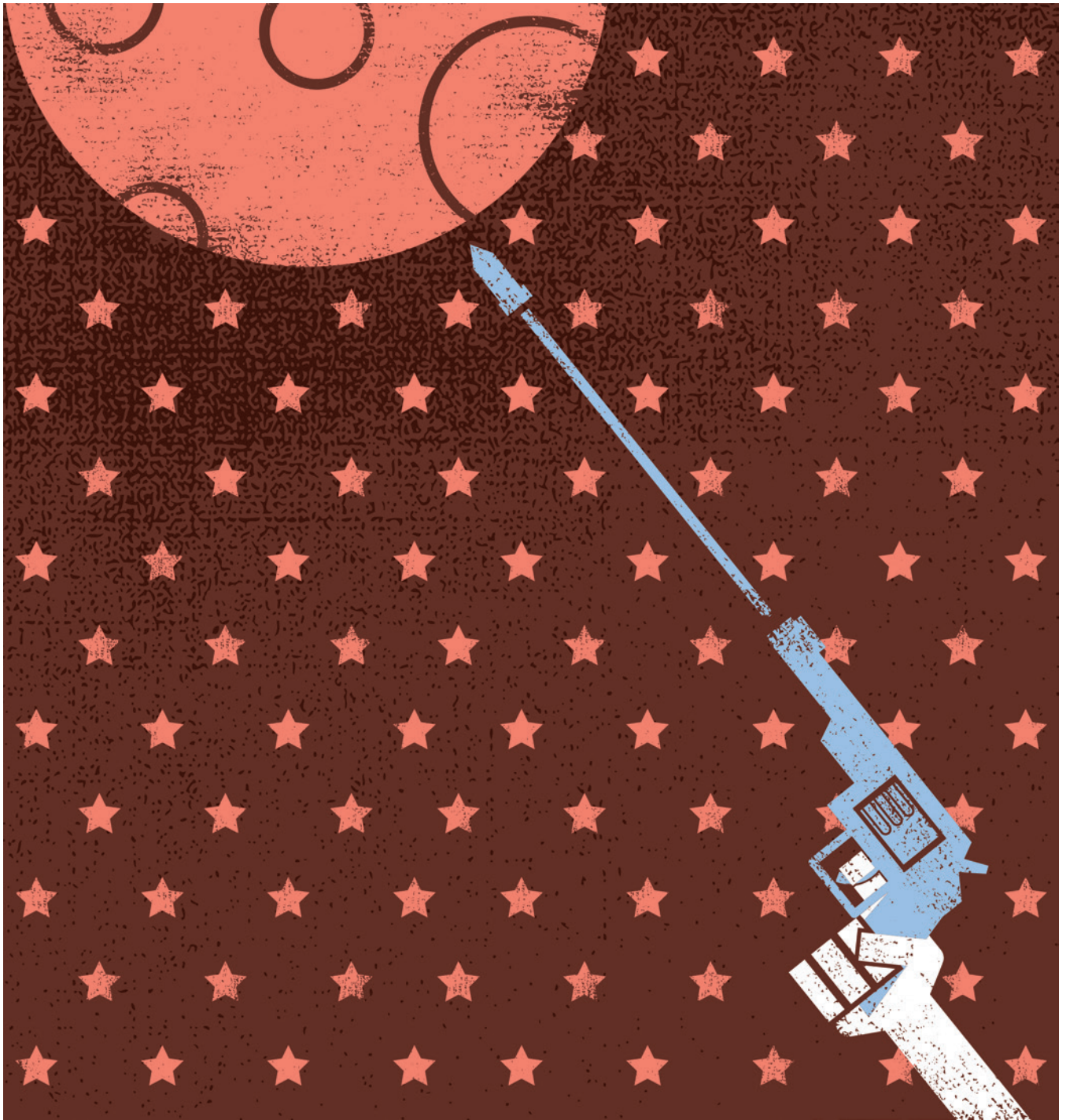
This is how I remember the driver: his body tilted out of the driver's-side window, arm dangling over the door frame, his eyes open wide, like one of my sister's dolls. His sunglasses crooked across his face.

I could see two more people in the back seat, through the window; the girl's rabbit-fur jacket was covered with broken glass and the dude next to her was moaning.

Chris, who hadn't said a word until now, said, "Fuck, man."

When the car stopped spinning, Vince went running toward it. Gas is the worst car smell of all. A tiny spark can turn a leak into Hades—use a ten-pound extinguisher on the flames and they pop right back up again, burning hot and fast, and the stink stays in your nostrils for days. When you smell it, watch out.

I thought maybe Vince was going to do something heroic—check a pulse, start C.P.R. Smoke was coming out of the hood. It's hard to reconcile your version of a hero with a guy who reaches for the dead man's sunglasses and puts them on his head, signs "victory" like some kind of deranged athlete.



Tims and I see Vince now in front of the Mac's. His face is a map of all the places he's been. He decides we should head to the beach. He keeps burning his mouth on the melted processed cheese that dribbles out from between two pieces of soggy shit-nuked English muffin. He has his hand under the sandwich, trying to catch the chunks before they fall. Some do anyway and he eats them right off the sidewalk.

"Gross. That's so ghetto," Tims says.
"Don't judge. I'm hungry, O.K.?"

I take my boots off on the beach, tie the laces together, and sling them over my shoulder. I love sand between my toes, even when it's cold. "Who wants to swim?"

"Too cold," Tims says.

"Are we skinny dipping?"

This from Vince.

Way down the beach we see a campfire. Preppy North Van kids party down here. The children of doctors and lawyers. Kids who go yachting, who take lessons. Whose schools teach them how. Who ski on weekends or before dinner because Grouse

Mountain is in their backyard. Who grew up next door to Bryan Adams. Who get cars for their birthdays.

"Looks like a party," Vince says, nodding toward the orange glow.

"Wanna check it out?" Tims asks, grinning

"Why not?" Vince says.

I almost expect him to do the mad scientist laugh: Mwah-ha-ha-ha.

I'm looking at the fire, so that's why I don't notice and step in something wet. The moonlight illuminates it and when

I bend over for a closer look, it's not seaweed but something white. A shoe. I unlace the runner.

"Fuck! Hold up, guys."

But no one waits for me, even when I tell them there's a sock inside.

Forget me leading any kind of parade holding my find aloft. By the time I get to them, Tims and Vince are already warming their hands over the flames. The boys around the fire are wearing cotton sweaters and leather boat shoes and sitting on a log. They have a guitar, a cooler full of hot dogs and beer, a forty of vodka. They're playing Bob Marley songs. They look like nothing bad ever happened to them their whole entire lives.

I don't trust people who never worked hard for anything, never had it rough. They have no foundations, haven't been built from the bottom up. Like ice cubes, Chris once said, describing certain types of people—solid on the outside, but they melt in the heat. I've always wondered what I could have done different, wonder did I throw him under the bus? I couldn't fake what wasn't there, but is it possible he saw love in our hookups? I don't even know what love is. Then I realize I'm giving myself too much importance, and who do I think I am? Maybe the truth was I didn't know Chris that well. Maybe no one ever really knows anyone, and that's about the saddest thing I can think of.

"How's it going?" I say to the pretty boys on the log.

On cue, Vince takes a seat next to one of them, perches at one end of the log. Tims sits on the other side, squashing them in.

"Now isn't this nahce," Tims says with a southern drawl.

Vince is the one to grab the bottle of vodka—Silent Sam—and guzzle. "Good fire, boys," he says. He keeps the bottle between his knees.

"So, you gonna offer us a beer, or what?" Tims says.

"We've killed before," I say, and it's eerie how all our eyes meet and how we're all thinking of Chris. "Better do what he says."

I raise the shoe.

We drink their vodka, eat their food, and play their guitar. They don't do much but wander off to take the occasional piss. We let them—we're not holding them hostage. They brought hammocks—planning to camp out on the beach—and we consider stealing them.

Tims puts his arm around me and says, "This is my girlfriend and I'd do *anything* for her." He's totally blasted but it's kind of cute the way he stares at each guy in succession with this narrow-eyed ninja look, like, "I'd rip your beating heart out of your chest if you tried to hurt her." I have to admit, sometimes it helps to take a long view of it, to pretend things mean something even if, right afterward, he just wanders off to take a piss.

About two in the morning, one of the teens says, out of the blue, "The cops have a parabolic dish."

He starts ranting, all paranoid and shit, says people are spying on him.

"Take a pill," Vince says.

"He's on, like, 'shrooms," the other guy says. "We both are."

The nervous dude is totally peaking, saying, "Why'd you call the cops? Why'd you call the fuckin' cops?"

That's when he pulls a .44. Everyone leaps up.

"Hey, hey, hey. Put that shit away."

I look deep into his eyes, trying to make some kind of connection. I even take a small step toward him to show *I mean no harm, Buddy. I'm on your side*. I stare at him long and hard, until I can tell it's doing more harm than good.

When I look around, the nervous dude's friend has disappeared. Flash, bang, and the guy's shooting.

I run for the nearest big-ass log and hide behind it. Fuck. I've never been shot at before. The bullets come so close they ping off the sand and grains fly up, hitting my bare legs. There's nothing to do but roll up into a ball.

I turn and see Tims not ten feet away from me. Passed out. He's snoring so loud I can hear him. I want to throw something at him, to wake him up. Jesus. If the sound of gunshots won't wake him up, nothing will.

How many rounds did the guy bring down to the beach? What's a kid from North Van doing with a gun?

I hear Vince's voice. Then what sounds like him slapping the kid on the back. I peek out from behind the log and see Vince has excavated some pot from somewhere. He rolls a joint and passes it to the kid. For a while there's nothing but low tones. Then a chuckle. I don't dare move. The kid fires the odd shot at the moon. Vince laughs. This goes on for so long my limbs grow stiff from my

crouched position.

Vince points to a distant log, turned upright.

"That one. You first."

The kid shoots.

"Me now."

"No way."

Vince shrugs.

"Fine, I'll use mine," he says, patting his jacket. Then, just as I'm thinking, "Since when does Vince carry a gun?" he says, "But mine's not so good for birds."

"What?"

Vince elbows the kid and reaches for his gun, struggling just a minute to get it out of his grasp.

"This one's better." With some satisfaction he says, "This is good."

When Vince smiles, his cheekbones are like plums in the moonlight. He gazes happily at the polished steel glinting in his open palm. He aims at the horizon and, while the kid watches, shoots the gun out over the water.

"Quit fucking with me, man. Give me my gun."

"Where's your other bullets?" He aims the barrel at the teenager's head. "Give me them and I'll show you."

The kid shakes his head.

Vince stops, scratches his back with the gun, then rifles through the bags the teens brought, still aiming the .44.

"Lucky for you I'm here. These birds attack everything around them. Out of anger. Starting with your stomach."

He picks up the hammocks they had brought down.

"They fuck with people who sleep outside. Get warm in your belly button. But they don't like it when the weather is bad."

I think of maggots and other creatures that burrow, things that feed off the dead—like the rotting corpse of a raccoon I saw last week.

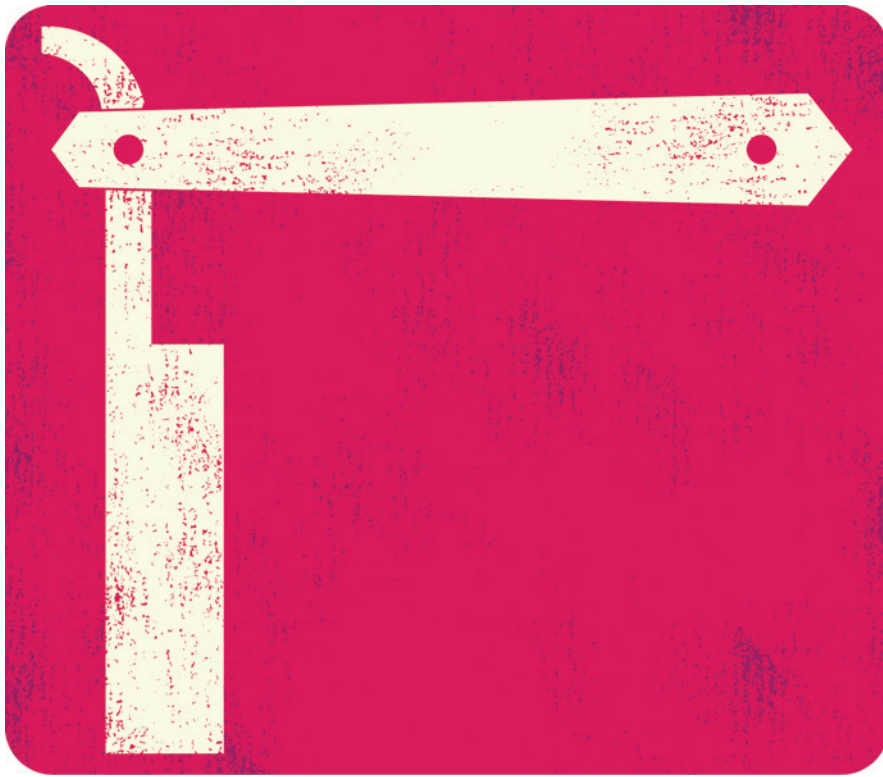
Vince reloads, shoots out over the water. He's defused the situation. You can find that. Not a weak spot. But a soft spot. You find that in a person. And then just ride on that.

I decide it's safe to come out of hiding.

He sees me.

"You O.K.?"

I nod. I want to tell him I know about finding the sweet spot, but Vince is busy shooting and the other guy has wandered off somewhere. In what's left of the beach firelight, Vince smiles and his eyes reflect something I don't understand. ❖



THE MICROPHONE

STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE

BY STUART ROSS

There was a hubbub like you wouldn't believe. First all those people pressed against the door, and then when the door was opened, they poured right into the room like water gushing through a doomed ship's hull. They poured into the room and ran all over the place, looking for the piece of paper. "Where is it?" they shouted, though not in unison. As one person was saying "where" another who had already said "where" was saying "is" and another person who was faster than anyone else was already saying "it." They bounced off the walls, looking for the paper. "Where is it?" Then they saw the girl actually had it, she was bent over it and writing something on it. She was probably writing her name. They filled up all the space around her, and their hands reached out, tentatively, drew back, reached out. They wanted the pen. She was writing so slowly. How long was her name? Most people had two or three names, but maybe she had four or five. People from foreign

places often had as many as seven names, and each of the seven names could be very long, maybe three or four syllables. Her hand froze over the piece of paper and she looked up. She saw that everyone was practically pressed right up against her, though they weren't actually touching her, and they were breathing all over her. Hands reached out and drew back, reached out and drew back. The pen was elusive. Everyone was silent. "I haven't finished writing my name," she said, her voice a little shaky. Then she climbed up onto the table and peered over their heads toward the back of the room. Back there it was like a scene from a Busby Berkeley movie, but without all the girls and guys moving in unison and with no singing at all. In fact, it was just a little stage and it was empty. It was like a Busby Berkeley movie, in that it was like a scene from a Busby Berkeley movie, in which a radio play was being broadcast, live, and everyone was crowded around the mic, including the

main characters and the guy who shook a sheet of metal to make it sound like thunder. Except there were no people and no sheets of metal. There was just a mic. The people who were crowded around the girl pressed in closer. "I am still writing my name," she said evenly. Just seeing the mic had given her strength and confidence. She climbed off the table and picked up the pen again and wrote the rest of her name, very carefully. Just her first name, because they only ever introduced people by their first names. Even if you had never been there before, it was like you were their friend. The protocol was just first name. "Next up is Bob. Thank you, Bob. Next up is Pamina. Thank you, Pamina. Next up is Farouz. Thank you, Farouz. You were good in the way you said how bad pollution is." Everybody clapped their hands, because since you were finished, their turn was even sooner. The girl held out the pen when she had finished writing her first name and a hand took it from her and a body pushed up to the table until another name was going down on that sheet of paper. The girl sliced through the cluster of people, and when she was free, she sat right in the back of the room, which was the front, because it was in front of the mic. She had a poem in her pocket. It was her first poem. Her friends had said it was good. More important, her teacher had said that she was an asset to the class in regards to her poem. No one could believe she had never written a poem before. That's how good this poem was. In her head, she practised what she would say when she got to the mic. She would say, "God guided my hand." She would say, "Although this poem is sad, it will offer hope if you let it into your heart." After she read it, including the part about the boy's belly being slit with a razor, the people would clap their hands. Then she would take out a razor for real and slice everyone in the audience's belly. There would be such a major hubbub. I'm just kidding. She wouldn't read that because she didn't write it and her poem doesn't exist and she doesn't exist. I have made her up for this, the first thing I have ever read in front of an audience. I am a person who wrote this, what you are reading now, in the book you are holding that contains also everything I wrote after this. The book is called *Strength and Confidence*. It came out six years from now. I get my ideas from everyday things, nothing special. ❖

A MAN AND HIS WORLD

Expo 67's life-shaping influence.

BY ALFRED HOLDEN

There's a book that sat on my uncle's shelf for years—an evocative, now-obscure memoir, published in 1939, by a French airline pilot. Reading it, I finally learned the inspiration behind the themes of Expo 67, Canada's famous world's fair, held fifty years ago, in Montreal. In *Terre des hommes* (published in English as *Wind, Sand, and Stars*), Antoine de Saint-Exupéry told of flying the mail between France, Africa, and South America in rickety, propeller-driven airplanes, while also laying out a philosophy of life. He dedicated the English version of the book “to the Airline Pilots of America and their Dead.” In a tragic turn, Saint-Exupéry himself disappeared during a reconnaissance mission, near the end of the Second World War.

Saint-Exupéry might be forgotten today but for *The Little Prince*, his 1943 novella and one of the best selling books ever written. In it, a chapter from *Terre des hommes*—the true story of Saint-Exupéry's crash in the Sahara Desert while flying from Paris to Saigon—is adapted into a magical, child-friendly philosophical treatise. An airman, lost and thirsty in an ocean of sand, stumbles upon a boy who has left his home on a small asteroid to explore the universe. The pilot is stirred by the child's understanding of life and their shared, deep solitude.

In *Terre des hommes*, Saint-Exupéry has much to say about the magic of flying, but it was his observations of the planet below that drew the attention of a group of Canadians who, in the early nineteen-sixties, were trying to set the mood of Expo 67. My own life has crossed paths, in different ways, with several of these characters: I interviewed Davidson Dunton, the one-time president of Carleton University, which I attended, and the scientist John Tuzo Wilson, famous for contributing to the theory of continental drift; I lived on the Montreal street named for Wilder Penfield, the McGill University neurosurgeon and a friend of friends; and my spouse taught at Gabrielle Roy, a Toronto school named for the French Canadian novelist.

The group's initial meeting, at a historic property in Montebello, Quebec, along the Ottawa River, took place in May, 1963. In her notes, some of which were displayed at the Stewart Museum, in Montreal, this year, Roy refers to Saint-Exupéry's account in *Terre des hommes* of piloting over Argentina at night and seeing a few flickering lights below. “They ‘twinkled here and there, alone like the stars,’” Roy wrote, quoting the author. Roy made a timely connection to the grandeur of earth as seen by the era's astronauts, who similarly observed “the splendour of *Man's Earth*, this one tiny speck fixed in the vastness of the universe.”

Saint-Exupéry and his navigator were rescued from their real-life Sahara crash by a Libyan Bedouin, whom the author thanks in *Terre des hommes*, as he makes a plea for human solidarity. The book was published at the outbreak of the Second World War. Saint-Exupéry, wrote Roy, “found a phrase to express his anguish and his hope that was as simple as it was rich in meaning.” It was the idea that we shared one earth and should try to get along: *terre des hommes*. Man and his world. The Expo group took up Saint-Exupéry's theme of human solidarity, and used his book's title as the fair's slogan. It was as if Saint-Exupéry “were speaking directly to the truck-driver, the ditchdigger or, better still, the mason,” Roy reflected, alluding to man—we would now say “humans,” or something similarly inclusive, in all these instances—as builder, creator, and steward of the planet and the civilization he had created.

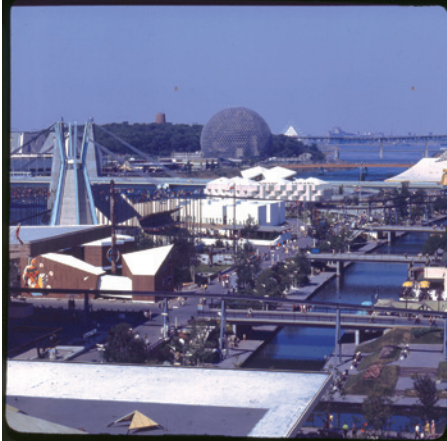
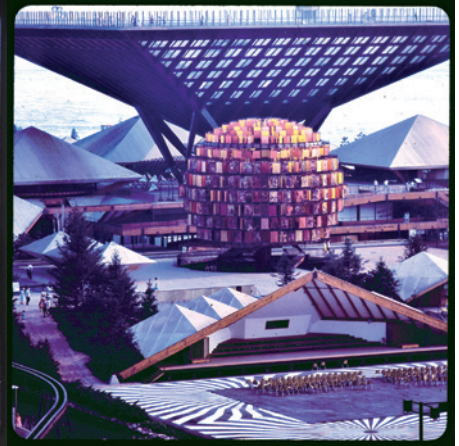
My parents moved to Montreal, from Burlington, Vermont, a few years before I was born, eventually settling in the suburb of Pointe-Claire. As a child, I lobbied my mom and dad, Sylvia and Clem, to take me to see sites downtown, such as La Fontaine Park, with its aquarium in a whale's mouth, and Place Ville Marie, the new skyscraper, which had

open observation decks. I tried out space-themed playground equipment at the park on St. Helen's Island, where, at the age of six, from rocket-shaped climbers, I first glimpsed (through a fence) Expo under construction. There was still doubt whether three years would be enough time to ready the fair (a new documentary about the building of Expo is subtitled *Mission Impossible*). When Gabrielle Roy visited the site, she found “a soggy field” containing “millions upon millions of tons of earth and muck.”

Three years was an unfathomable amount of time to a boy of six, but the idea of Expo registered with me, as it did with most Montrealers, if not yet the rest of Canada. Within a year or two, West Island kids were doodling Expo's logo—Julien Hébert's now-familiar circle of stick men, linked in pairs—in their school notebooks. Long before Expo 67 opened, its earworm-y theme song, Stéphane Venne's “Hey Friend, Say Friend,” was inviting us to “come on over.”

My brother, Jeffrey, two years older, kept an Expo scrapbook as a class project (for which he received a decent mark of sixteen out of twenty), and unwittingly created a valuable future resource. It is one thing to say in hindsight that opening day was magic. It's quite another to be able to prove it. A few days after Expo's debut, Jeffrey wrote to our maternal grandmother about it, and I am astonished, fifty years later, to be able to walk with my family through Expo on Day 1.

“Dear Grma,” Jeff wrote on Wednesday, May 3rd, hunt-and-peck style, on an old Remington typewriter. “Expo is open and in five days 2,000,000, 7/8 Montreal's population, have gone to see it. After school on Friday Alfred, mummy and I left at 3 o'clock because we couldn't wait any longer. We drove in town by six and four lane hiways. By three thirty we had paid \$2.50 for parking and bus fare. At four o'clock the bus pulled in at PLACE D'ACCUEIL, the Main entrance. As we showed our PASSPORTS they let us in. After going over our plans we



boarded the EXPO EXPRESS, the free transportation.”

Jeff described how we zoomed “past the Habitat Station, past PLACE DES NATIONS,” en route to La Ronde; how we “boarded the MINIRAIL, a ride carrying you forty feet high and even through pavions”; and how, at the Île Notre-Dame Expo-Express station, “we had a discussion. After having a vote we entered the Western Provinces Pavilion,” in which “we descended into a mine. Here we saw different Rocks mined in British Columbia. After maneuvering a sharp bend looking at an Atomic Energy station we took a look at a tipical wheat farm in the wheat-growing provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Suddenly we entered a roofless room in which a giant log truck and real trees had been planted.” I recall there lingered a scent from what the official Expo guide referred to as “lofty Douglas firs,” even a forest-y dampness, helped by cool weather in Montreal. On postcards, the firs are seen poking out the top of the shingled structure.

It was a packed afternoon. We ended up at the Ontario pavilion, a many-angled, origami-like canopy, and where Lake Erie perch was served in one of the restaurants. Things quickly got more technological. Jeff was impressed by a series of robots “representing M. Businessman, Mr. Sports, Miss. Arts, Miss. Science,” who put on “a marvolous mechanical play.” But something else blew us away even more: “We were told that a rare film was to start in two minutes,” my brother wrote. “This film turned out to be the only one like it in the world . . . in which different pictures flash on a screen and suddenly turn into one, change and split up again.” That would have been *A Place to Stand*, with its score “A place to stand / A place to grow / Ontar-i-ar-i-ar-i-o,” another earworm of the day, and from then on an anthem—perhaps the cheeriest ever penned—for the province. The movie’s innovative multi-dynamic image technique helped win it an Academy Award, in 1968, for best live-action short subject.

“By that time it was five o’clock and we decided to leave,” Jeff continued. “But as the bus slowly glided away we thought ‘what an amazing exhibition!’”

We would visit Expo often, all summer. I’d look from the parking lot, through the iron beams of Montreal’s blackened, rusty nineteenth-century Victoria Bridge,

across to Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic dome, shimmering blue-green in the distance, or Katimavik, the upside-down pyramid, on Île Notre-Dame. This was my world, I thought, and although Expo came and went, in many ways it has remained my vital happy place ever since.

In Montreal, in the nineteen-sixties, young children walked to school alone and wandered unsupervised around their neighbourhoods. My brother, my cousins, and I were similarly free-range at Expo. We were inclined to go to La Ronde, the amusement area, but once let loose, we headed for where it was really at: film screens.

Expo stood as the prototype for the virtual, electronic future predicted by the media guru Marshall McLuhan. The pyrotechnic virtuosity on-screen grabbed your attention and would not let go. Many films were torqued to the limit, using the technologies of the day: multi-screen; cruciforms with images ahead, above, and below; audiences seated on carousels.

The Canadian paint and chemical industry’s Kaleidoscope pavilion was called by one critic, “a prismatic environment of reflecting mirrors with filmed images of bleeding, bursting colors . . . the ultimate psychedelic experience”—a very sixties, McLuhanesque way to push paint. The queue to see the National Film Board of Canada’s multi-screen, multi-chamber *In the Labyrinth* was so long it snaked right out into the St. Lawrence River, at least as seen in a newspaper editorial cartoon of the day. Thanks to the very type of media McLuhan foresaw—namely, virtual reality—my mom and I finally got to see the film this summer, at the Stewart Museum. We were seated in womb-like white plastic chairs, as a young man whose parents, even, might not have yet been born in 1967, helped us on with our goggles. Into the labyrinth we went, finally seeing what the fuss was about fifty years ago.

There is one Expo film that wasn’t very fancy. Like many films at the fair, the equipment needed to play it isn’t as easy to find anymore. It was the home movie made by my family. There we are on eight-millimetre film: my mother, my brother, and me (Dad is the cinematographer), ready troopers arriving at Place d’Acceuil, the fair’s entrance. I appear on the platform waiting for the Expo-Express. When it arrives, my father fol-

lows me in, camera running, and off we go. Looking past my bobbing head, you see us zip past the architect Arthur Erickson’s Man in the Community pavilion (fashioned from what seem like giant Popsicle sticks), past Habitat 67, the model housing complex. In a moment, we are crossing the new Concordia Bridge to St. Helen’s Island.

My dad pans across the unfolding scene: On the left, the ball of Fuller’s American pavilion. More distant, out on Île Notre-Dame, rises Katimavik, the centrepiece of the Canadian pavilion. Its aqua colour is still visible in the faded footage, shown dozens and dozens of times at family get-togethers over the past half century.

I am seen on a different day, in my red blazer, yawning, in the massive Soviet pavilion, which displayed such doomed technologies as the Tu-144 supersonic jetliner. In another scene I wave frantically for my dad to hurry up, before disappearing into British Hovercraft Corporation’s experimental hovercraft service, which would take us for a spin up the rapids, through Le Moyne Channel, separating the Soviet and U.S. pavilions.

In my overcoat—this scene must have been early, or late, in Expo’s six-month run—I walk up to an animated sculpture that caught my cameraman’s eye. My dad lets the film run, as rotating rings show a jumble of moving colours. They slow down, and I look satisfied as the shapes come to a stop, aligned as a pop art play on Da Vinci’s *Vitruvian Man*.

In one scene, my older, calmer brother looks out at the St. Lawrence, from the patio at the Ontario pavilion. I show my impish side at Vermont, where I follow my family up a ramp, then walk backwards straight back down, knowing on playback the film will seem to have reversed. Outside Belgium, Dad hands me the camera and everything goes shaky, but Dad smiles as he walks toward me, wearing a suit over his argyle sweater vest.

Two sailors approach as I walk toward Katimavik. We spot a Mountie on a horse, and the People Tree—orange panels with photographs of Canadians on them, resembling a maple in the fall. Thanks to the magic of editing there is no queue, and we are instantly up walking the inverted pyramid’s perimeter, looking across at a giant Canadian flag waving in a wind that shook Katimavik on its steel legs. We look out at Britain, with its tower

capped by an upended, 3-D Union Jack. We pan past the Indians of Canada pavilion, as it was called. In the current era of reconciliation, it's worth reviewing what the Expo guidebook said fifty years ago: "Primarily the Indian people want to present the problems with which they are faced by involvement in a modern technological society, and to affirm their will to preserve the traditional moral and spiritual values of their forefathers."

In a bit of trick photography, I am

Grande Hermine, the ship he sailed to North America, in 1535. A gondola ride whisks us back to the more serious part of Expo.

In the age of digital video, when any smartphone can produce sharp, instant moving pictures, it is hard to imagine the trouble and expense involved in 1967 to create such fuzzy, flickering memories. A four-minute roll of unexposed film cost about three dollars—the equivalent of twenty-two dollars in 2017. The better

family members are seen disappearing down ski trails at Smuggler's Notch, darting between moving Minirail trains, ghosts schussing through such impediments as the French pavilion.

In 2007, I contributed to *Concrete Toronto*, an anthology of essays on mid-century concrete architecture, published by Coach House Books. At the launch party I rubbed up with a friendly gentleman, also a contributor to the anthology



Scenes of young Alfred at Expo, from the Holden family's home movies.

seated, with my blue Expo 67 tote bag, on the edge of a precipice. Foreshortening by the camera makes it appear I can reach out and touch the passengers, not to mention the track and electrical gear, on a passing Minirail. Over at La Ronde, La Spirale rotates up its giant pole. Voyageurs paddle a giant canoe on Lac des Dauphins. A man flying on a Canadian flag hang-glider soars behind a motorboat. Finally, I look pensive, exhausted on a replica of Jacques Cartier's

Kodachrome stock cost even more. Cameras were finicky, mistakes many. Projectors were hard to thread and often jammed, and the heat of the lamp could melt the film. Ambitious parents edited scenes together, but many families didn't bother, showing the reels exactly as they were returned from the processor. Our film has at least one Expo-worthy special effect: a double exposure my dad left in of a trip to Vermont the following winter. *Skiing at Expo* we call the error, where

and, as I found out, the architect of an artful addition to Toronto's Central Technical high school. "A Place to Stand" began to play in my head.

"You did the Ontario pavilion at Expo 67—Macy DuBois."

"With Fairfield. And it's 'DuBoyz,'" he corrected me. "I pronounce the s."

"The pavilion was great."

"Thank you," he replied.

Several years earlier, my spouse and I lived in one of Toronto's early Modernist

apartment houses: 169 St. George Street, built in 1958, and designed by James Crang and George Boake. Boake was in the Toronto phone book, so I invited him over to have tea and sit in one of his corner windows. It's cool to live in a building and ask its architect, as he eats your cookies, what he was thinking. A lot depends on the client, Boake said. "There didn't seem to be a lot of interference, if you like" at 169. Then he told me client input was considerable for the pavilion his firm designed for Air Canada at Expo, its most prominent feature a spiral stairway to the sky, suggesting the circle of fins in a jet engine.

That was the thing about Expo: my childhood happy place kept turning up in my adulthood, saying hello, with life-affirming regularity.

In the eighties, I ran into Expo daily, at the office. The late Boris Spremo was a *Toronto Star* photographer who'd covered the fair, although he hardly got to see it, he told me this year, in a brief phone call: "Working all the time."

Covering city hall I met Colin Vaughan, the crusty commentator for Citytv, who, it turned out, was a principal architect of the Canadian pavilion. Reporting on Ontario Municipal Board hearings for Toronto's domed stadium, I met the SkyDome architect, and Vaughan's partner on the Canada pavilion, Roderick Robbie. Reporters sometimes get their best material from small talk at the beginning and end of an interview, and when I spoke to Robbie for something or other, in 1997, the topic of Canada at Expo came up. I let the tape run: "We wanted something lively and light and kind of reminiscent of the country. The general concept was that this airy sort of roof was like this huge sky that you see in Canada, and the land was the brick paving that went everywhere. . . . The form—this square, thirty-degree pyramid—grew out of the notion of unity in diversity. . . . The general idea was to show a country that wasn't a melting pot, it was a mosaic, and the whole design was based on that. The *katimavik* was 'meeting place' in Inuktitut. . . . I and my colleagues picked the pyramid—the symbol of forever-no-change, almost mindless stability, which sort of characterized the ancient Egyptian culture. We said, 'If you took that, turned it upside down, and suspended it in mid-air, it would show a number of things. One

was great dexterity of balancing the people and the problems."

My mother clipped and saved a *New York Times* review of Habitat 67, Expo's daring housing exhibit, written by the pioneering architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable. "What Habitat is, to the eye, is a Mediterranean cluster of pyramided and jutting boxes that form one-story and two-story houses so that the roof of one box makes the garden terrace of another," Huxtable wrote. She also observed that "just about every housing and building rule, precedent, practice, custom and convention is broken by Habitat. This includes design, engineering, construction, trade union operation and the way people live. There have been two results. One was snowballing costs and technical problems. The other is a significant and stunning exercise in experimental housing that is also the most important construction at Expo."

I recall visiting an apartment low in the jumble, with ultramodern furniture, a garden, and views of the river. At the far end, nearer the point of Cité du Havre, one of the concrete boxes was suspended all summer from a crane. Around it were moulds and equipment showing how they were made—a fortuitous display, the result of Habitat being not quite finished by the time of Expo.

My interest in Habitat turned a page in 1971, when Karl Raab, the son of friends of my maternal grandparents, moved from Vermont to Montreal, taking a sublet on Apartment 615, midway up the pile. Here was my chance to visit and stay at Habitat often, sleeping in one of the Raabs' heirloom Biedermeier beds.

Our extended family gathered at Karl's apartment in June of 1972 to see Grandma off to Europe on the Soviet ocean liner *M.S. Mikhail Lermontov*, whose sister ship, the *M.S. Aleksandr Pushkin*, of the Baltic Sea Shipping Company, was where the Soviet Union had signed its deal to participate in Expo. One picture shows me, sporting an Andy Warhol hairdo, standing with family on the *Lermontov's* stern, Habitat behind us. In another, we switch, and watch from the terrace of Apartment 615 as tugboats pull the liner, Grandma safely aboard, from its slip, and it departs down the river.

Slides show our family visiting Habitat. Here we are in the nineteen-seventies, picnicking on the patio. There is Eveline

Bradter, Karl's wife (whom he met on the Expo site), on the patio, being stung by bee. She is next to the tomato plants that prospered in the architect Moshe Safdie's centrally irrigated balcony planters.

The Raabs' unit contained the famous two-piece molded fibreglass bathroom—tub, sink, ceiling, and floor all one prefab unit, everything but the toilet, which was bolted to the wall. The apartment also had a General Motors Frigidaire kitchen, elegantly modern, with grey cabinets framed in aluminum. I loved Habitat so much, my instinct was to move in. In another instance of Expo resurfacing in my life, I almost did. I was twenty in 1978 when Eveline, who worked in the German Foreign Office, was transferred to Vancouver. Between us we conceived a scheme to hold onto Apartment 615 by subletting it, but the deadline to give notice to Habitat's owner, Canada Mortgage and Housing, passed before we found a tenant. A few years later, the government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney sold Habitat, for ten million dollars, to Pierre Heafey, a Quebec businessman, who flipped it to residents for \$11.4 million. Could we have bought 615, now a condo? By the mid-eighties I was established in the workforce; the Raabs owned a house in Vancouver, but were living in Europe. Maybe.

"It was a feasible plan," Karl said recently, on the phone from Vancouver.

"It could have worked out," I said.

Karl told me that when he and Eveline were at Habitat, "I said to her, 'We will never live as well as this again.' That's still true."

In 1981, after I graduated from university and moved to Toronto, I noticed Expo 67 street furniture scattered around the city, specifically the fair's distinctive park benches. There were several in Queen's Park, and a few in the Beaches. Some deluxe ones, with backs, lined the tiny Frank Stollery Parkette, at Yonge Street and Davenport Road. Fourteen years after Expo, I thought myself to be one of few people who knew or cared about the history behind them.

During the summer of 1967, my mother noted discrete plaques attached to the avant-garde furniture throughout the Expo site. The signs indicated the benches were Toronto's offering to the fair. They were part of an ensemble that included matching triangular trash cans,

broad white disk-shaped street lamps that reflected light projected from below, and bubble phone booths, all custom made, and credited to the designer Luis Villa. This didn't much please the Toronto designer Paul Arthur, who created Expo's much-acclaimed signage, and who originally held the furniture contract.

It seemed logical that Saint-Exupérian sentiments about human interdependence, McLuhanesque notions of a global village, or maybe even Jane Jacobsian expressions of friendly urbanity would be behind Toronto's Expo benches—but was it so? As a Torontonian now, I was curious. In some old city council minutes, I came across a mention, along with the name of an Ontario Expo official named Allan Rowan-Legg. One evening I called him up.

"Yes?" he answered, picking up the phone in Victoria. "I've just got into bed but I'm wide awake."

"I'm calling about the park benches that were used at Expo 67."

"Well, I know all about them."

Rowan-Legg was one of the lieutenants on the Expo team in Toronto, whose responsibilities included Macy DuBois's pavilion. He said he'd been given a floor in Toronto's then new city hall, to drum up interest and Ontario exhibits.

"I went to the mayor [Phil Givens], who was a friend of mine in Toronto, and I said, 'What are you going to do for Expo in Montreal?'" Rowan-Legg told me. "He said, 'We don't have any money to put into Expo.' I said, 'Tell me, do you buy so many garden seats?' He said, 'Oh yes, we buy so many every year.' 'Well,' I said, 'why don't you allot them to Expo 67 and put a plaque, a little brass plaque, on the back, and have them returned to you.' So that's how they got to Expo."

After Expo, the seats were collected, shipped to Toronto, and placed wherever needed. It was something of a scandal in Montreal. In my uncle Oskar Heining's slides of the Expo grounds in 1968, there is no place to sit down. Toronto, as Rowan-Legg explained it to me, would have contributed nothing without his manoeuvre: "They were always jealous of Montreal because they thought that Expo should have been on Centre Island, in Toronto."

In 1997, in my City Building column in the *Annex Gleaner* community newspaper, I wrote, "Let me recount the story of a glorious summer, as it was told to me by a park bench I sat down on a few



From top: Alfred Holden, Sylvia Holden, Erna Heining, and Oskar Heining, aboard the M.S. Mikhail Lermontov, 1972; Habitat, circa 1976; Alfred admires Expo benches in Toronto's Queen's Park, 1997.

FROM TOP: KARL RAAB; ALFRED HOLDEN: MICHEL LAVERDIÈRE

days ago under an oak tree. . . . The tale told here quietly, and a little sadly, is one of hope and celebration, mingled with amusing parsimony and competitive rivalry between two great cities. For these are not ordinary park benches, but former ambassadors. They are the street furniture that was Toronto's contribution to Expo 67."

At the time, Expo benches could still

more time at Expo. After the move, we commuted by Volkswagen from Ottawa. In my dad's Expo Passport—the season passes fairgoers had stamped at each pavilion they visited—he noted "26/10/67," two days before the fair closed, and the last day the Holdens were there.

This past August, my spouse and I took our bikes to Montreal and did the grand tour of what is now Parc Jean-Drapeau,

Helen's Island, we passed through the sculpture park that was a lively part of the Expo art scene. Some pieces remain, unsung in the maturing forest, while others are sprinkled about the islands. They include, on St. Helen's, Alexander Calder's *Man*, moved from its original site. We passed the geodesic frame of Fuller's dome, as a security guard in a Jeep kept watch. A fire in 1975 destroyed the plastic enclosure, but the structure of metal tetrahedrons looks sharp just the same. The Canadian flag was flying inside, where the Montreal Biosphère environmental museum has long occupied the complex.

Over on Île Notre-Dame—past Trinidad's tiny pavilion, lonely amid maturing conifers, past France, past Quebec's mirrored box, now playing support for the casino—Katimavik is three decades gone. More earthbound sections of the Canadian complex remain, serving as park headquarters. We ran into a wedding party looking for La Toundra, the Canadian pavilion's Inuit-themed restaurant, where apparently they were expected.

Touring the remains on St. Helen's and Île Notre-Dame, it is tempting to lament, to feel loss at Expo 67's distance in time, to be sad that weeds grow under Calder's masterpiece. But no less a mind than Pierre Dupuy, Expo's commissioner general, foresaw another, more virtual, reality. His thesis was that the physical fair itself would be but a corner of what it meant to the nation, the world, to people who went there, afterward. In a form "less glittering but more profound," such an event "begins a new life . . . nourished in the souls of those who visited the Exhibition, and it will blossom into a legend for generations to come."

I am the poster boy for the notion that Expo 67 morphed into a foundation for life since. Others coming of age may have relished sports, or maybe found their engagement and glory later in business or academia, or even gone into the army (though the Vietnam War was invisible in Fuller's American dome). My central reference point has been *Man and His World*, for all the hope and beauty that Expo 67 represented. "*J'tait jeune—9 ans,*" I wrote in broken French this past summer, in the comment book of the McCord Museum's retrospective *Fashioning Expo*. "*Mais je rappelle tous.*"

I remember everything. ❖



Calder's Man and Habitat, in 2017.

be found in parks around Toronto. I know of none remaining today.

Expo was still going full tilt on Labour Day, 1967, when my family moved to Ottawa. My dad had taken a job at Parks Canada, and we purchased a house in the Glebe. Back in Pointe-Claire, 110 Douglas Shand was sold, with the closing at summer's end, giving us and family visiting from the United States some

the former Expo islands. Its symbol is Julien Hébert's globe of stick men. We had to laugh when, cycling way out on one of the narrow strips of fill in the river, we ran into the short-lived black gnats that gather in extended clouds along the St. Lawrence, whom officials prior to Expo went after with the best insecticide they could find—dichlorodiphenyltrichlorethan, or D.D.T.

Remnants of Expo abounded. On St.



THE SHOPPING CART

THE DYING PIG

BY DEREK McCORMACK

FRIGHT THIS WAY.

The Grim Reaper looms over everything, in one arm a scythe, in the other a sign: FRIGHT THIS WAY.

The reaper's an inflatable. He's surrounded by inflatables: vampires, zombies, and psychopathic clowns.

There's an inflatable skeleton. There's an inflatable skeleton in an inflatable coffin. An inflatable tombstone bears the inscription: *HERE LIES WILLIE B. BACK*. For francophones, there's another inscription on the other side: *CI-GÎT G. RENDULAM*.

Happy Halloween! It's the season when stores are stocked with decorations of the dead and dying. It's the season when stores are stocked with inflatables of the dead and the dying.

They could sell an inflatable of me:
I'm dying.

Insufflation.

It's medical. It's the act of blowing a substance—powder, air, medicine—into the orifice of a body.

I've had it done to me many times—doctors puff air up my ass so that my rectum and intestine puff out, then they look for cancer.

That is, they look for more cancer.

It's a painful process, but pleasurable, too—while I'm inflated, I like to think I've become something besides myself—an inflatable.

I have not seen myself being insufflated—my head's always down, my ass

up. I'm told that it can be done manually—a doctor pumps air into my rectum with a bladder. What goes in is room air; what comes out is something else. I'm told that it can be done automatically—an insufflating contraption pumps CO₂ into my ass. What inflatables have in similar—an electric fan puffs them up from the inside as soon as it's plugged in. When I'm puffed up, I could rupture. When they're puffed up, they could rupture—they are, after all, balloons.

At Halloween, balloons are the ideal decor—they're so good at death.

"The Importance of Hallowe'en Trade"—this was a headline in a stationery trade magazine, in 1916. "Masks, lanterns, favors, and placecards, besides post cards and other novelties, can all be sold most readily for Hallowe'en."

Balloons were novelties.

Halloween balloons were much the same then as now—black and orange, stamped with skulls and skeletons. The rubber was heavier. The dye on the rubber rubbed off. They had trumpet ends: when air went out, they wailed.

FUN FOR ALL, read a headline in the same trade magazine in 1922. The big seller was the Broadway Chicken—a balloon in a costume.

The chicken was a balloon with a cardboard beak and feathers glued to it. When it deflated, it squawked. Another company offered the Dying Pig, a balloon with ears and legs stuck to it. It

screamed like a slaughterhouse as air shot out its asshole.

All assholes are trumpet ends.

In 1945, a jack-o'-lantern floated down Columbus Avenue.

It was a balloon in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, in New York City. Why put a jack-o'-lantern in a Thanksgiving parade?

Why not?

The first Macy's parade took place in 1924. The floats were trucks decorated with crêpe paper and costumed characters.

Then, in 1927, it got balloons. They were floats that floated. They were storeys high—they peered into fortieth-floor apartments.

Tony Sarg, a puppeteer, designed them. That first year he did a Felix the Cat, a baby dragon, and a floppy-eared elephant. A team of the store's employees held them aloft with poles. The balloons were rubberized silk pumped up with oxygen. The following year, Sarg pumped helium into them. At the end of the parade, the employees let them soar up into the sky. There they expanded, then exploded.

Felix's skin fell onto the street. An ear, an eye, an asshole.

In 1929, Sarg built the balloons with slow-release valves—when the balloons were let go, they propelled themselves across the city. The balloons alit in the Bronx, in Brooklyn. They didn't make it to Toronto, though Toronto had balloons of its own. The Santa Claus Parade tried them out in the nineteen-thirties. The streets here destroyed them—they got snagged on railway bridges and electrocuted on streetcar cables.

Balloons are born to die.

How do inflatables die? There are storms—winds whip them away. There's vandalism—shootings, stabbings, slashings. A penknife can waste a werewolf. A garden stake can take down a vampire. Then there's simple wear and tear. Air fans fail. Seams pull apart. Sunlight fades the fabric 'til it's brittle. You can't put a vampire in the sun for too long—he'll bleed out, bow down, then drop to the ground. Then he's nothing. He's a tree skirt.

When I die, I like to think it'll be with a bang—a desufflation of gas, shit, lube, like a balloon that's been butt-fucked or a butt that's been balloon-fucked—the dying pig as dying pig. ❖

COOL COMICS CLUB

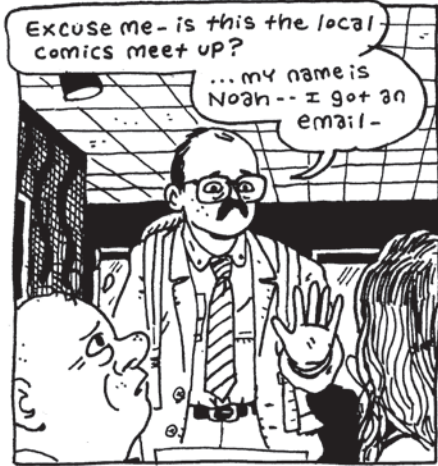
(of Ohio)

Noah van Sciver 2017

Greetings, Mr. van Sciver, and welcome to Columbus. My name is Thaddius and I too am a comic book artist.



I organize a weekly get-together comics Jam at the Crimson Cup coffee shop for local comic artists and I think everyone would love it if you came out. It would be a great way for you to meet everyone too!



I'm Thaddius, or "Lord Thaddius" as I am the leader of this group!

This is Phil Duncan. You've probably seen his pin up in a 2008 issue of 'CHEW' published by Image Comics! The BIG TIME!

It's a pleasure. Green Lantern Rebirth was excellent.

This is Carey Gail, the author of the self-published mini-comic "Fairy Fighters." Now out of print.

I teach comics at the college.

And the youngest of our group, Maggie Rage. They draw the web comic "pony Time Rainbow."

GREAT. Another white male! This group is privileged shit!

I'm sorry -- They're right... I should leave. I don't wanna be a problem.

pull up a chair!

Yeah, don't go yet!

SOON! we're collaborating on prints that we can sell at the upcoming Wizard World con! Do you have a table yet?

For a wizard world con?

Nah, I don't really exhibit at those kinds of shows. I never do well in that scene...

I'm sure you do! You're Ethan's brother!

Stop saying that. I have my own notoriety! You don't even know! I've toured Europe!

I'm famous in Alternative Comics!

Of course! I've seen your comic in the newspaper! wonderful textures and colors.

Not a lot of blacks I've noticed.

I saw your work on the web! That's why you got the C.C.C. invite! You're on your way!

Just keep working on your anatomy and dynamics!

And don't be so sure about not exhibiting at Wizard World. It's all about networking!

I once bought Jim Shooter a beer!

I'm an alternative cartoonist! An artist! A storyteller! What do you people think that means?!

An Amateur?

You stupid hayseeds, I'm an award-winning cartoonist! Not a mere cog churning out product for a sniveling corporate fanbase!

I write and draw BEST SELLING books!*

Philistines! midwestern rubes!

I'm out of here!

Ohio farm assholes...

what a pretentious jerk!

Great! Thanks for offending him before I could get Ethan's mailing address, guys!

male aggression.

* Lie. So what, sue me...

Fin

THE MARATHON OF HOPE

BY MICHAEL CHRISTIE

He stood clad in bronze, ten kilometres outside of town.

On Saturday nights, during our short, frenzied summers, we'd convene here at the feet of his life-sized statue—one calf flexing, hairless, like our own, the other replaced by a medieval-looking artificial limb, its top end disappearing into his short shorts, its bottom end jammed into a vintage Adidas runner—and try to siphon as much alcohol into our bloodstreams as possible without waking to the tube of a stomach pump down our throats. Saturdays were a night of abandon, of mythmaking, to be discussed in the halls of our high schools through the following week: who puked, who cried, who sucker-punched who, who fingered who, who had their mind stolen by acid, who nearly died of alcohol poisoning, who professed love, who refused it.

The monument was too far up Highway 17 to reach by bike, so you needed a car to be there, lending it a certain exclusivity as a party location. And with no houses around, the O.P.P. never got called. But when I think of it today, now that I live in relative peace near the ocean, on the other side of the country, I've come to believe that, more than the monument's seclusion, it was the statue itself that drew us.

You already know this, but in the summer of 1980, when Packer and I were just toddlers, a young man who'd lost most of his right leg to a cancer growing in the cartilage of his knee, dipped his artificial leg into the freezing Atlantic, at St. John's, Newfoundland, then proceeded to run west for fifty-four hundred kilometres—forty-two kilometres a day for *a hundred and forty-three consecutive days*, we'd been told countless times by our gym teachers and parents—to raise money for cancer research. In fact, Terry Fox ran to this very spot on this very highway, where he was forced to stop after the cancer had finally metastasized into his lungs, and died shortly after. His Marathon of Hope captivated Canadi-

ans; it was the kind of story that turned even our most alcoholic parents and our most draconian gym teachers all misty. Even today, it's the closest thing this country has to a unifying narrative. The sacrifice. The selfless perseverance. The chafed stump. The rivers of sweat. The conquering of our vast distances. To young people like us, here at the foot of his monument, his story ought to have been inspirational, it ought to have convinced us we could accomplish anything we put our minds to.

But we weren't so sure. There was always something fishy about the story. We couldn't help but suspect that it wasn't actually the cancer that made him stop, but rather that when he hobbled up over the rise and got one look at our ugly little city—with its rusted half-tons and abandoned grain elevators standing near the lake like the castles of some ransacked civilization—and, after limping his way through five thousand kilometres of agony, he was swamped with despair and called it quits right there. In our hearts, we knew that our city could make even a great Canadian hero realize he could no longer fucking take it.

And really, we couldn't blame him.

Anyway, this particular Saturday, twelve of us were sitting on the statue's granite base, including me, and my best friend, Chris Brunspacker, who everyone called Packer. He had one of those names, one of those bodies, one of those warrior souls that seemed almost purpose-built for the N.H.L. A defenseman who could skate and shoot and hit and move the puck around the ice at will like a cursor across a computer screen, he was the best player our hockey-obsessed town ever produced. A player who surely would've sold a million jerseys—I can still imagine the BRUNSPACKER crammed in across his wide back, the letters crowded to near illegibility—that is, if his right knee hadn't been blown to bits by a low hit from another player during his first Junior B game and his dream ended in a symphony of popping cartilage.

Before doing his knee in, Packer would've never so much as spoke to someone like me: an unathletic nobody whose mother was in and out of the insane asylum, and who smoked half the weed he was selling and needed to pawn his dead father's tools to make up the shortfall. But the crippled giant took a liking to me, shielding me from all the high-school monsters who would do me harm. But more than that protection, it was our shared frequencies of rage—directed at everything and everyone—that drew and kept us together.

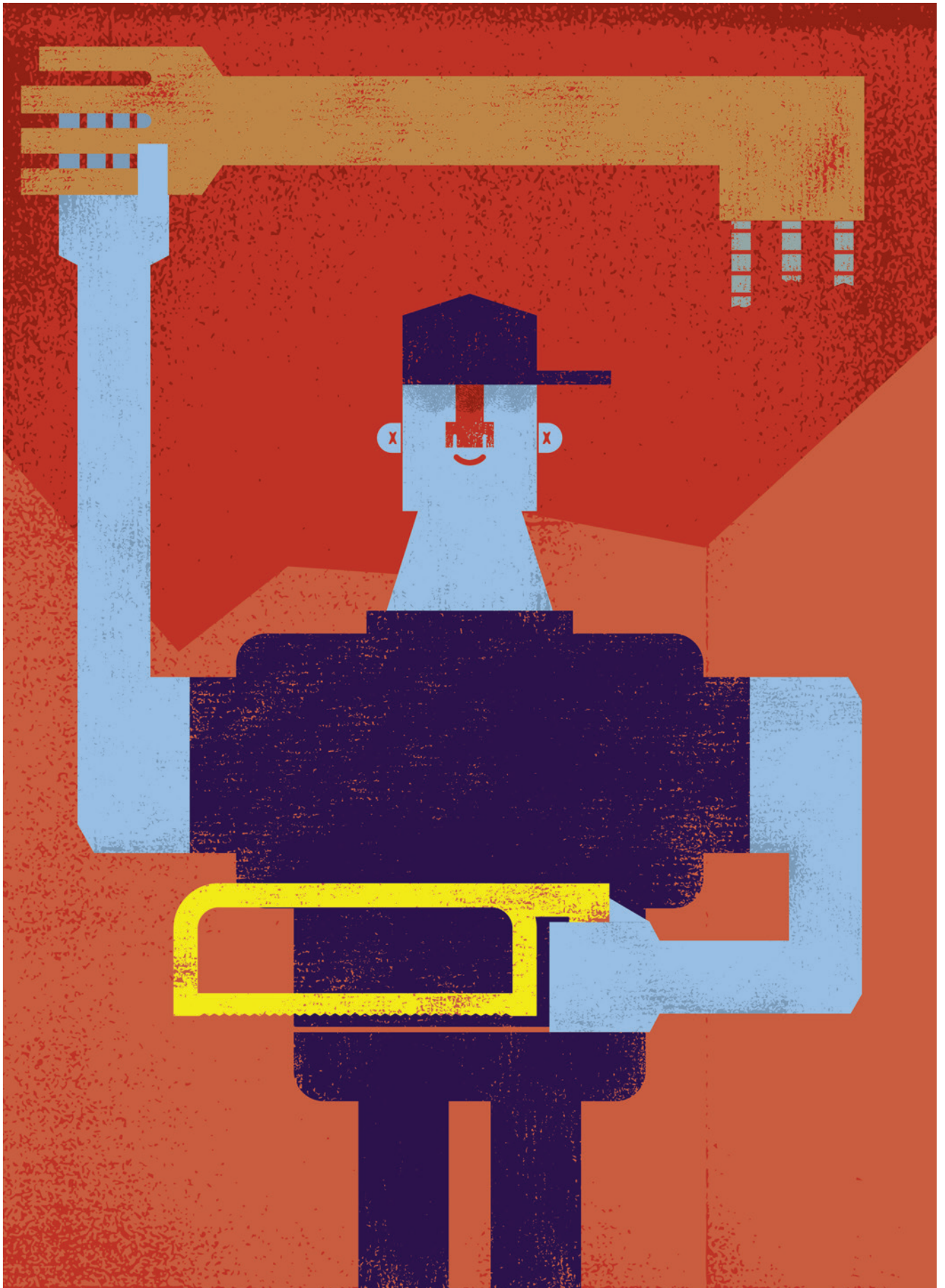
We'd come that night because Packer was after a girl named Amy. He'd borrowed his father's car, a rusted Pontiac Firefly that we called the Superfly, and bought us a case of Labatt Ice (even at sixteen, Packer never got carded) because it had the highest alcohol content available. Amy was short, nearly half Packer's height, a former gymnast with a triangular, foxlike beauty to her face. Packer claimed they'd hooked up a few times before his knee went kablooy, but now that he worked weeknights at a grocery store—the depressing kind where only old people go and everything is shrink-wrapped—a place where he'll work, I'll later learn, for the rest of his adult life—Amy's interest had flagged.

But on this particular night, things were looking up. There was a party somewhere across town we hadn't heard of, and the other guys assembled at the monument were all at my level or beneath, leaving Packer to assume the slot of most desirable guy by default.

"How long did he run for again?" Amy asked, sipping her pink wine cooler as we all stared out over the jawbone of the bay.

The lake was huge and freezing. Even in summer, none of us would dare swim in it unless we were much drunker than this. Our parents were raised in this horrible place because their parents worked in the grain elevators, or the shipbuilding factory, or on the railroad, or they made airplanes for the war. Their parents came to trade for furs, to mine, to log,

ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW DALEY





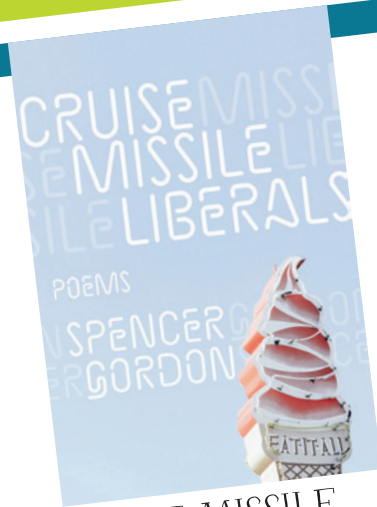
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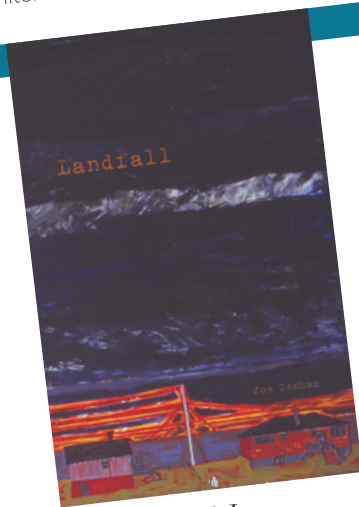
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to otherwise fuck over the landscape and trample Indigenous culture in the process. I've only realized now that it wounds you deep down to live where there's nothing to be proud of, not even your own family's way of life.

"He ran for three months," I said, and we all craned our necks up at the statue: sweaty curls, elbows hugged tight to his sides in mid-jog, greenish face twisted somewhere between agony and ecstasy.

"That's a long fucking time, man," said Amy's friend Melissa, a girl I would later date, and who would carve my name deep into her arm with a seam ripper after I dumped her before leaving for university.

"Aw, three weeks isn't that much," Packer said. "You can do anything for three weeks."

Often, usually when I was stoned, I'd attempted to imagine running across a country as big as Canada. Because of how much I smoked, my lungs neared implosion if I even jogged for a bus, so the thought was daunting. But maybe Packer was right, I now thought. Maybe it wasn't that much. Packer was the athlete. He'd know.

"Oh yeah," Amy said caustically. "Well I can think of a few things that you *couldn't* do for three weeks, Chris."

Packer sucked air between his teeth, and I worried Amy was somehow referring to one of their previous interludes. Sometimes, Packer would smoke an ounce of my weed and get so stoned that I'd become suddenly afraid of him, this big bull lying in my room on the couch that I'd found in the alley and dragged inside. But his ramblings remained peaceful, and would always return to Amy and how much he loved her.

"And seriously, how do you get cancer in your knee?" I asked, trying to back up my friend, taking what I hoped was a cinematic pull on my third Labatt Ice. I was already drunk to the point of slurring, and my face felt like I'd snorted a tablespoon of novocaine.

"Yeah," Melissa said. "I mean, like, knee cancer seems so *fake*. Maybe he faked the whole thing!" she declared, before descending into the endless giggles of an inebriated teen.

We all knew that Melissa's mother had died of stomach cancer the year before, which rendered her laughter all the more grotesque. Still, she had a point. Lung and stomach, lymph and brain, liver and pancreas—these were cancers we knew.

BAGUETTE, PIGEON, PEREGRINE

The peregrine bites the head off a pigeon.
The pigeon bites the head off a baguette.

The centrality, the persistence—
The Role of the Baguette.

“In this ever-changing world in which we live in”
a stale baguette becomes a weapon.

And a wet baguette?
Just another sly aside before the lighting of a cigarette.

Kitchen Tip No. 37—Save a Stale Baguette:
halve it, sprinkle with water, toast.

To nourish the masses! (At least the masses
that can find a *boulangerie*.) To nourish the masses

is a comfort afforded not much to pigeons,
and pretty much lost on peregrine, too.

—CHRIS CHAMBERS

Statistically, cancer was more common in our town than anywhere in Canada—because of poverty and the mill and the lead in our pipes—and these cancers were dropping our parents and teachers and grandparents like flies.

“He didn’t fake it, Mel,” Amy said, with something like pity in her voice.

“Well, I heard he didn’t even stop here,” Packer said in his loud, booming voice. “That it was actually four miles up the highway where he officially gave up. But this is a better viewpoint, so the city put the statue here. Meaning: this whole place is bullshit.”

“Well, I like bullshit,” Amy said as she climbed the statue’s big base, the enticing foothills of her butt just visible beneath her cut-off jean shorts, her high-heeled sandals clicking on the granite slab inset with amethyst. “And dead guys are hot.”

We’d seen this before. Sometimes drunk girls would climb up there and hump against the statue’s good leg and sing Mary J. Blige songs in fake American accents, and this was what we all expected. But this time, Amy bent low, and with her long strawberry-coloured tongue, licked the bronze bulge of his eighties running shorts with impressively simulated passion.

“Get down, Amy,” Packer said, after she’d gone at it for a few seconds, almost like a father would to his daughter at a strip club. Packer had a sad, stifled look on his face, and for a second I was relieved he couldn’t climb up there as well, because of his knee.

Amy’s eyebrows went up. Two penciled arches.

“You know, you and your little drug dealer friend talk a lot. But what’ll *you* ever do that will be worth a monument, Chris?”

Packer’s face turned to stone and he locked his eyes on the bay. We all watched Amy climb down and soon she and Melissa disappeared into the Acura of some other guys who’d been watching Amy’s performance.

After they’d gone, Packer kept his eyes on the bay while he shotgunned three drinks in quick succession, the beers looking like those little airline bottles in his big hands. But after that, his eyes were aiming different directions, and the other teens gathered at the fringes of the monument seemed to sense his intensifying dark energies and retreated to their cars and trucks. When everyone else was gone, we sat alone, not saying anything. Finally I couldn’t stand it anymore, and said, “Well fuck her.”

Packer laughed. A loud bark that didn’t befit the situation.

“You know, Mike, the human knee is the most complicated piece of orthopedic hardware in the entire animal kingdom,” he said, rubbing his own shattered knee with his big palm. “More complicated than the eyeball. The brain even.”

He rose from the statue’s base and limped over to the parking lot. His physiotherapist always told him to use his cane, but he never did, not even while stocking shelves at the grocery store, and his great girth only made his limp more pathetic, more sad, like a grizzly with a wounded paw. Packer reached a truck somebody had left parked in the lot, the kind of truck that was ubiquitous in our town, a work truck with a locking chrome tool box in the bed. It’s the kind of truck owned by a man you definitely don’t want to fuck with, but Packer didn’t care. He took up a big rock and hit the box’s padlock a few times until it popped open. After rummaging around a minute, he started hobbling back. At first it looked like he was carrying some kind of machete, but as he drew closer, I saw it was a hacksaw.

“Watch the lot for me,” he said.

With some pain, Packer ungracefully heaved himself up onto the monument and stood staring at the statue, the saw in his hand. Packer was at least six inches taller, and it may have been the weed, but I realized then my friend was the exact opposite of Terry Fox. His shadow. But also his twin. His enemy and his brother. I remembered that in the Bible brothers were often sacrificed on cliffside altars just like this.

Packer, however, wasn’t thinking philosophically at the time. I know now he must’ve been deciding which part of the statue to remove. And even today, I can still hear the sound of the saw, the way the statue started to ring like a giant cymbal as Packer hacked at it. Initially, I was surprised he didn’t go for the leg. The artificial one seemed too obvious, but I realize now that the legs would’ve required two cuts, so the left arm was the easiest target.

The bronze had stainless steel support rods inside it, and the sawing took longer than expected. Packer was already sweating and peppered with shavings when he was only halfway through. But he pressed on. I would like to claim today I was filled with horror during this process,

that I told him to stop, but that would be a lie. Because I said nothing. There are some things that seem inevitable, especially when you are young, and this was one of them. And to be honest, I hated the statue just as much as Packer did. It was built to remind us we hadn't suffered, not like him. This young, beautiful torture victim. This Jesus. Who was better than us all, dying so we could all be saved. Though she wasn't religious, my schizophrenic mother sometimes saw Jesus in the clouds, which I hated, mostly because none of her delusions were ever about me.

After the arm detached, Packer held it by the hand, like a giant from Norse mythology with a bronze club. Then he raised it up in the moonlight like the head of an enemy king, and screamed out over the frozen bay.

"You want this?" he asked, after I helped him down.

I shook my head.

Unsure what to do with it, Packer wound up and hurled the arm over the highway and into the bush below.

"Let's go," he said.

All that week, the police questioned kids who were there that night, including Amy, who all identified Packer as the likely culprit. But when they pulled me out of math class I told them that I was at home, with Packer, watching *Chariots of Fire*. In the end, they found the arm in the bush two weeks later and had it welded back on. The police knew Packer did it, they just couldn't prove it because I wouldn't talk.

But I didn't speak to Packer either after that, just the occasional nod in the hallway, like two prisoners who'd once shared a cell. I passed the rest of high school in a kind of bitter tortoise shell fabricated by weed, books, and a big pair of blaring headphones. Somehow, probably because of the books, I managed to do the impossible and escape our town and go to university. Yet I still managed to fuck my life up, almost as thoroughly as I would've if I'd stayed. That is until I met a woman, a woman who didn't harbor a secret desire to destroy herself, like me and Packer did. With her help I was able to cobble together a good and hopeful life, or at least one that felt like it.

Then last year, while driving across the country, moving from one city to another, as artists tend to do, in the flawed hope that constant relocation could fix what

was wrong with me, I saw a sign for the Terry Fox scenic lookout. Without thinking I veered the wheel of my U-Haul to the exit.

I pulled into the old parking lot. It was winter and it was late, and there was nobody there. But they'd prettied up the monument since that night with Packer: expensive halogen lights and video cameras and big, wheelchair accessible washrooms. I climbed up onto the statue's icy base and ran my finger along the seam on his bicep where the arm had been welded back on, and thought of Packer for the first time in years.

I'd recently read in the newsfeed of a friend from my hometown who I still kept in touch with that someone had tried to saw off the statue's head. They'd got halfway through his neck before abandoning the grim project, possibly, the police thought, because it was too difficult, or possibly out of remorse. I read all the on-line editorials of outrage, which included allegations that this was akin to an act of terrorism, an attack on the very fabric of our nation.

Though we'd fallen out of touch, I looked Packer up on Facebook and was pleased to see he was still alive, and now managed the grocery store where he'd worked. Neck tattoos. Goatee. Backward hat. The kind of fat that looks more strong than unhealthy. Four children, all boys, all of them huge, and an ex-wife with fake breasts (not Amy), who takes blood at the new hospital and goes on many tropical vacations. Packer posts infrequently, mostly about weed legalization and Maple Leafs draft picks. And though he looked happy enough, there was still that old sadness in his eyes. The wounds of disappointment. The fatigue of having touched greatness then lost it forever.

I've often wondered if it was Packer who went back for the head. Or whether it was his big, angry offspring, the eldest of whom was approaching the age we were that night. And is it shameful to admit that there's a part of me that hopes it was? That he did return to finish the job, but couldn't go through with it because, he'd realized, standing up there beside his twin for the second time, that even if he did saw off the statue's head and throw it into the lake, they'd just make another one and weld it back on, like some mythic monster that could never die.

I'm remembering all this because, just this morning, my eldest son participated in the Terry Fox Run. He was born here on the West Coast, quite near to where Terry went to school, in fact, and the place he would've completed his run if our town hadn't forced him to give up. There's a bronze statue here as well, but not nearly as grandiose as the one marking the place his Marathon of Hope ended. In this rendering Terry looks happier, less anguished. Less like Jesus and more like a fine young man out for a restorative Sunday jog. I can't help but shake my head at it. It looks nothing like him.

"Did you see me run, Dad?" my son asked today, after crossing the finish line with the number 273 safety-pinned to his shirt.

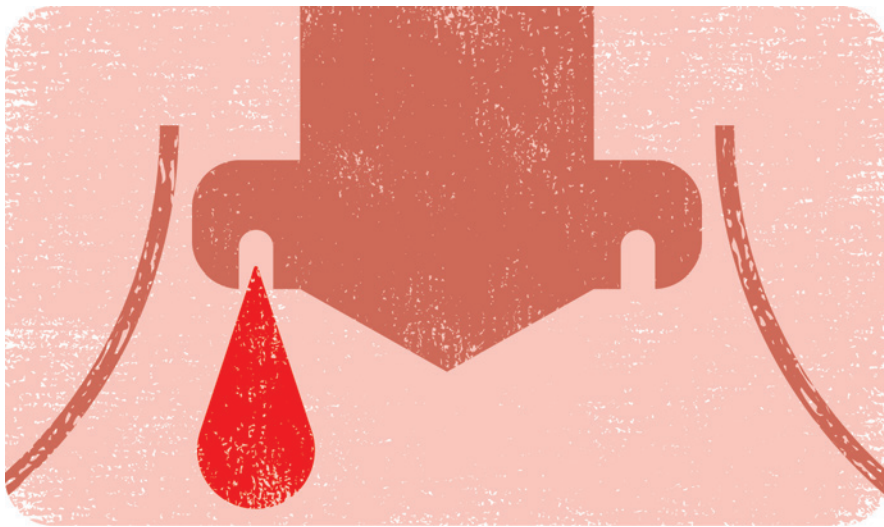
"You were amazing, buddy," I said, distractedly scruffing up his only slightly sweaty hair. Recently I've developed a bad habit of offering bland and thoughtless encouragement at almost everything he says, including when he tells me something awful has happened.

But this morning, it wasn't just my usual distraction. This morning my mind was four thousand kilometres away, back at the monument. Because how could I possibly tell him that Packer had been right that night: it wasn't amazing, what Terry Fox did. That it's nothing to run. Two kilometres. Or ten. Or a hundred. That it's all the same. Because compared to living, running is easy. Even with an artificial leg. Even five thousand kilometres at forty-three kilometres a day for a hundred and forty-three days. Because all you need to do is keep taking steps and breathing, and keep doing that one thing over and over, ignoring pain, collecting adulation.

Try not running, I wanted to tell my sweet little son as he thoughtfully stabbed the straw into the organic juice box I'd brought for him because I don't want him riddled with the same toxins me and Packer and our parents were. Try staying in one place. Like Packer did. Like that tortured statue does still. Like I did, even though I left, and brought the torture with me. Then try that for thirty years. Forty. Fifty.

Try staying in a place that wants to sacrifice you like a lamb on a big granite altar overlooking a frozen highway.

Then we'll see how far you get. ❖



THE RACE TRACK

FIRST ASSIGNMENT

BY BRETT POPPLEWELL

Hi, I'm the new race reporter from *Taddle Creek*."

"Taddle what?"

"*Taddle Creek*. National magazine. Big readership in the Annex. My editor sent me out here to write about your race-based steaks?"

"Who'd you say?"

"*Taddle Creek*. You haven't heard of it?"

Silence

"*Crick*,' maybe? Not sure how you would say it out here."

"And you're here for what?"

"Race-based steaks. Or, wait . . . Racist steaks, maybe? Just a second. Let me check my assignment notes. Yup, yup. Uh-huh. Race-based steaks. Write it up so it reads like some guy named Cathal Kelly. Something about a handicapper and a groom. Or maybe a handicapped groom? That mean anything to you?"

"Handicapped groom?"

"So you know him. Perfect. Would you say he's old-man racist or more alt-right racist?"

Silence

"Let's not complicate this too much. Just show me to the guy with the steaks."

"Sir, this is a barn. What's your magazine again?"

"*Taddle Crick*. It's all over newsstands. Glossy, like the *New Yorker*."—Sigh—

"Listen, I got a deadline here—"

"I think your nose is bleeding, sir."

"Jesus. Not again. Sorry, one minute. . . . Damn it. . . . Do you have—? . . . Thank you.

That should hold it. I just . . . There we go. . . . Oh, for God's sake, your shoe. Let me— No, no, I insist. I'll rub it in for you."

"Please, sir, I— . . . That's enough. You got it all. That's good. Honestly that's . . . that's good."

"Hey, who's that kinky little guy with the whip over there?"

"I'm sorry?"

"Bit bold, don't you think? White pants this time of year."

"Eduardo?"

"Ah, a Spaniard. That explains the boots."

"Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to—"

"Oh, don't say that. No, no, don't say that. You don't know how bad it is out there. I *need* this story. I just gotta taste the steaks, get a few quotes from the handicapped guy or whatever, and I'm gone. Maybe, actually, can I just interview you?"

"I'm not supposed—"

"So, tell me, what exactly do you do here?"

"I . . . you can't . . . I'm a hot walker."

"Ha! Cute, cute. But seriously?"

"Sir, what— Wait, is that a recorder?"

"This? No. This is just a . . . Listen. I get it. You don't want to be quoted. No problem. These big steaks, though. Would you say they offend Eduardo?"

Silence

"Hmm, so Eduardo's not the victim here then. Interesting. O.K. So what can you tell me about the groom? How long's he been handicapped?"

"Charlie?"

"Charlie . . . just a second . . . let me write that down. Now we're getting somewhere. . . . Does he prefer Charles? Chuck? Just Charlie? O.K. So was it Eduardo who crippled him? We talking paralysis or more like a limp?"

Silence

"Hmm, O.K. 'No comment.' Smart! I'll just stick with 'Handicapped.' And Eduardo, is he . . . you know . . . 'legal'?"

"Sir, I think you'd better leave."

"O.K., O.K. I get it. You already said too much. You got a job, I got a job. Nobody needs to lose their job. How 'bout I just ask yes or no questions, and you either look away for yes or stretch out your face for no. O.K., here we go: Would you say the big steaks are a direct result of the increase in race-based tensions in America? I'm sorry, you seem to be contorting your face . . . is that a yes?"

"Security! Security!"

"Whoa! O.K. All right. Back the way I came. No need to scream. I'm moving, I'm moving. Hey, what's this horse's name?"

"Sir! Don't pet the horse! Sir! Sir!"

"Say, what kind of steaks you guys selling here anyway?"

"Sir! You mustn't approach her like that! She . . . she won the derby!"

"Oh wudgy wudgy woo."

"Your hand! You mustn't so close to her mouth!"

"Oh wudgy wudgy wudgy—"

"Sir, please! She'll think your fingers are carrots! Oh my Christ! Get her— Argh! Get her off!"

"Holy! Jesus shit! That's a lot of . . . are you—that's a lot of blood!"

"My hand! Argh! I can't feel my hand!"

"Hang on, I gotta write this down."

"Sir! Please! Grab the bridle!"

"Just a . . . I . . . wow. She's really chewing on your bones."

"Argh!"

"Oh, God, this is good stuff. Although . . . hmm. How would you describe her colour?"

"My thumb. Can you see my thumb?"

"One second, I— O.K., O.K. I'm going punch her in the throat."

"No! Argh! She won the derby! Just grab—grab the bridle."

"Whoa! Hold that pose for just . . . I just . . . Let me . . . Lens cap, check. Aperture, yep. Light, good. O.K., O.K."—*click-click-click*—"Hang on . . . I'll stab her in the eyeball with my pen." ♦

BIRTHRIGHT

Hip hop at the Six Nations reserve.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF SPEED

A new generation of hip-hop artists is reaching back with skilled hands, toward their birthrights as gifted orators, on the same hard-won land of their ancestors—our ancestors. They pick up the microphone, a new torch of leadership, and generously offer inspired understanding of their culture, something they say is so often misrepresented in the media.

It is easy for any young person rooted on Six Nations of the Grand River—the largest First Nations reserve in Canada, located approximately a hundred kilometres west of Toronto—to live both a traditional life and a contemporary life, given the amount of support and resources available to them. Six Nations is a self-sustaining community with many Indigenous-owned businesses, cultural and educational schools, radio stations, two lacrosse arenas, media production houses, and, most recently, not one but two Indigenous-owned Tim Hortons coffee shops—not to mention a slew of smoke shacks. Music is a large part of Six Nations culture. The Juno Award winners Derek Miller and Murray Porter come from here. So does Tru Rez Crew, the hip-hop team that was adept at producing banging beats and penning socially conscious rhymes, and that won two Aboriginal Peoples' Choice Music Awards before disbanding. The freestyler Wes Day, a.k.a. Fresh, says the Six Nations brand of hip hop has ceremony built into it, focusing on the energy and poetics of freestyle. "Everything is irrelevant when you're in your element" he says.

Today, two names feature prominently on the Six Nations hip-hop landscape: 6BronxZoo and Chilly Chase. The name 6BronxZoo "riffs off the term 'Six Nay zoo'—when big tourist buses roll through the rez, filled with people taking pictures of us like we're animals in a zoo," says James Blood, a.k.a. Jimi James, a 6BronxZoo member with senior hip-hop status from his days performing with Tru Rez Crew. "The Bronx part honours the roots of hip hop, where it started."

Chase Jarrett, a.k.a. Chilly Chase, comes to the game with a degree in English literature, and so far has released a mix tape, an album, and an EP. His song "Tommy Longboat" was last summer's most requested song on Jukasa Radio, a Six Nations-based station. Chase, whose rhymes are rooted in current political and cultural struggles on Six Nations, is a self-described songwriter, and has employed beats mixed by the Six Nations D.J. Hunter Sky. Chase is also supported by Gary Joseph and Shane Powless, of the production house Thru the RedDoor, who worked on Chase's album *King of the Rejects*. (Chase also worked on several still-unfinished songs with the D.J. Zoolman, before Zoolman got recruited into the trio A Tribe Called Red.)

The artists here call themselves a family, looking out for and supporting each other. (Though, despite Haudenosaunee foundations with matriarchal leadership, Six Nations hip hop is still largely a boys' game.) The daddy of this family is John Henhawk, who offers support in numerous ways. But the self-promotional game that often takes precedence over real talent and honest rhymes is not the motivation here: these are people with kids, with families, so they're not driving hard toward the finish line, or to any kind of fame-dom. "We chill," Fresh says. We're artists."

Jeff Speed, an award-winning commercial and editorial photographer based in Toronto, struck up a friendship with Fresh two years ago, while on assignment for Norfolk County Tourism. Speed mentioned his interest in creating a photo essay on Indigenous culture, and Day suggested the Six Nations hip-hop scene. "He's cool," says Fresh of Speed. "He's down to roll." In the time since, Speed has visited the reserve numerous times, capturing a scene some describe as "underground," but with bubbling talent surfacing as surely as corn in a soup pot.

—JANET ROGERS

Chase Jarrett, a.k.a. Chilly Chase.





James Blood, a.k.a.



Jimi James.



Top: Gary Joseph, of Thru the RedDoor. Bottom: Wes Day, a.k.a. Fresh.



Top: Liam Aaron, a.k.a. Lucky Lee. Bottom: Hunter Sky.



Eric Martin, a.k.a.



Lunacy.

IF THAT'S ALL THERE IS

BY MONA AWAD

Archibald was already fucking one fat girl when he began to fuck another on the side. Now he was fucking two: Beth and Brita. Or was it Bertha? Anyway, two fat girls. He even began to think he could make a little money out of it. Like maybe he could write a book. There would be chapters like: “Do Not Underestimate the Power of Despair” and “Low Self-Esteem is Your Friend!”

Archibald's father's wife, Edna, with whom he'd also fornicated on occasion, felt the whole thing was a disgrace. While in the back seat of a moving cab, she raised Archibald's head from between her legs and told him so.

“Those fat girls are going to eat you alive, Archibald,” she said, her voice sludgy with Klonopin and Grand Marnier. “Just like that show.”

“What show?” Archibald asked, grabbing a Virginia Slims from her purse and lighting it.

“No smoke in here!” the cabbie called from the front seat. “I told you last time, this not a motel!”

“The *show*,” Edna said, lighting one too.

She attempted to pull up her gold stirrup pants, then gave up and let them fall back down around her ankles.

“You know, the one that's on late at night? Where the fat women throw chairs at each other? Mom loves it. Don't you, Mom?”

“I love what?” her mother called from the front passenger seat.

“No smoke! No smoke in here!”

“Calm *down* . . . Jesus?” Edna said, squinting at the name on the cabbie's licence. “Look, I'll blow out the window. See?”

“What do I love?” her mother called again, worriedly.

“You probably shouldn't have brought your mother,” Archibald said.

“Well, I couldn't leave her alone with your father. Not in her condition. Not in *his* condition.” Edna leaned into the front passenger seat and placed a hand on her mother's shoulder. “You know the show, Mom. Where the fat women throw chairs. You never miss it.”

“You smoke in here, you get out!”

“Oh, yes!” her mother said, the knowledge at last dawning on her face. “I just love that show. I never miss it.”

FAT GIRL ONE

Archibald stumbled into the sexual arrangement with the first fat girl much like he would an after-hours bar following a tequila bender. It was how he stumbled into most sexual arrangements: the one with Edna, the one with Joyce, the Korean dwarf, and Anne, the morose vegan with long silver hair who worked at his local video store.

He'd spent the evening after his shift at Bert's Bookstore as he often did, in the back seat of a cab with Edna, chasing Klonopin with Absolut. At Edna's request, he'd gone down on her twice, though it was all a bit hazy and tricky, what with the narrowness of the back seat, and Jesus watching from the rear-view mirror and Edna's skin-tight suede slacks, the unbuttoning of which required a team effort. Afterwards, she'd laid comatose on his chest, pulling drags off a Virginia Slims and singing “Is That All There Is.” Intermittently, she told him about the time before she married Archibald's father, when she'd been a jazz singer working days at a florist and her life was pure and filled with hope. After she passed out, Archibald took a roll of bills from her purse, gave some to Jesus and pocketed the rest along with some cigarettes, the Absolut, and an unlabeled bottle of pills, which he popped on the long walk home.

He was feeling pretty good when he got there. Like maybe he might even hook one of his chromatic harmonicas to an amp and jam along to some Davis or Toots. Or wail along to some calypso on his steel drums. Most likely he would just turn on the blinking chili-pepper lights that adorned his basement walls—the ones he'd dared Edna to steal from the outside façade of a Mexican restaurant—sit on his green paisley chair, with the burn stain on it, which he lifted from a neighbour's curb one morning on trash day, and blow on his kazoo. The more he

thought about it, the more he felt like tonight was a kazoo night.

Archibald was on his way to the kitchen to find a mixer for the vodka, when he saw one of his five housemates, Bertha, in the common room, crying. Or was it Brenda? All he knew about her was that she lived on the fifth floor, worked at the Y as some sort of swim teacher, and owned a dachshund puppy she liked to bathe in the evenings. In fact, the only communication he'd ever had with her were vague grunts of recognition when he went into the washroom for his evening shower just as she was coming out with the wet dog wriggling under her arm, both of them reeking of floral soap.

Still, he couldn't just let her cry like that. He'd attempt to console her. Well, what is it to console, really? What he did was sit beside her on the lopsided futon, imagining her churning butter, naked, while she recalled what happened in a tremulous voice.

“It was h-h-horrible,” she said.

He should have guessed bad date from her outfit, which had a lot of rhinestone swirls in it, and her hair, which was bubble-flipped. Both the bubble flip and the rhinestones clashed a little with her grief, making it somewhat absurd and amusing to behold. Archibald dug the bubble flip though.

“Horrible, huh?”

Apparently, her “date” had taken her to a seafood buffet, then masturbated under the table while watching her eat a plateful of shrimp. It didn't take her long to figure out he was masturbating, because he'd begun to sweat and gasp and it looked like he was doing something furious down there.

“Freaks,” Bertha finished, grabbing a Kleenex from the cozied tissue box. “Sometimes I think that all there is out there is freaks. For me, at least.”

“Well,” Archibald said, pulling a joint from his shirt pocket, “you know what they say, Bertha.”

“*Brita*. What do they say?”

“If that's all there is, let's break out the booze and have a ball. It's like that song. You know the one. By Peggy Lee?”

She shook her head.



“Sure you do.”

He tried to sing a few bars, but it was hard with all that cotton in his mouth.

“Anyway, you get the idea. Like me? I used to play jazz guitar. But then because of this tendonitis in my arm, I had to start playing harmonica. I hated them at first, but after a while, I got used to them. Then I sort of got into them. Now?” he smiled, “I’m a harmonica man all the way.”

“So . . . what are you saying? That I’ll get used to freaks?”

“Sure,” Archibald said. “Not that you don’t deserve better, Bertha,” he added with an eye on her expansive cleavage. “No question.”

“How do you know? You don’t even know me.”

“I know you wash your dog too much,” Archibald said.

At this, Bertha began to cry harder.

“I know you like to decorate,” he offered, waving a hand around at the dollar-store frippery she’d affixed to every cracked, scuffed surface of the common room: the cozied tissue box, the lady-shaped lamp, the bowls of potpourri he’d once mistaken for mixed nuts.

“I know you teach coffin dodgers how to doggie paddle,” he added. “Probably do a decent job of it too.”

“I’m a lifeguard.”

“And I’ll bet no one’s drowned on your watch.”

“No,” she conceded.

“Want to know something about me?”

“Um . . .”

He leaned in and whispered: “I can’t even swim.”

“Well, it’s easy for fat people,” she said, matter-of-factly. “We float.”

“Float,” he repeated dreamily. And the image of Bertha floating, perhaps in a too-tight two-piece, either polka dotted or sailor themed, came irresistibly into his mind. Desire flared up in him like an ulcer. He eyed her, from her overly coiffed hair to her small stocking feet.

“I like your bubble flip, Bertha.”

“Brita.”

“Right.”

Sleeping with Bertha was more pleasurable than he’d expected it to be. It was like finding that bar you stumbled into by default was not only open after hours, but that the bartender knew how to make a few half-decent drinks. He nicknamed her Squirt, because of a neat little trick she could do during orgasm that he had heard of but never witnessed first-hand.

Archibald found the sincerity and the depth of her desire for him, a desire that nearly broke the bed, amusing but also undeniably erotic. Indeed, she’d opened up a whole new world for him. A jiggling, fleshy world, humid with want and desperation, and it was fun to kill a quarter of an hour or two rolling around in it with her. On the subway to work the next day, a Tupperware container full of some weird fat-girl salad she’d made him tucked under his arm, he found himself noticing women of a heavier girth. And maybe this was crazy, but he felt these women were noticing him too. It was as if they could smell it on him: he had scaled one of their kind, like a mountain. Which meant, of course, that he could scale another.

FAT GIRL TWO

Beth was a clinically depressed French literature major who worked with Archibald at the Special Orders desk evenings and weekends. Her bra was a no-prisoners affair with thick, gun-metal-coloured straps that cut deeply into the flesh of her shoulders. It was seeing her bra through a gap in her shirt buttons that got Archibald thinking a little more about Beth. He enjoyed watching her bend her bulk to pick up crates of books, and he enjoyed even more seeing how flushed her cheeks became from this exertion. He found himself becoming aroused by her lumbering walk, the suicidal air with which she answered the phone, the strength in her thick arms, which could easily haul stacks of books.

“Need any help there, Beth?”

“Nope.”

“You’re a champ,” he grinned.

Beth flushed deeply, then went back to frowning into a book called *Enabling Romance: A Guide to Love, Sex, and Relationships for People with Disabilities*. He continued to eye her appreciatively and without apology. She was prettier than Brita. Better shaped, too, like a bass. Poor Brita carried it all in the gut and backside.

“*Enabling Romance*, huh?” Archibald said, reading off the title. “Sounds like a page turner.”

Not looking up from her book, Beth said: “So, Edna sang ‘Is That All There Is’ into the general voice mailbox again last night.”

“Oh man, really?”

Archibald smiled. Edna had been doing

this a lot lately. Ever since that one night he’d visited her and his father, and his father had inexplicably left the living room to go upstairs and fondle his instruments for the evening, leaving Edna and Archibald alone and embittered enough to drunkenly fondle each other. Though it had been a bleak, brief union—doggie style, on the velour couch, with Edna’s senile ninety-year-old mother watching and muttering joyfully from the La-Z-Boy—Edna couldn’t leave him alone after that night. She’d get drunk, lock herself in the bathroom with her keyboard and a cordless phone, then call the bookstore, singing Peggy Lee songs until the voice mail cut her off. She called the bookstore because Archibald was often without a phone due to unpaid bills, so where else was she going to call? Also, because she was insane.

“She came by earlier, demanding to see you,” Beth told him. “Didn’t believe me when I said you weren’t in today. Called me a liar.”

“Jesus,” Archibald said.

“There was this old lady with her. She must have been, like, a hundred. She kept giggling like she was senile or something.”

“Lucille. Her mother. She is senile. Great gal, though.”

He told Beth how he learned about Lucille during an overnight visit to his father’s one Christmas, when he’d snuck in to Edna’s bedroom late at night, hoping to get lucky. When Archibald realized Edna shared a bed with her mother, he’d attempted to back out, but Edna had encouraged him to go for it all the same. He had, but then the old woman woke up about halfway through, crying, “Oh dear! Oh dear!” At that point, Archibald had been ready to quit, but Edna insisted he keep going.

Beth stared at him, her mouth and eyes wide open.

“You didn’t keep going . . . did you?”

“Sure,” Archibald said. “I mean, it was awkward. I almost couldn’t. Thought for sure I’d never be able to look Lucille in the eye again. That it’d be, you know, weird after that. But what do you know? The next morning, she just smiled at me across the breakfast table and told me she was the world’s oldest teenager. Didn’t remember a thing.”

“Maybe she was pretending she hadn’t remembered to spare you both the embarrassment of how much of a prick you are,” Beth said.

“Maybe,” Archibald smiled. “Or maybe

THE POCKET

An untouchable and drastic movement
soothed us into two hundred square feet.
It's the city, we say. We hold on to more
or less the same things, side by each.
Don't ask after us. We've been combing
an edge into this sand for months.

We vacation to the north. An empty path
is *our* path, for the minor seconds
during which we sense its beauty, pass over it
to stare at fog that chimneys across the mountains,
maybe until the slaps of our entitled feet
grow inaudible from a significant distance.

Autumn is already rubbing its scent on corners.
It calls for reducing cold, tangible room; we'll stitch
up a cerulean pool into a pocket, make it usable.
We could live here, you say. Imagine
we lived here, I say. The water gains speed,
bounces light back, dives into and out of the question.

—ALLISON LASORDA

she got a kick out of being a spectator.”

“You're sick,” Beth said, shaking her head, but there was a half-smile in her eyes when she said it. They began to talk more after that.

Archibald assumed Beth had many dates, many admirers. He was surprised to discover that, actually, she did not. Her “boyfriend” was a fortysomething quadriplegic living in Irvine, California, whom she met on the Internet though their shared enthusiasm for the novels of Marguerite Duras. Currently she was saving up money to go visit him.

Beth showed Archibald a picture of him.

“He used to be a pretty big-deal soap-opera star in the seventies,” she said. “Until this one night in Maui after doing too much coke, he just climbed up a forty-foot palm tree and jumped.”

Archibald stared noncommittally at the picture of a broad-faced man in a wheelchair, with crinkly Malibu blue eyes and Hasselhoff curls. The man wore a biker jacket.

“He's got a mullet,” Archibald said.

“He does not,” Beth said, snatching the picture back.

“Does too. You know, Beth, I don't see why a very attractive girl like you would have to go all the way to Irvine to get half laid by a paralyzed dude twice your age.

Especially when there are men right here who like you a lot and who would do a hell of a better job of it.”

“Oh yeah? Like who?”

She was trying to sound indifferent and challenging, but there was a note of interest in her voice.

“Fergie's got a thing for you,” he said, referring to Howard Ferguson, their co-worker, an obese man with a bristly moustache who walked with a cane due to a childhood bout of polio. Fergie was currently doing archival research on a book about the naughty nuns of Italian cinema and was deeply in lust with Beth. Archibald figured if he started with Fergie, he'd look pretty good by comparison.

“Fergie?” she repeated, a little sadly. He knew she had a thing for Chris, the half-Indian boy with the Viking physique who worked in New Age and thought he was the next Aleister Crowley. Chris would often come up to Beth's desk and the two of them would chat about Yeats, Baudelaire, and other people in whom Archibald was not interested. Chris maybe did like Beth a little, but Archibald knew he'd never do anything about it.

“There are things *I've* thought of doing to you, for instance,” he added, staring at his computer screen.

“Like *what*?”

He took a red pen and printed the word “cunnilingus” on one of those small scraps of paper they used to note titles of books a customer wanted ordered. He folded it up and handed it to her. A customer approached the desk just then, so it was only out of the corner of his eye that he saw her reaction. The curtain of dark hair obscured her face, but her neck and chest were now covered with blotchy red patches.

“I'm sorry,” she said, after the customer had gone. “I just can't.”

She handed him back the note.

“It's not a ring, Beth,” Archibald said, trying to smile. “Just consider it an open invitation.”

He decided to put Beth out of his mind; after all, one fat girl seemed more than enough. But the workday seemed dreary without the mild flirtation to look forward to. The next day, on the subway, he took a bunch of downers he'd stolen from Edna's purse to get through his shift.

He was in the midst of a serious high, scarfing down Bertha's banana nut bread in a sort of dream, his thoughts trickling from his brain like treacle, when Beth approached him in the break room.

“So I was thinking about your offer yesterday?”

“Offer?”

Through the treacle, he recalled the note.

“Oh right. Offer.”

“I was thinking it was really rude of me to just brush you off like that.”

“No worries.”

“Anyway, I was thinking that maybe, you know, we could. Not do the note, obviously. But go for coffee?”

Coffee. He smiled.

“Well you know, Beth, who doesn't love a cup of joe?”

They had the coffee, then quickly went into a nearby park where he went down on her twice between some evergreen shrubs. He was surprised, even a little disappointed, to discover Beth was considerably thinner than she appeared in her uniform. He was surprised also at his disappointment. She came very loudly and gratefully, screaming a muffled “I love you” into his neck during the second orgasm, which surprised him even more.

“I'm going to break up with Blake,” she announced, afterwards.

“Who?”

“Blake. My boyfriend?”

“Oh right. The wheelchair guy. You sure?”

I don't mind sharing you. Especially with a paralyzed dude you'll hardly ever see."

"Well I mind. It wouldn't be fair to him."

"Only if you mind," Archibald said.

TWO FAT GIRLS

Fucking two fat girls didn't require much time management or stealth. After work, Archibald would find a park to fuck Beth in, or he would fuck her in her apartment, and then he would go home and fuck Bertha, once, maybe twice. He taught them both how to play a song on the same toy harmonica. He taught Beth "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and Bertha "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Brita was a faster study than Beth, but Beth looked hotter playing it naked. Overall, it was a deeply erotic time for Archibald. He'd been with two women before, and knew how to work that sort of arrangement. But with the fat girls the whole thing felt bigger, riskier, more unwieldy somehow. All that fleshy want festering on either side of town. It became clear that he was the centre of their respective universes—not some side thing, but the centre—a fact that deeply amused and aroused him.

He had a knack for pleasuring them, making them feel good about themselves, something they each confessed to him they'd never really experienced, and something they'd both been quietly craving from the world for a long time. Archibald enjoyed the perks of their gratitude. His fridge shelf—which usually contained only an industrial-size jar of generic-brand peanut butter—was now full to bursting with Bertha's casseroles and baked goods and mayonnaise-y salads. On his newly repaired harmonica (courtesy of Bertha), he wailed along to the limited edition recordings of Coltrane and Davis Beth would buy him. He smoked the menthols pilfered from Beth's purse, downed the ancient liqueurs taken from Bertha's grandmother's hutch, popped the Prozac prescribed to Beth for her depression, and helped himself to the dime bags of pot she kept in her freezer. He lay beneath his chili-pepper lights and got so stoned that in his mind he would mash Beth and Bertha into one big fat girl, and he would roll around with this mammoth woman on his crud-covered carpet, in near mystical bliss.

"What do you mean you'd *like* to but you *can't*?" Edna said, when he refused to go out for their usual cab ride.

"I'm helping them with their self-esteem. I'm winning hearts and minds here."

"Better watch it, Archibald," Edna said.

"Soon they'll start throwing chairs. I told you, it's like that TV show."

"Haven't seen it."

Though the image of chair-wielding fat girls wasn't entirely unpleasant, Archibald decided to let go of Bertha. Much as he enjoyed the hot weight of her want and witnessing the depths it made her sink to, he didn't like how her dog always had to be a part of things. How he always yipped outside the door when they were fucking. How she baked him little dog treats and bought him all these little dog sweaters. Besides, Beth more than satisfied him sexually. He especially enjoyed her severe bouts of near catatonic despair, the way she'd lie on her blue duvet-ed bed like a fat, drowned Ophelia, murmuring bleakly about literature. He liked her prescription drugs and her pot too.

When he broke the news to Bertha in the common room, she cried so hard she used every Kleenex in the cozied box and Archibald had to walk up five flights of stairs to the bathroom to get her a roll of toilet paper so rough and cheap it chafed your ass. He watched her blow her nose repeatedly with a wad from this roll, feeling the corners of his mouth twitch into an unholy smile.

"I'm sorry," she hiccupped. "I just wasn't"—more tears—"expecting this."

He cut it to her straight: "I just feel like there's no give and take, you know?"

She nodded. She was wearing one of those outfits she'd bought from a discount plus-size store at the nearby mall, this bright blue shiny thing edged with lace on steroids. He found himself becoming aroused by the way the ridiculous, cheap frills crackled as she wept.

"Is there"—more sobs—"someone else?"

"Yes," he said, biting on his grin, "But! She's not as pretty as you."

"Is she . . . *thin*?"

Archibald smiled.

"She's like you. Maybe a *little* thinner."

Bertha cried some more, and seeing her cheap plus-size lingerie bristle with each cry, seeing her blow her nose repeatedly into the cheap toilet paper, and seeing her intermittently gulp wine from the bottle she'd bought to surprise him, was all so erotic to him that he began slowly but surely to approach her. She smacked him, but not as hard as he knew

she could have, which he took to be promising. He kissed her hands and the fleshy backs of her knees and each of her freshly painted toes. At last, she lay back on the couch, sniffing, while he performed a conciliatory cunnilingus. She came despite herself. In his peripheral vision he saw Ling, the math major from the third floor, pad into the kitchen to make one of his weird ramen noodle variations. Upon seeing Archibald and Brita, Ling made some disgusted grunts. Archibald waved to him from between her shuddering legs.

The next day he told Bertha he would tell Beth it was over. But then, at work, Beth was wearing some sort of tank top that made her breasts pop, so he decided he'd go home with her anyway. Beth was a friend, was what he'd tell Brita. Bertha wasn't the boss of him was what he told himself, as he ran his hands over Beth's breasts on the subway back to her apartment, a despicable display that made many people tsk.

"People are watching," Beth whispered.

"People should mind their own business." Archibald said.

After making out with Beth awhile on her bed, Archibald began to teach her about jazz. Now this was pure charity. Beth's room was a poster shrine to Tori Amos and other sad vagina music. He played her "Is That All There Is." Knowing Beth dug philosophy, he explained to her how this song echoed his philosophy. How it said, bleakly and beautifully, everything he felt about life: that it was shit, and that to roll around in it drunk and naked with the one nearby was the best anyone could hope for. Anyone who thought there was anything more was fooling themselves. Beth listened with a stoned smile.

For a long time, the ringing of the telephone just seemed a part of the music.

"LaChute," Beth said, squinting at the caller display on her phone. "Don't know who that could be."

The name sounded vaguely familiar to Archibald, but when he couldn't remember why, he just zoned back out to the tunes. It was a good part in the song, so he didn't notice when Beth answered the phone. Nor that she'd left to use the phone in the living room. Nor that she was gone an awful long time. He pulled out his harmonica and began playing along to the music. He was really wailing on the thing by the time Beth came

SWOON

This is one of the strongman days, red
rust on the rock, a voice pumped up
on sun, then rain—reliable rain—
and snow on the steady peaks.

Swallows
swooping out of the blue
& dipping,
diving their hearts out, man oh man,

this may be a weak day ~
raven holds the swing vote
& you know
he's in with his beak.

I am in my black suit,
also swaying sillily from the middle.
Nothing is as loveable
as the middle from the edge—

Something weighty
drops,
is falling,
something from

the inner ledge,
the sound of it
confounding
down, the

old thought-wanting
round & round
& here I go
again,

again.
O, purify me.
Circumcise
this mind.

—ELANA WOLFF

back, wearing a housecoat patterned with googlie-eyed bats and looking very grave. She did not come back and join him in bed, but chose instead to sit at her desk chair. He stopped playing, a little irritated.

“What?”

“A woman named Brita just phoned. She says you're sleeping with her. Are you?”

“LaChute,” he said. And then remembered it was the last name of Bertha's French-Canadian best friend. Bertha must have called from her place.

“Shit.”

Beth threw a cat-shaped cup at him, which crashed to the floor and made her cats run howling out of the room.

“I was *descending* to sleep with you, you know that? I was *descending*, asshole! And you cheat on me?! And now you're smiling?! What the fuck is wrong with you?”

But he couldn't help the grin that slid over his face. The godawful truth was there was something vaguely arousing about this scene, just as there had been something vaguely arousing about Ber-

tha's sadness. He felt a semi-erection salute this anger of Beth's, which had caused her housecoat to fall open and her breasts to slide around under her black camisole like great humpback whales under the ocean's surface.

“Just, you're hot when you're pissed, that's all,” he said.

Red patches bloomed all over Beth's décolletage. She threw a stapler at him and missed. She began to cry.

He kneeled at her feet, not yet daring to take her hands.

“I never deserved you, Beth. I knew that. I count myself lucky that I was able to be with you at all. About Bertha—”

“Brita.”

“She's a nice girl, sure. But really, I just started sleeping with her because, well, I was lonely and she was lonely and I felt bad for her, all by herself on the fifth floor. I'm all she has, you know. As a friend, as a lover. She's got this dog she washes every night. You wouldn't believe it. But you're the one I wanted. And I'm really pissed at myself for ruining my chances here.”

He said things along these lines for a while, while Beth smoked a cigarette. He noticed her hands had begun to shake. He kissed them; she flinched a little, but she let him. When he began to gently kiss the sides of her knees, gently pushing them apart. He expected her to say, “Get out. Get out now.” That's what he expected. But she just sat there limp, letting him.


Archibald stayed out so late fucking Beth he missed the subway and had to walk home, where he knew Bertha would be waiting. It was precisely this expectation that made him walk more slowly, that made him take his sweet whistling time. When he arrived, he found her sitting in the common room with the yipping dachshund wriggling in her arms, like a demon-possessed sausage.

“I'm moving out,” she announced. “I've already started to look for apartments.”

“O.K.,” he said, knowing she wouldn't.

Archibald swore to both of them he'd be faithful. He swore on two different harmonicas. He swore on the mother he never called who was dying of kidney failure in a hospital in Kingston. He continued to fuck both of them on a regular basis in the hopes of being caught a second time.

But though he suspected both of them



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knew, neither confronted him. Each seemed to be purposefully in denial of the other's existence. And in that denial, both girls had begun to grow rather sickly. Beth began to get dizzy spells and started to take a lot of sick days. The doctor had told her the dizziness was being caused by panic attacks and prescribed anti-anxiety meds that killed her sex drive. Archibald would visit her after work, and find her in bed in her Ophelia pose, listening to Norwegian dark wave.

"I'm dying," she told him.

He got in bed with her, and together they listened to sad songs and popped her pills.

Bertha began to lose weight in odd places and her hair began to fall out in clumps. In the shower, he encountered great balls of dirty blond tangles mingled with the short black dachshund hairs.

At first he wondered why they bothered to stick around. Then he figured it out. Aside from some failed Internet dates and the coffin dodgers who flirted with her when she taught aquafit, who was ever going to fuck Bertha besides him. And Beth? Maybe Beth had a shot before, but she'd gained quite a bit of weight while with Archibald. She was almost the size of Bertha now. Probably he was all there was for Beth now too.

More and more he found himself thinking of Edna. Her absence of flesh. Her boozy desire that often flatlined into unconsciousness or indifference, which turned on and off like a flickering light. He fondly recalled her small, high breasts, so different from the cumbersome flesh tears that fell from the hunched chests of both fat girls.

It was with those breasts in mind that Archibald called her up.

"What?" her tone was miffed, but he could hear the bend in it.

"Hey, can you get away for the night? Come see me?"

Through the phone, he could hear the plaintive sound of his father's trumpet bleeding Chet Baker down from the attic.

"Thought you had your hands full over there, Archibald."

"You know what they say about handfuls."

"No. Tell me what they say."

"They're—"

"Never mind, I know what they say. I'll be there in a couple of hours. Can you wait?"

He considered this: Bertha would

likely be coming home in a few hours from her girlfriend's. Beth had already called him twice in a panic about some new anti-anxiety meds she was taking. She was worried she might have an adverse reaction and wanted him to come over and be with her in case she needed to go to the emergency room.

"I don't know if I can wait *too* long," Archibald told Edna.

While he waited for Edna, Archibald took the last few anti-anxiety meds he'd borrowed from Beth. He turned on his chili-pepper lights. He put on Peggy Lee. He sat down in his burn-stained chair with a half-empty bottle of Slovenian pear liqueur from Bertha's grandmother's hutch. His phone began to ring. LaChute. Then Beth. Then LaChute again. He took it off the hook. If they called each other up, so much the better.

By the time both girls showed up in his basement, Archibald had finished the liqueur and blacked out on a bottle of strawberry wine Bertha had brought back as a souvenir from a trip to Prince Edward Island with her sister.

When he came to, he was disappointed to see the fight had already taken place. The chili-pepper lights had been torn off the wall. His records were strewn all over the floor. It was just like his dream, really, except instead of wearing too-tight two-pieces and wrestling in a jam-like substance, they were wearing long black coats and calling each other "cunt." Clearly some information had been shared while he'd been out cold, some phone calls placed.

Seeing them like this, hot tears sliding down their cheeks as they threatened each other with violence, the erotic possibilities of being with two fat girls at once fully presented themselves.

"Ladies," he called from his chair, through a mouthful of cotton. He was about to say much more when Bertha threw a harmonica at him, hitting him right in the mouth.

After that, everything acquired a hazy, dream-like pacing. Both girls rushed toward him. Sobby apologies. Beth dialing for a cab. A blood-covered Bertha dabbing tenderly at his mouth with her Addition Elle cardigan. The fat girls dragging him up the stairs like pallbearers. How he felt like he was flying and actually said "Wee!" a few times. Being led through the common room where he encountered Ling, who made a dis-

gusted noise from the kitchen doorway. Being at last able to use his knowledge of Ling's secret hard-on for *Anne of Green Gables*.

"Hey, Ling, How's *Road to Avonlea*?"

Archibald pretending to jerk off. Ling turning pink. Ling screaming.

"You pig! You pig fucker!"

Archibald replying, "*I a pig fucker?*" snorting so hard, the blood bubbled from his nose and pooled into his mouth. The fat girls pulling him away, making conciliatory murmurs, managing to get him out the door and into the waiting cab, while Ling wielded a dirty frying pan over his head like a cowboy's lasso. Archibald weeping with laughter, the blood trickling hotly down his chin.

By the time Archibald got into the cab, the pain had begun to rage across his face like an out-of-control fire. He was cognizant only of the fact that he was between them, their vast flanks compressing him on either side like the bookends of an accordion, an instrument he had always felt too expensive and cumbersome to play.

The cab driver looked a lot like the one who had driven Archibald and Edna around on their jaunts. What was his name again? Jesus?

"Hey there, Jesus," Archibald said. "Sorry about all the fucking in the back seat. Not that I'm sure you didn't enjoy the show, you know? In fact, pay up, Jesus. Pay up!"

Because of the blood filling his mouth, Archibald words were near-incomprehensible babble. Jesus looked at him through the rear-view mirror, confused. Then Archibald saw on the licence that the cabbie's name was Gary.

"Shit, Gary," Archibald said. Then he passed out.

He woke to find a triage nurse doing violence to the fire in his face and the fat girls nowhere to be seen.

"I came in wi two, uh, women," Archibald said to the nurse. He was going to say "fat women," but seeing that the nurse was rather large, he stopped himself.

"Cafeteria. Said they'd be back in a bit."

"Ow! Fuh. D'you have to make it tho tie?"

"I don't *have* to," the nurse said.

"Wher'th my harmonka?"


"Relax, it's not like you'll be playing it anytime soon. Have a seat in the waiting room. We'll call you. It'll be a while."

"Can I uth your phone?"

Out with the old
AND
in with the new old

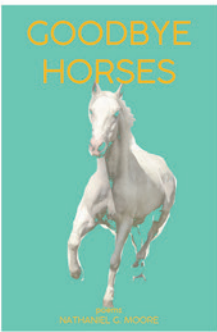
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Archibald was sitting brooding in the waiting room when Edna came through the E.R. doors, her mother muttering after. They negotiated his escape with little protest from the nurse.

"Didn't I tell you those girls would eat you alive?" Edna said on the cab drive home.

"I wath trying to win hearth and mindth."

"Shh."

Beth and Bertha, of course, would demand further explanation. There would be many more tears, many more dark nights. Archibald considered this, but he also considered how lovely it was to lie in the lap of this good, small-breasted woman, his father's wife, while she hummed songs in a voice thick with love and Klonopin and other substances, and ran her chipped red nails through his widow's peak.

"Thith ith like old timeth."

"Yeah," Edna said.

By the time they reached his father's house, the phone was ringing like an angry question. Could be Beth. Or Bertha. Or both. Perhaps they'd become allies. He pictured it. The two of them in the hospital cafeteria, eating Jell-O and exchanging mutual miseries.

"Your father's out cold in the attic," Edna said, positioning Archibald on the couch. "I'll go get some stuff for that cut," she said, pouring him a Scotch. "Maybe we should have kept you in the hospital. It's still bleeding pretty bad."

Archibald opened his mouth to speak, but all that came out was a fresh gush of blood.

Lucille was seated in the La-Z-Boy, watching a ludicrously loud television. Though it was June, she was wearing a sweater decorated with Christmas trees. From his reclined position on the couch, Archibald waved to her.

"I'm the world's oldest teenager," she shouted over the volume and the ringing telephone.

"I know it, Luthille," Archibald yelled.

More blood pooled down his chin. He turned to look at the TV screen.

"What are we wathing here?"

"I love this show. This is my program."

The television was tuned to what looked like a talk show gone awry. On a stage strewn with overturned chairs, two fat girls in stretch pants were screaming and strangling each other.

They would have killed each other, Archibald was certain, if two big, bald men in black polo shirts hadn't suddenly appeared from the wings and separated them. Along the bottom of the screen was a caption that read "I CHEATED ON YOU WITH YOUR BEST FRIEND!" The camera then panned to a fatherly looking man in a suit whom Archibald assumed was the host. He weaved through the whooping, stamping audience, shaking his head and smiling sadly at the awful humanity of it all.

"Jethuth, what the hell ith thith?" he asked, looking to Lucille. When she didn't reply, he turned once more to the screen.

One of the fat girls had broken loose from security and had the other girl in a headlock. Behind them, between their abandoned, overturned chairs, a thin, weaselly looking man sat serenely. He watched as security separated the fat girls again. He watched them claw and kick the air helplessly. He watched and he smiled, like violence and misery were his porn. When he suddenly smiled wide at something one of the fat girls was screaming, he revealed a missing incisor.

With his tongue, Archibald poked around on the left side of his mouth. Feeling the raw gaping hole where his tooth had been, he suddenly began to sweat. He attempted to down the Scotch, but it spilled out of his mouth, making his skin burn like hell.

"Mind thanging the thannel Luthille?"

"I love what?"

"Thange thannel."

"What do I love?"

He hurled his drink at the television, missing it by a mile.

"Fuh!" he shouted, causing more hot blood to gush down his face as he whimpered in pain.

He threw the bottle of Scotch after it, which also missed the TV. Instead, it hit one of Edna's Royal Doulton figurines, the one of a Victorian man and woman curtsying to each other, making it crumble to the carpet.

He sunk his head back against the velour couch, and woefully watched the screen. Over the bleeped screams of the fat girls and the unrelenting ringing, Lucille muttered and hummed some terrible, baleful tune about falling to pieces. It wasn't jazz, so Archibald didn't know it. ❖

THE BOOKS



ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Three new reference works.

BY CONAN TOBIAS

Jann Wenner, the publisher of *Rolling Stone*, recently announced plans to sell his controlling stake in the magazine he founded fifty years ago. *Rolling Stone* earned its reputation not only through coverage of music and popular culture, but also as a trusted outlet for long-form journalism and political reportage. In 2014, the magazine published “A Rape on Campus,” the account of a female student at the University of Virginia who claimed to have been gang raped at a fraternity party. The story garnered major media attention—especially when it became clear that it wasn’t true. The university filed a libel suit against *Rolling Stone*, eventually settling for three million dollars. The fraternity filed its own twenty-five million dollar suit against

the magazine, for which it received \$1.65 million. A third suit, by members of the fraternity, is pending.

Rolling Stone, like most legacy media outlets, has suffered financially in the digital age. Wenner Media, its parent company, is still big enough to survive the financial hit of the lawsuits brought against it to date, but the damage done to the magazine’s reputation could seriously hamper Wenner’s ability to sell and secure the future of the magazine he spent a lifetime building. The *Columbia Journalism Review* called *Rolling Stone*’s article “a story of journalistic failure that was avoidable,” encompassing the story’s reporting, editing, and fact checking—the system employed by many consumer magazines as a fail-safe to ensure every fact in the stories they publish is actually

true. “The particulars of *Rolling Stone*’s failure,” the *Review*’s investigation continued, “make clear the need for a revitalized consensus in newsrooms old and new about what best journalistic practices entail, at an operating-manual-level of detail.”

The University of Chicago Press is doing its part to encourage best journalistic practices with a new book, *The Chicago Guide to Fact-Checking*, by Brooke Borel, a *Popular Science* editor and fact-checking instructor. Staffs of traditional news media are shrinking, as the public appetite for news only continues to grow. At many publications (especially in Canada), dedicated fact checkers are now seen as a cutable expense, with the onus of accuracy shifted to writers. *The Chicago Guide* should be required reading for anyone working in the media industry, especially those forced to work without a fact-checking net. Borel explains, in ways even the most novice checker will understand, the whys and hows of fact checking, and breaks down the process for checking various types of facts, including numbers, quotes, images, and foreign languages. She also discusses navigating the potentially fraught relationships between writers, editors, and checkers, and, perhaps most importantly, fact checking on a budget and how to check your own work. Borel’s book offers nothing more or less than the previous most-accessible book on fact checking, Sarah Harrison Smith’s excellent *The Fact Checker’s Bible*, published in 2004. But Borel, unlike Smith, has written in a textbook format, with frequent skill-testing questions and activities, which probably makes it a more useful guide to novices.

If there’s one criticism to be made, it’s the delegation of political fact checking to a brief mention in the conclusion. A more detailed analysis of that topic would have been welcome, given how much the work of organizations such as FactCheck.org, PolitiFact, and Snopes have done both to inform the public and give it a healthy skepticism of what they read and see in the news. The book also was written too early to cover the recent



widespread impact of the “fake news” phenomenon—and the public’s sometimes *unhealthy* skepticism of the media. Hopefully both topics will be explored further in future editions.

The University of Chicago Press recently released another useful reference, the seventeenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, a book that has been the go-to editorial reference for book publishers, media, and academics for nearly half its century-long existence. The gap between editions of the *C.M.S.* has shrunk progressively, to about every seven years since the turn of the century, and new editions tend to coincide with major technology-based changes in the publishing industry. The latest version, for example, includes new sections on metadata and proofreading tools for PDF documents, details the various types of electronic-publication formats, and has expanded its explanation of Creative Commons licences.

On the editorial side, the press has clarified its techniques for achieving gender neutrality. Some may be offended by the book’s continued stance against artificial genderless pronouns, though it does maintain that personal preference should be respected at the end of the day. Also, while it’s rare to see this well-researched book backtrack on a rule just one edition old, that’s exactly what the editors have done with their previous advice on italicizing Web sites analogous to a printed work.

It’s unfortunate Canada doesn’t have a reputable style guide to call its own (with all due respect to the Canadian Press’s *Stylebook*, that publication is more a reporters’ tool than a thorough style guide.) The *C.M.S.* continues to throw Canada the meagerest of bones. Its section on Canada’s Indigenous population is incomplete and outdated, and, while for years now it has offered both standard and postal abbreviations for U.S. states, it continues to offer only postal abbreviations for Canadian provinces and territories—which at least makes it easier to write the editors a letter of complaint.

One of the more interesting Canada-centric projects to appear during the country’s sesquicentennial surely must be the long overdue second edition of *A Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical*

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Principals. The first edition was published in 1967, by W. J. Gage, and written by a group of academics who felt Canada needed a historical language reference in the tradition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. (Ironically, the lexicographer who initially spearheaded the project was an American.) The first edition was popular with the public and sold well, yet a follow-up never materialized. Talk of a new edition began at a conference on Canadian English at the University of Toronto in 2005, and Stefan Dollinger, a professor at the University of British Columbia, who was then completing his Ph.D., eventually accepted the job of bringing the dictionary into the twenty-first century. The *D.C.H.P.-2* (which lists the University of British Columbia as its publisher, though the project was funded by a variety of sources and is hosted on a private site) is available exclusively on-line, and contains all ninety-nine hundred entries from the first edition, as well as more than a thousand new entries. All told, the combined editions offer more than fourteen thousand meanings.

The *D.C.H.P.-2* is a fascinating read. “Parkade” and “toque” are there, but their entries contain more than just a simple one-sentence meaning. The entire history of each word is offered, including its earliest known appearance. “Hoser,” for example, is credited to Dave Thomas and Rick Moranis, who (possibly) invented the word for their characters Bob and Doug McKenzie. The entry for “eh” is nearly five thousand words long.

For a dictionary that was created as a digital product, its search engine could use some work. A search for “double-double” will tell you the phrase originated with the Tim Hortons coffee chain to describe a cup of coffee with two servings of cream and sugar. A search for “double double,” without the hyphen, will tell you no headwords matched your search.

Canada hasn’t had a popular desk reference since Oxford closed its Canadian office in 2008 and stopped updating its Canadian dictionary. The *D.C.H.P.-2*, unfortunately, isn’t a replacement—it covers only words of Canadian origin (and a few words often thought to be Canadian, that aren’t). But it is an interesting supplement to whatever dictionary you use day-to-day, and definitely worth bookmarking on your digital reference shelf. ❖



COOKING BY DESIGN

The Short Stack series.

BY JUE CARTER

Decades before celebrity chefs saturated the cookbook market with glossy hardcover tomes, housewives looking to impress at potlucks relied on recipe collections produced by local charities, or given away by major food brands. The more luxe publications featured a fancy cake or aspic on their covers, but there was little panic if a misdirected glob of butter left a greasy stain on the cheaply printed interiors.

Short Stack Editions, a subscription-based, single-subject cookbook series published out of Brooklyn, falls somewhere in between those two extremes, bridging the utilitarian with the demands of modern chef wannabes looking for an Instagram-friendly aesthetic and standout recipes concocted by writers with impressive pedigrees. The series originated in 2013, when Short Stack’s publisher, Nick Fauchald—a former editor at *Food and Wine*, *Wine Spectator*, and *Every Day with Rachael Ray* magazines—crowd-funded more than ninety thousand dollars to produce his first three titles: *Eggs*, *Tomatoes*, and *Strawberries*. To date, twenty-nine books have been published.

The initial allure of these forty-eight-page, hand-bound pocketbooks are their retro covers, designed by Rotem Raffé, Short Stack’s creative director. *Pears*, by Andrea Slonecker, an author and food stylist, for instance, sports an avocado-green

pattern that recalls the dominant colour of nineteen-sixties kitchen appliances. Even Angie Mosier’s *Buttermilk*—a tough ingredient to sell in today’s lactose-free, calorie-abhorring world—ended up in my shopping bag, thanks to the lure of its French country-toile-inspired milkmaid design.

The books’ simple interiors, however, ensure the recipes dominate. Each booklet, printed on bright-coloured paper and accompanied by charming black-ink line drawings, opens with a brief introductory essay from the author about their relationship to the chosen ingredient. In *Peanuts*, Steven Satterfield, a chef and restaurateur, reminisces about growing up in rural Georgia, and the childhood treat of roadside hot boiled peanuts, while acknowledging the legume’s ubiquitousness in dozens of food cultures.

There are few personal stories included beyond the introductions. The complexity of the recipes depends on the individual authors, and vary from page to page, sometimes even within an edition, which means cooks of all stripes should find something that suits their skills or level of adventure.

Not every edition will hold the interest of every cook—chickpeas or grits aren’t for everyone, after all—but the books are so appealing, both in look and content, that anyone with a collector instinct might buy them all anyway. ❖

Fall Colours

Dave Lapp

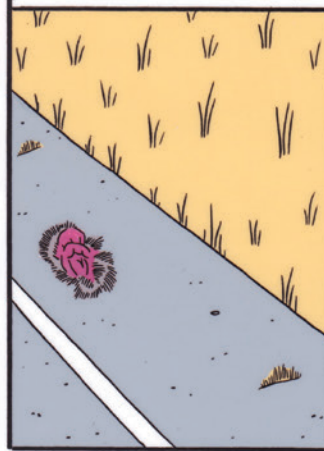
I drove from Toronto to London for Thanksgiving.



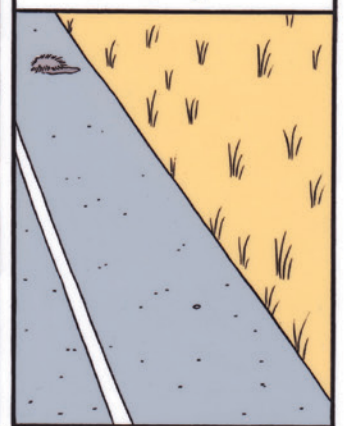
Each year the Fall colours are very pleasant to see.



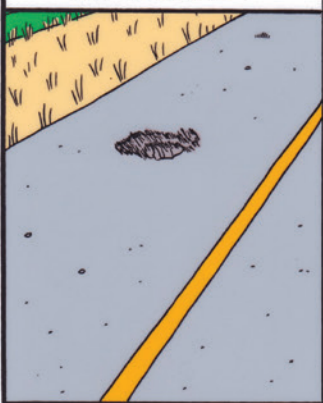
This year I didn't notice them much... I decided to count the roadkill on the highway.



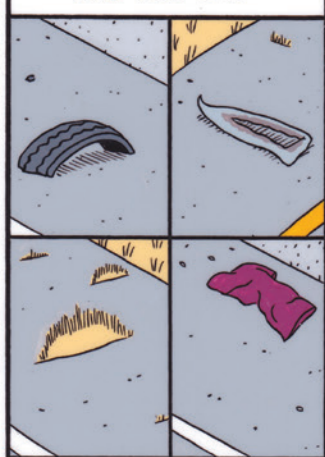
I began counting around Burlington. I figured it'd be pretty tough to get into double digits...



I was up to 4 or 5 as I drove through Hamilton and I was going to give up because the carcasses were so few and far between.



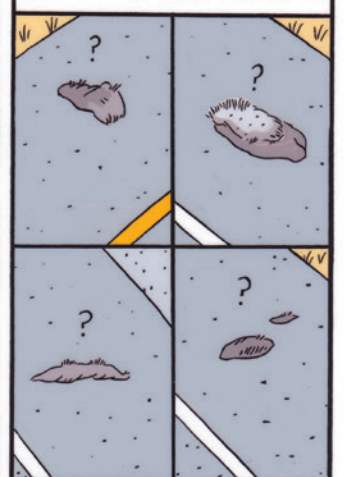
I was being very careful to discern rubber, metal, grass and fabric ...



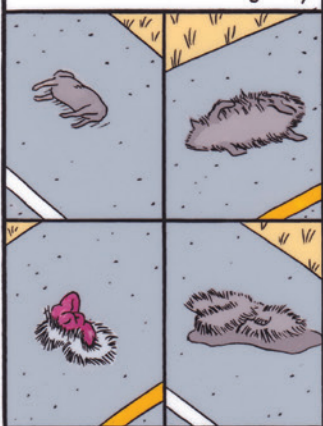
...from blood and fur and guts.



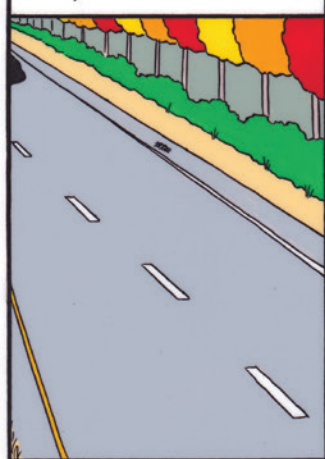
If I wasn't totally sure it was an animal, I didn't count it.



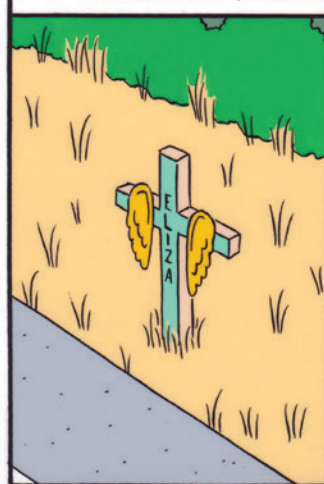
By the time I got to London my count was 37... not including the dead creatures I saw when I left the highway.



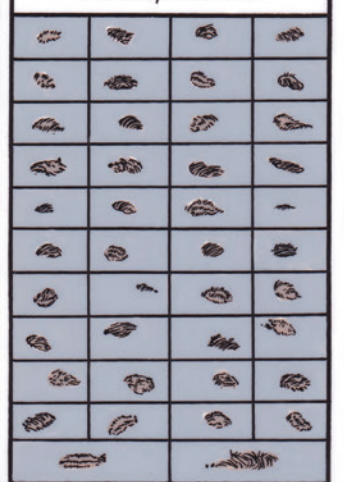
Returning to Toronto I would have preferred to look at the trees, but I was committed.



On the roadways of Ontario someone is killed every 17 hours.



I counted 42 roadkills on the way home.



“THIS...”

doesn't try to be hip,
it just is.

It never ceases
to make me think,
question things
and get angry”

—Sarah Polley



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