

BELIVEAU REVIEW

SPRING 2021 ISSUE 4



Beliveau Review

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The Best of Afterthoughts 1994-2000

Dénouement: a poetry anthology

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ANDREAS GRIPP

Mark Jodon

Cast Sheep

I am matted with mud
and manure, briars
and burrs. Exposed,
unsheltered, rain-soaked.

Burdens the weight
of winter wool. So heavy
when I fall I can't get up.
Flat on my back

staring in the eyes of
a prison gray sky,
overhead the buzzards
have not yet found me.

Instrument

Grief is a carpenter
working through the night.

She holds in her hands
a severed branch,

stripping away your bark,
hollowing you,

carving you into a flute
for the winds to play.

Brent Holmes

Eighteen Next Month

The light is bright! Leaking through a door which does not shut.
Damn my privacy! Damn my head!

My window closes; my curtains cinch, but I can look right through them. Right into the sun. The back of my eyes are crystals, grinding against my skull, grinding my nerves like earthworms stranded on the sidewalk, searching for remnants of rain. Their guts lubricate the gears of progress as it's always been. But if one day there is no more grass, where will the earthworms be born?

My mother will yell when she gets home. Splitting my head. How dare I lay with pillow overhead, nails' points hiding just below my pupils? We've been to the doctor. He professed my migraines were induced by stress, speaking these words like a magic spell, as if the very enlightenment would be my cure.

Every year it gets hotter, and I could swear that every year it gets brighter. Every year too, the world has more cement.

I wonder at what point an earthworm realizes she's not making it back to the grass. I wonder if an uncertain terror precedes the realization or if it's a sudden knowledge that replaces a false sense of security. Maybe it's different for different earthworms. Soon enough some earthworms will be born on cement. Maybe some already have been.

Tomorrow the adults vote.

Pat Connors

Supper

Through the crisp ruddy twilight,
fingers and arms entwined, we enter
my newfound favourite sushi spot
toward the end of the Village.

She lets go of my hand, twirls
almost perfectly around the table
on which I manage to keep balance—
she smiles as we sit in our chairs.

She asks me how my day has gone,
where else I could be this evening.
I tell her everything I have ever
hoped for is right across from me.

Our server comes over, wonders
what we would like to start. She
orders a glass of white wine. I
get ice water and ginger ale.

*She says, Honey, if you want to have
a beer, it's okay. I reply, Thank
you for your kind indulgence. But
I am sure I indulged enough last night.*

I am glad she chooses to be with me
when clearly she could do better.
She has seen me at my worst
and not just in a lampshade.

I know she fell in love with my
second best, but living what
the years have brought, I am
finally ready to give her more.

We share tempura, sushi roll and sashimi
she deftly lifts on poplar chopsticks.
I spear too much wasabi with my fork
then practically inhale the pickled ginger.

I wipe tears from my eyes, then look into hers.
What we have is greater than who we are.
I know there is no getting out and
I don't want to be let go.

Jennifer Wenn

The Ant

Halfway down the driveway you were noticed,
some tiny spark catching the eye,
pulling attention to a significant detail
bound together with me in creation's vast web.
Your burden, your prize, proudly
thrust out in front of you: a dead pill bug
seemingly far bigger than you,
but easily borne, at least for stretches.
Pavement cracks; a major obstacle?
Ah, but you flipped around and pulled,
down across up and over, and onward,
transcending apparent limits,
and, in time, into the backyard,
scrambling pulling pushing climbing through
the interminable jungle of the lawn,
bound for a hidden underground realm,
bound for reassimilation by the colony,
bound for insectoid hearth and home.
Heading into my own little realm
I looked up, and wondered.

Auschwitz Threnody—Pink Triangle

A sneering macabre ostinato grounding
the entire horrisonant din,
Nazi mania for speciation of the condemned,
rooted in the infamous yellow star,
branding as accursed an
ancient faith, culture and tradition.
Here in Auschwitz the star modulates
to a clamorous fugue of triangles:
 Green for professional criminals;
 Black a grab bag labelled asocial, swallowing up
 the Roma, sex workers, the homeless, and more;
 Red for “political” prisoners;
 Purple signifying Jehovah’s Witnesses;
 Yellow for the Jewish people, overlaid with another
 triangulated colour to achieve the mandated star.

But there, one more theme weaving in,
plaintive and forlorn—the pink triangle,
mocking label dominated by men condemned
only for loving other men;
but slipping into the silences,
also condemned for their inner flames,
my sisterhood, female spirits
tearing at contrary, shrouding male shells.
Blessed to be born in a different time and place,
now transitioned from Jeffrey to Jennifer,

my newly integrated mind's eye sees
chambered Jeff myopically scan the display case
and pass on (Jennifer from her subconscious prison
insistently importuning but heard as
just a mysterious, fleeting susurrant).

Miles and milestones later my memories
are remade, imbued with new meaning,
and pen in hand I spiral through that pink triangle,
tripping over the decades, to the '20s of
another century, an entr'acte between
violent cataclysms, and wondering,
what if this was my time,
what would I have been?
Most places a tormented butterfly locked
in imperishable masculine amber,
tagged pervert, insane, degenerate,
never to feel the sun or hear my wings
whisper on the wind;
but Weimar period Germany,
the Great War then a nightmare past,
Hitler a distant rumble expected to fade;
daring, decadent, doomed Weimar,
its beating heart at blazing Berlin,
an ephemeral roiling crucible,
a time of Bauhaus, Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann,

Brecht and Weill's *Threepenny Opera*,
Marlene Dietrich and *The Blue Angel*,
prostitution, drugs and the black market,
wildly uninhibited cabarets,
and much, much more,
a tumultuous symphony spacious enough
for even my pioneering sisters to have a part,
tremulous but growing:
Permits to publicly present our true selves;
Magnus Hirschfeld's research and medical Institute;
our own magazines and nightclubs,
headlined by the infamous, amazing Eldorado;
above all being seen and heard,
casting off shame and having community.
Maybe there I could have shattered
the unyielding chrysalis and found my voice.

Then the clanging chimes at midnight
proclaimed onslaught of the Hakenkreuz
and its minions;
diversity now deemed noxious plague,
the entire pink cohort, gay and trans (in modern terms),
repudiated by families and former friends,
pilloried, hounded,
step by step,
books burned,

Hirschfeld's Institute torched,
Eldorado perverted to Nazi headquarters,
arrested,
peoples of all the triangles designated for
thralldom and disposal in the camps
where pink sank into the abyss:
Given the most arduous assignments,
despised even by other prisoners,
many driven to suicide,
their SS slavers incited to new depths of depravity
all because our inner stops
reverberated with chromatic notes;
and mine, no doubt, would have
been deftly snuffed, never to be re-sounded.

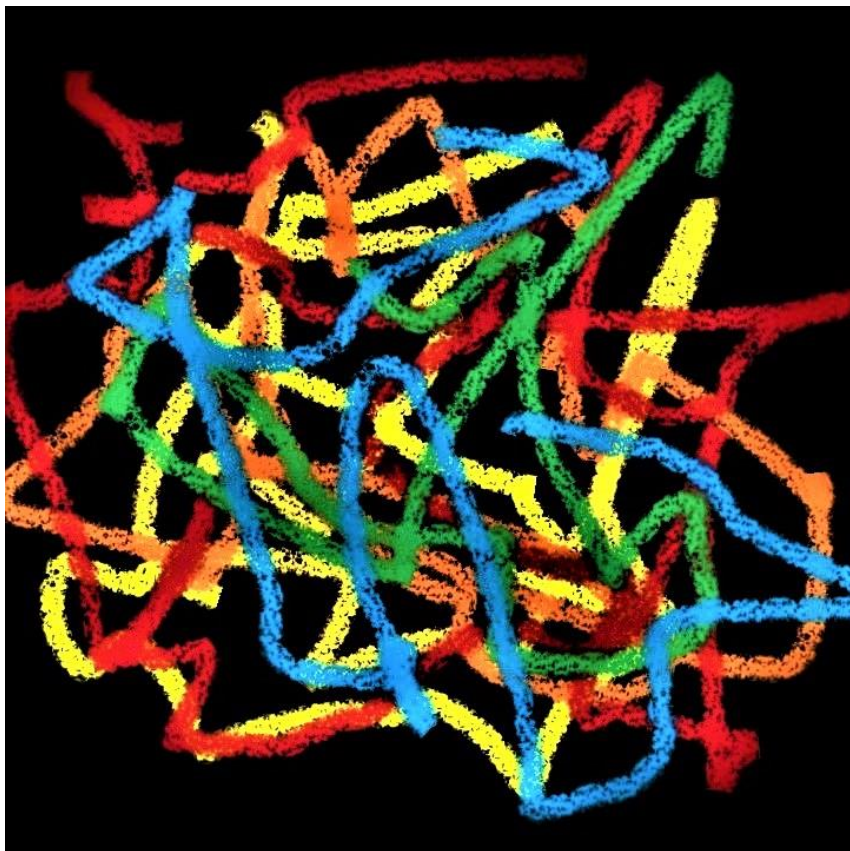
Witness a curtain crashing down,
our little song crushed by an
ushered-in Götterdämmerung
hemorrhaging death and hate,
a scene repeated over and over
like a record needle stuck on
Wagner's lyrical savagery.
My forgotten sisters and brothers,
revealed or hidden, self-aware or suppressed,
we have always been here;
but this time was different: you were
convention-shakers, mould-breakers, trailblazers,

and came the howling midnight klaxons
you paid audacity's highest price, and,
obliterated or not, were pitched with
so many others into hell's waiting maw.

Now here I am, comfortable (but for the
unceasing etheric chorale),
awed, guilt-stained, grateful, scribbling.
I shed lonely tears of pride, for
before those fatal klaxons
my sisterhood fought another war,
invisible, soul-deep,
one I know well,
a desperate sub rosa pas de deux,
shame and hope whirling on the razor's edge,
and all those decades ago hope
flung aside the inherited, imposed
manly shroud,
divine feminine spiritus
finally dancing free like
evanescent will-o'-the-wisps amidst a marsh.

Turning, I sing out that your lives had
value and meaning;
I quiver with anger at the vermin
who tormented and butchered you,
and others like us to this day;

horribound and uncomprehending
I weep for your suffering,
a profound drop in a bitter,
agonized ocean.
May these few words be a
memorial from one who, having seen it,
cannot and will not forget,
and who honours and exalts
the hidden realm of the pink triangle.



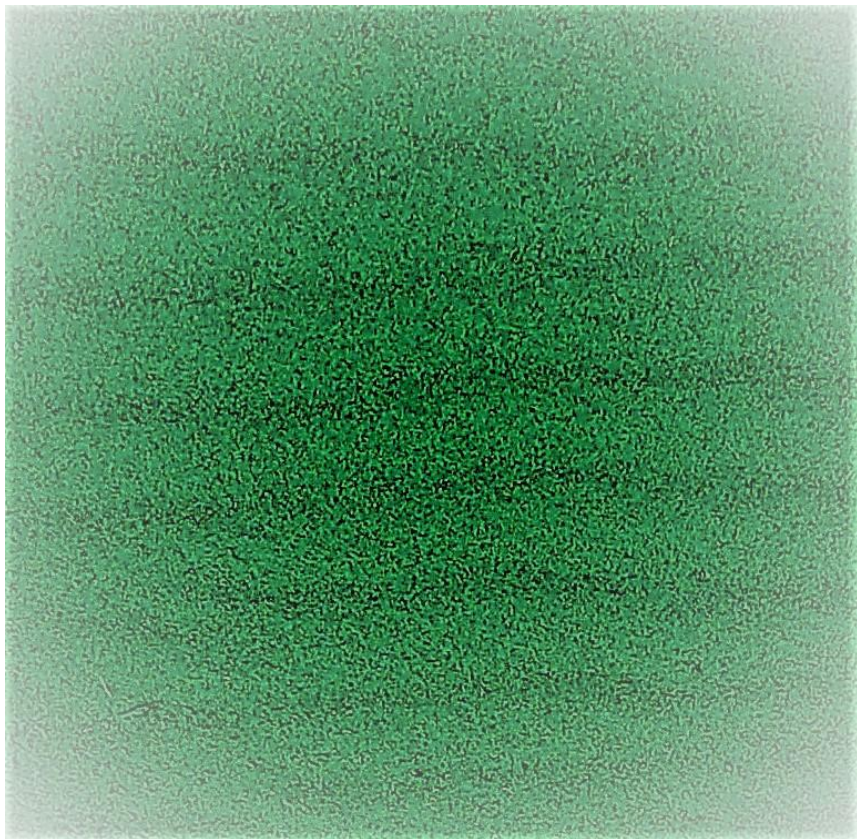
CONCETTA TRÖSZEK



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CONCETTA TRÖSZEK



CONCETTA TRÖSZEK

Okolo Chinua

In a River of Openings

"I found a boy with mismatched eyes,
His hands were the colour of water... "

The compound is quiet with the sand still bearing stripes of the *akpata* used to sweep in the morning. The silence is normal. Of course at a time like this people were still going about their business, although Ebere was expected to be home. It was two o'clock after all. He dusts his slides at the front of the door and pauses just before entering. The short broom used for the house is lying outside, the window pane is a little bent to the left. Dropping the nylon in his hands, he sets to put it back in place. 'Typical Ebere. She'll do and do and then forget, spoiling the whole thing. If I don't give her the bread now *oburu*. Yeye girl'. Chuckling, he retrieves the broom as well as the nylon and then knocks.

"Bro Ned"

"*Ibiakwa*. So if others call me Ned *isorukwa*. Take," handing the nylon to her as he walks in bolting the door behind him.

"One is for you and the other for Mama. Mama's own is Our Ladies oh. It's not tomorrow I'll see you with the nylon and you'll then say you made a mistake."

"No na" she laughs, her head bent, still inspecting the contents of the nylon.

"How's Mama?" as he sinks into the chair, stretching his neck left and then right.

"She's sleeping."

"Mmmm"

He looks up, scoffs, then looks again.

"*Bia* Ebere, so no food for me."

"Sorr... Sorry... " she regains awareness of herself and hurriedly moves to the kitchen, the nylon in her hands.

"Make sure Mama takes her drugs when she wakes up oh. You know we're supposed to take her for her weekly checkup next tomorrow... Ehe... And the receipt nko... Did you not pay the fees again?"

"Our bursar said she'll give it to me tomorrow." She replies from the kitchen, her voice resounding.

"Don't forget it oh. If tomorrow she denies you and says you've not paid don't come to me oh. I won't pay school fees twice so if you like forget, you hear?"

"Yes brother!" She mumbles a few words which he cannot make out clearly. He doesn't strain or try to. He stretches his arms on the sofa, he tries to relax his body in the best manner. He'll definitely be taking a big nap after eating. He gets up, walks towards his mother's room and opens the door gently. Lying on her back with one arm over her forehead, she sleeps. He's about to leave when she stirs a little. "*Nedu nwa m*"

He turns, walks towards the bed. Her eyes are slightly open with a half-open smile on her lips. "*Nedu m. Ibatago?*"

"Yes ma"

"How was school... *Igukwa tata?*"

"Yes ma"

His hands find her hands and take hold of them, gently.

"Mama, how are you feeling?"

She smiles.

"*Nwam*, have you eaten? Has Ebere served you anything?" as she tries to get up.

Placing a hand on her shoulder he gently moves her body back to the bed.

"I've eaten, Mama. Don't worry. Just rest."

"Let me change my clothes. I'll come back. Just rest." She nods.

He's in his room when Ebere comes in, with a tray holding four plates. The hunger rekindles in him. He's about to move towards the tray she had left on the table after winking at him several times when his phone rings. He holds it up. Bayo. He puts it down, pauses, takes it back up and slides his hands to the right of the screen.

"Bayo"

"Esco"

"Wetin xup"

"You dey around? Like now?"

"Anything?"

"Client show oh"

"I dey come."

Putting on the shirt he had just taken off, he calls out to Ebere as he reaches the door.

"Ebere. I'm coming. Let me get something from school. It's urgent."

"Ok brother... Ehmmm... Buy... "

"If I twist your mouth eh" he chuckles as he opens the door and heads out.

Nnamdi paces around, pausing to observe what his sales boys were doing. They notice his eyes and immediately start packing more

materials from the truck into the shop. He shakes his head, "*Ndi nzuzu*"

He walks to the driver of the truck who extends his hand from the window of the driver's seat. He counts fifty thousand naira and gives it to him. The driver, watching from the corner of his eye, takes the money, moistens his thumb with his tongue and then recounts the money. Nodding, he starts the truck which had already been offloaded and moves out.

"*Ndi Igbo na ego bikonu. Haba*"

Then turning around he sees two of his boys talking while his building materials still lay on the floor. With authority, he scolds them so hard that others are affected by it. Everybody begins to take the materials into the shop with more fervour than before. In his pocket, his phone rings out.

"Hello"

"Good afternoon Sir." The voice is smooth with an official tone behind it.

"Ehe Good afternoon. *Onye?*"

"Am I speaking to Mr Nnamdi Nnadebe, please?"

"Ehe"

"I am Femi Oladele from Access Bank. Information reaching us shows that someone tried to forcefully access your account in the early hours of this morning between 9am-10am Sir."

"Ehe"

"It is our duty therefore to inquire if you were the one trying to carry out the transaction and if not to help you rectify it."

"Are you there, Sir?"

"Ehe, I'm listening. Go on."

"Sir, please, you haven't answered. Were you the..."

"I did not make any transaction this morning. I don't know what you're talking about."

"Alright Sir, we request that you help us help you rectify this error. The last two digits of your pin are seven and nine, right? Please do understand that we're trying our best for your interest here, Sir."

He removes the phone from his ear, looks at the caller ID on his screen and exhales.

"Bia Bia Bia, *rapugodu* all this English. Do you know who you're talking to?"

"Sir... "

"No... Because it's obvious you don't know who you're talking to. So you think I'm like those people you'll call and scam easily eh. *Nwoke*, abum onye Igbo. *I jukwara ese?* Look here young man, you have age on your side. Go and hustle and stop looking for who to scam!" With that he cuts the call, fuming. "Nonsense. *Ndi ara*. Mad people everywhere." After a few seconds his phone beeps, then again, and again, and again. All of them texts. He opens it to see "DEBIT ALERT" heading the three. He screams.

"Do you know what annoys me the most about those boys? The way they spend the money. How will you get your hands on 2.5! 2.5 million dollars Dili and the first thing you can think of buying is Benz... Benz!! Just imagine. In a country like Nigeria oh where everything is hard. And it's not like you got the money legally oh. They'll now be moving around intimidating people here and there."

"Did Laz tell you about the man who called in yesterday? They drained him dry. Everything... They took everything. Do you

remember Mr.Obi?"

"Obi? Which Obi?"

"The one that said they told him to invest na. The one that poured his entire retirement savings into the so-called investment because they promised a two hundred percent return in two months."

"Ahhh... Yes I remember. That old man was crying. Imagine, and he doesn't have children. I wonder how he's going to survive"

The two continue their walk, flashing their torchlights in areas they considered hidden spots for students who wanted to smoke or indulge in illegal activities. They were now getting closer to the well-known "Five Decking"—popular for housing the most infamous students of all, from scammers to cultists to anything negative one could think of.

"If it was before eh when they used to just scam these white people, I mean why not? I won't even complain. But to go as far as doing that to our own people who are just trying to survive. Ahhh... May I just see any werey idiot first."

They spot a boy at the corner, his left hand continuously tapping the left ear which housed a visible white earpod. The dim lights from shops around illuminated his figure a little for them to pick interest in him.

"See as this idiot wey carry dread dey pose with confidence. Imagine." I.K crosses over towards the young man.

"Come on stop there! If you move I move *you!*" as Dili comes over to join him.

Chukwu tosses his phone on the bed, furrows his brows slightly.

"Neme, you don hear from Ned since?"

"At all. Shey he said he was going home on Thursday" as he removes one part of his earpiece to be able to communicate well with him. Bayo comes in with the provisions he had just gotten from the Supermarket. He reads the atmosphere.

"Wait oh, Ned never show since?"

"At all. His sister called to even ask if he was with us."

"But he went home on Thursday now after we finished that stuff. Unless he branched somewhere oh."

"Ned? Branch? When he's supposed to take his mother to the hospital the next day? E no possible na. You sef suppose sabi Ned."

"Fuck!! Guy what the fuck na!!"

"Neme, wetin." He tosses his phone to Chukwu as continues his lament.

"I.K calm down you no dey hear. Just see now. Just see."

I.K's shoulders are moving up and down as his breathing increases.

"You no see wetin he do? Bring your phone, bring your phone baba dey form right. I... I... I bin no know wetin I go do na... I was not thinking."

He hisses, pouts, then wipes his nose with the back of his hands.

"Wetin we go do now?"

"Wetin you wan do before? Guy you shot him. It's too late already. Let's just... May we just go abeg."

The picture circulation had started on Friday. Neme would be the first of his roommates to see it that morning on Saturday, a grotesque image of Ned, eyes wide-open staring at the sky, his hands on his belly... and blood... a lot of blood. His father, late, due to circumstances surrounding issues with Custom officials and the ilk but his mother, how do you tell a mother she has lost her only son... not to talk of a dying woman. The entire money he had made had been for his mother's medication and family upkeep. It would be natural to call him the breadwinner. Ned... Chinedum...

"What is life if not full of care?"

Edward Lee

Foul

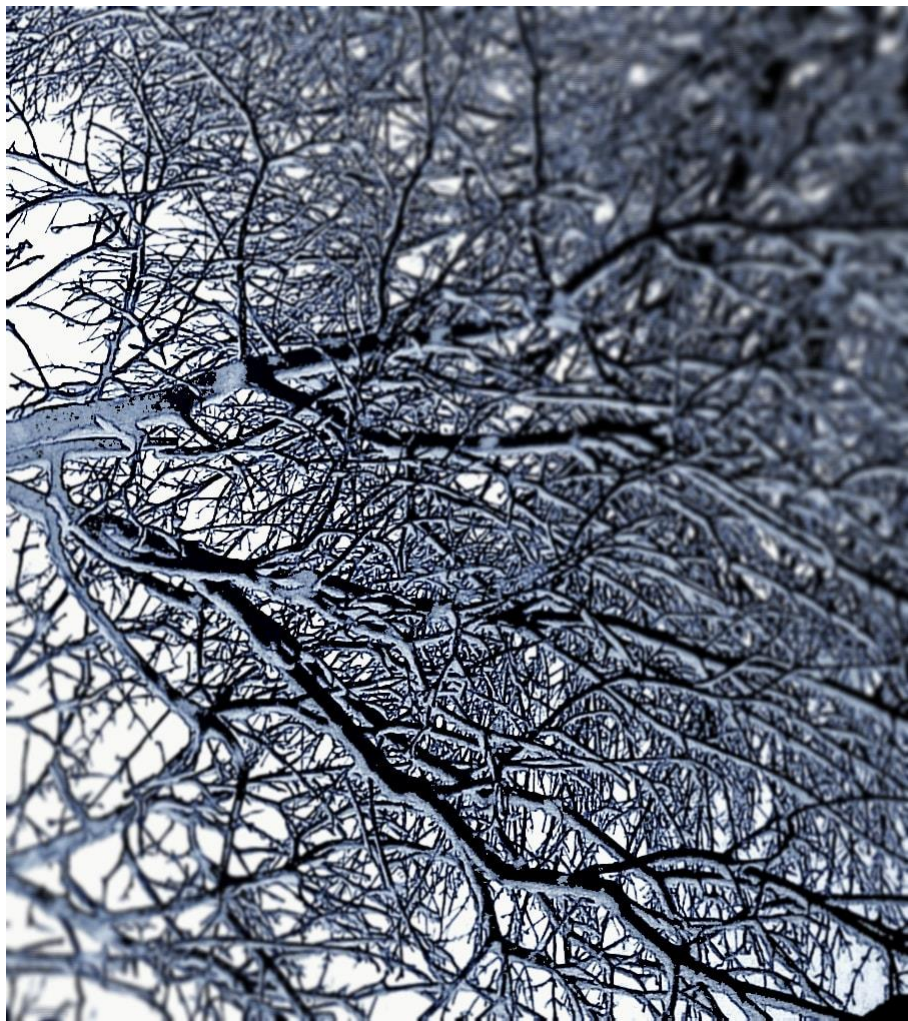
In the time it took
for the child's multi-coloured football
to touch the sky
and fall back down again,
the world had changed,
along with the rules,

even the football
had become a tennis ball,
and no one
had been issued rackets.

We all stood there,
staring at the ball
in the long grass,
wondering what to do,
none of us willing
to make the first move,
none of us willing
to hear the word "foul."

editor's note:

football in the British Isles is the equivalent of *soccer* in North America



ANDREAS GRIPP

Andreas Gripp

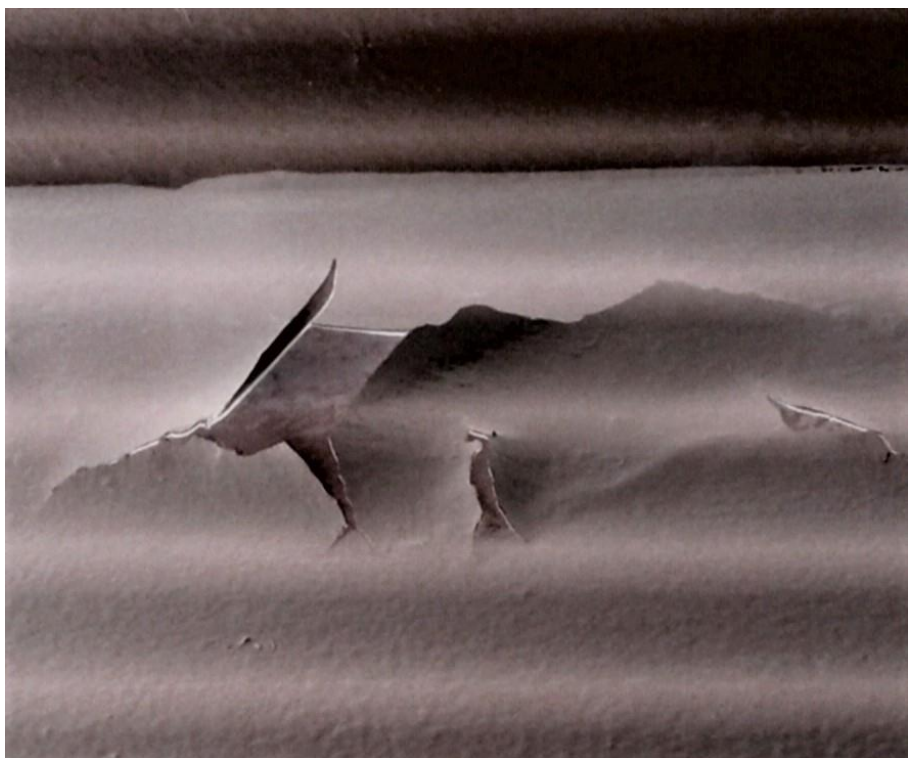
The Last Poem

my dreams divaricate,
their deathly terminals
inevitable
on these ethereal *ventricles*,
every bronchial path
merely breathing's cul-de-sac,

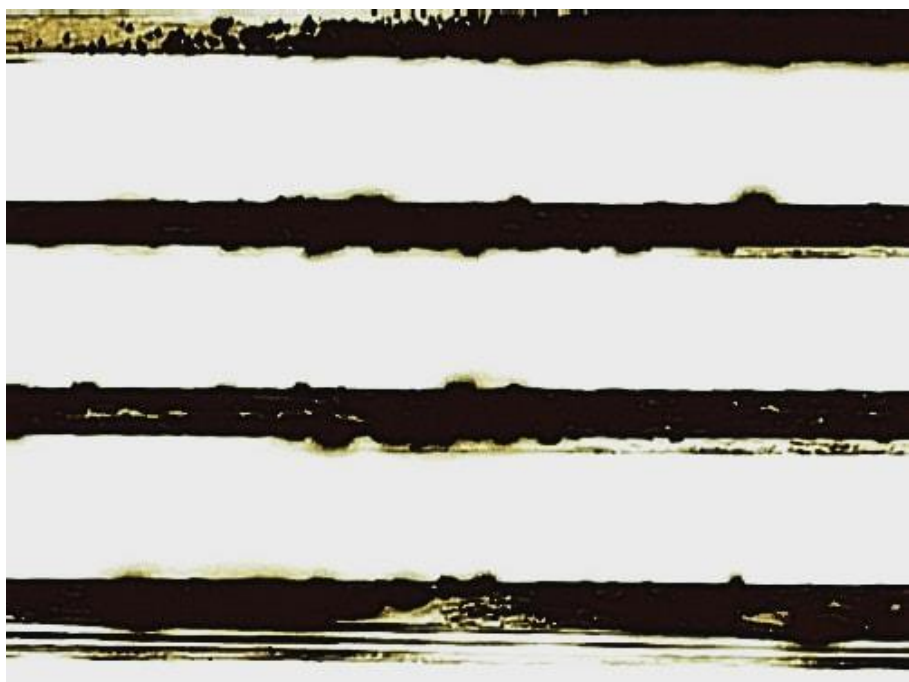
my wishes flagged for speeding
on the snaking estuaries,
fined for spinning U-turns
at the sight of deltas, red—

filled with barges
cracked in their hulls,
sinking from the weight of their
freight, memory's
stubborn refusal
to lighten even a little,
at the sighting of
vistas, tranquil . . .

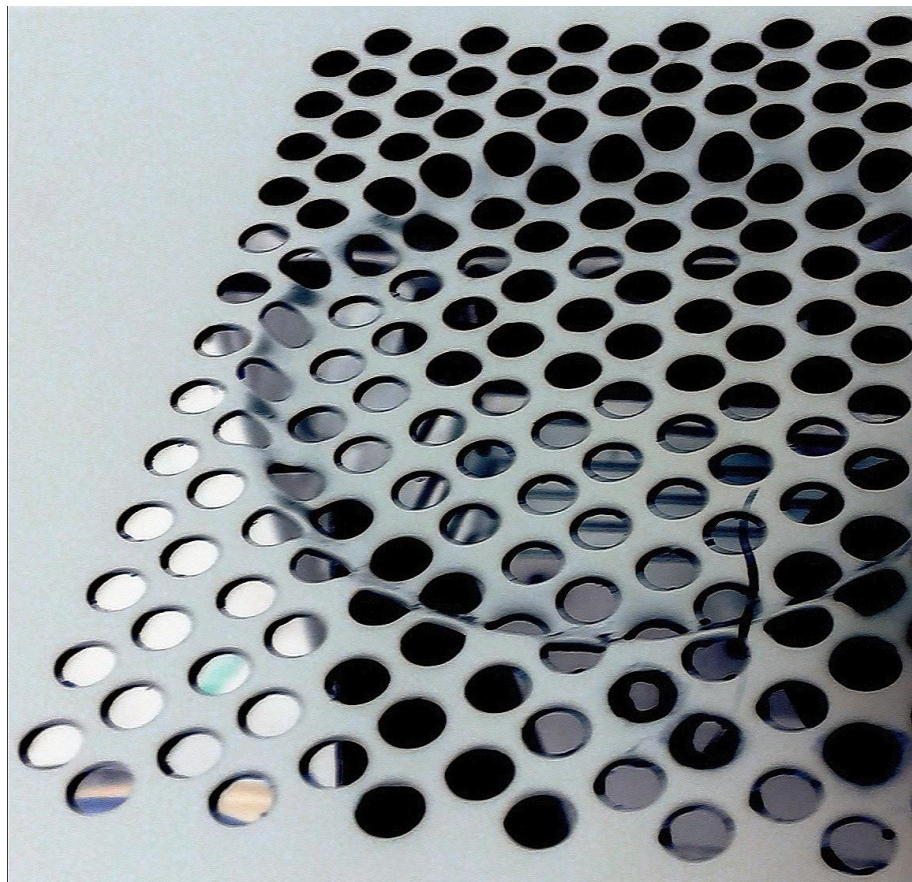
the ellipse revealing
life is rounded as earth,
flatlines mythic,
salted as ocean air.



ANDREAS GRIPP



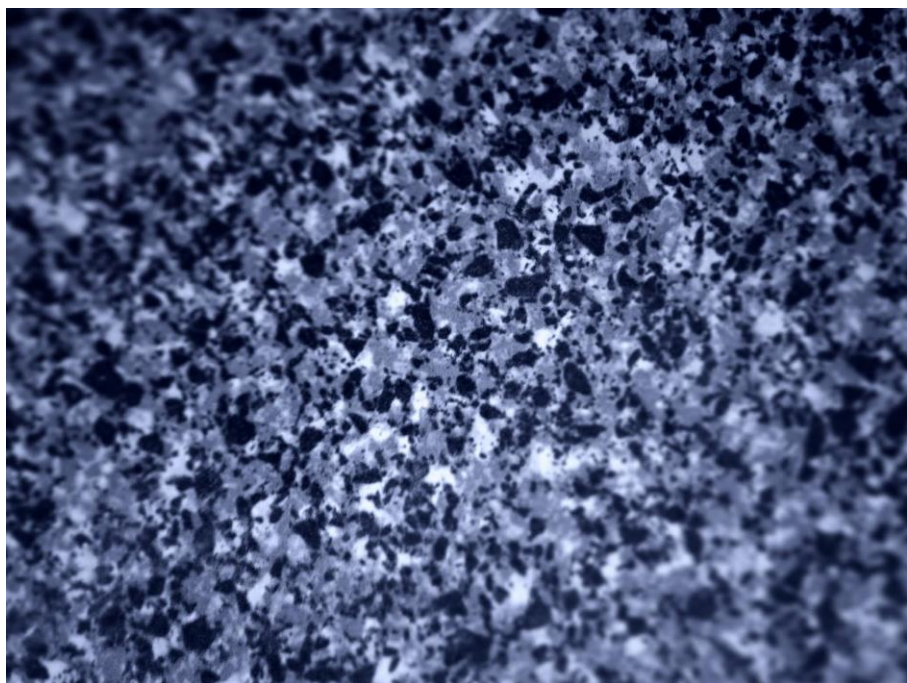
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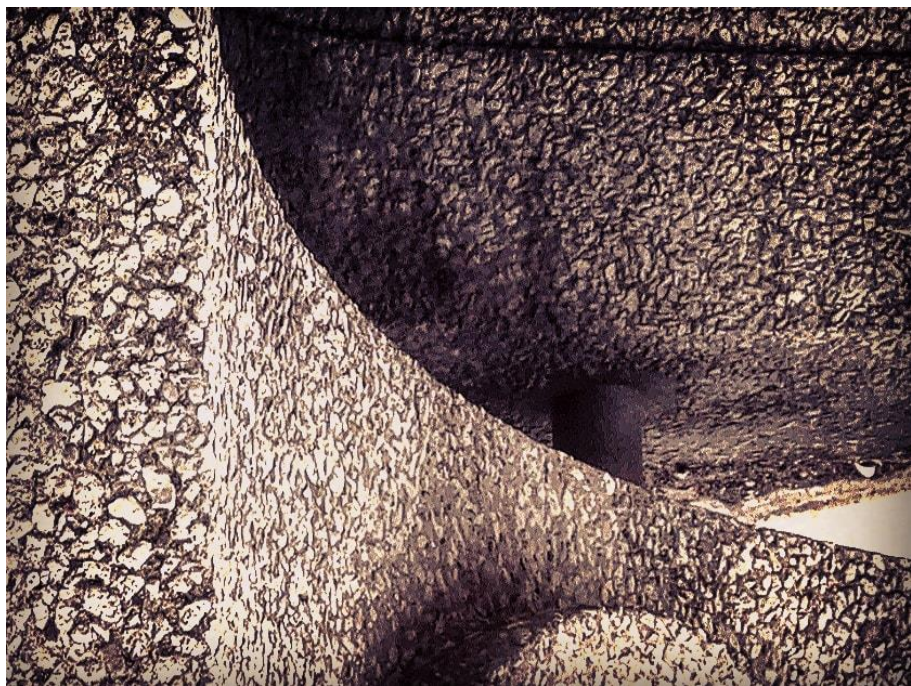
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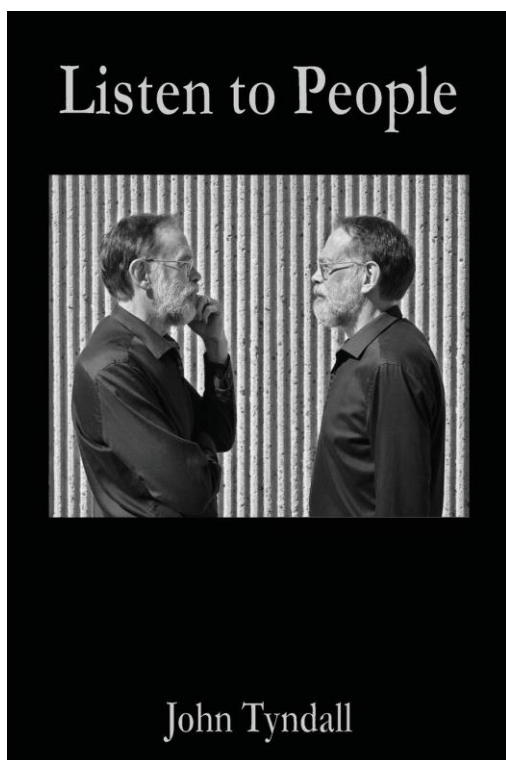


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Editor's Review



John Tyndall, *Listen to People*

Hidden Brook Press, 2020

ISBN 978-1-989786-03-1

It's been some time since a new book of poems came out from London, Ontario poet John Tyndall. The years between *The Fee for Exaltation* (Black Moss Press, 2007) and the present though, are at least partially filled in this three-segmented presentation from Brighton, Ontario's Hidden Brook Press.

Lots of Love (the first of the trilogy) begins with a sequence of poems

relating to the author's father, his death at 90 ("White Oxfords"), and the people that the senior Tyndall knew in rural southern Ontario. The vision of the passing away is strikingly haunting:

The last time I
saw my father
his eyes had been
shut an hour already
although his mouth
gaped open
so I cupped his
still-warm chin
in my hand
trying to close it
but of course
the jaw fell again
and when his lips
parted they made
the minute sound
I'd heard countless
times just before
he'd begin to speak
saying perhaps his
signature *Goodbye*
Lots of love

Family history is shared: *Your great-great-uncle / Black Jack Tyndall* (an innkeeper not averse to heavy drinking) and a tale of being laid in a wagon pulled by a horse that's similar to one named "Fly" many

years later (pulling a milk wagon for the author's father in 1930s Wiarton). The poem, *Falling Down: Father Tells Us*, is both endearing and delightful, though the gaiety is abruptly halted by the closing lines: *until one night at the movies / a guy came down the aisle / to tell me another horse / had kicked Fly, broke her leg / and did I want to be / the one who shot her*. The first-person narrative of the senior Tyndall makes the rendering so effective and sticks with the reader much more so than had the telling been like a distant observer's memory. And it's this personal approach to the stories in *Listen to People* that invites us to simply sit and be quietly attentive.

Another highlight of the book's first section is the three-part *Wiarton Cenotaph: Father Tells Us*, each telling of friends of Tyndall's father who perished in World War II. The middle of the three, Russell Moore, *flew off / we tracked his plane down / the east coast of Scotland / until he journeyed beyond / our range and crashed / on a foggy mountain / Russell was buried over there / but I brought back / a snap of the grave / his family couldn't visit*.

The opening third of father, relatives, and familial friends is accentuated by a beautiful poem, *She Danced Before She Could Talk*, about the author's storytelling wife Diane Halpin's hearing obstruction which is eventually corrected and results in *one who married*, Tyndall writes, *the Gael with the Frank / who listened and spoke to all / the tongues of the Earth / yet never forgot to honour / the pulse, the beat / on her goat-skinned bodhrán*.

We also meet "Doug," a bagpipe player, in the wonderful *For All Time Lamenting*, bidding farewell to a dear brother:

This lone rendition
at the gravesite
carried mourners off
while still on Earth
in this valley
where every piper
who plays *The Flowers*
adds a deliberate
mistake to ward off
the bad lucky

Undetermined Significance, the second part of *Listen to People*, conveys the author's ongoing struggles with declining physical afflictions (e.g. peripheral neuropathy) and dreaded cancer testing. Since I myself have a milder form of neuropathy, I'm familiar with the electric shock process aptly described as "a torturer's initial jolt" in the poem, *EMG us*, and suffice to say, very unpleasant memories swam to the surface of my mind. For Tyndall, there is the pain of tingling and shooting nerve endings, the loss of balance, the inability to perform tasks which were at one time much easier. Blood tests and X-Rays and the author's interactions with those conducting them help the reader to understand the dialogue of Tyndall's thoughts. The poem, *How She Knew Me*, relates this best, where we read, during a bone marrow cell extraction:

and that felt
like someone stirring
my very soul

no pain, no
pain, no pain
only my core
giving it up
for science
for diagnosis

take this, doctor,
may it serve you well

I replaced my clothes
over bloodstained
long johns, lastly
my long woollen socks

At my follow-up
appointment, results
confirmed MGUS
as my ailment

she said she
had seen me
walking home
from work
day after day

she said she
knew me
by my socks

The section closes with *Go Ahead John*, and here it's Miles Davis and jazz that bleeds into the final portion of the book, appropriately titled *Listen*, and we do, as more musical sounds speak of bygone library school days (the author subsequently worked four decades at Western University's D.B. Weldon Library). We encounter individuals in the poems that follow who've intersected the author's life, including a London, Ontario literary friend (now dead) in *Sit Back and Listen*; a Hungarian immigrant to Canada in *Zsuzsánna is in Love Forever*, while in *Only a Dream Camino*, the author, while travelling, sees foreboding crosses *in a small city / on the pilgrim's way / to Santiago de Compostela*, later writing:

I announce *I see it*
everywhere, in everything
vapour trails across the sky
medieval masonry
each crossroad
here, in the ceiling panels
the flooring tiles
window panes

Former London poet (now living on Hornby Island, BC) Cornelia Hoogland is another Tyndall has scribed for in *Raven Plays the Mountain*, and his gentle elegance and subtle rhythmic responses are on display, particularly in the poem's second stanza:

Raven has flown to this peak
and faced the steady winds
since land first dried

and rose to icy heights
he has spread wings, fanned tail
and tumbled backwards
over the summit, joyous
in this cacophonous comedy
soared above evergreens
to play the mountain
again and again
to make the snow fall
and the water flow
to his call

Other appearances in this closing third of the book include Clinton, Ontario resident and Nobel Prize winning author Alice Munro and one of my very favourite bands, R.E.M. (in their earlier, much rawer years). There is also a bit of much-needed levity in *Moniker, Handle, Tag*— a comical vision of the author as a street tag graffiti artist, while *Listen to People* ends with the fitting *Haunt*, and it does as it phases in and out between the ghostly ethereal and the still-tangible life that's left to Tyndall, who gazes *upon a perfect circle . . . a ring only visible / at this very window / like a constellation / only we on Earth perceive / a great roundel within / a tree no longer there*

—Andreas Gripp

Andrew Geoffrey Kwabena Moss

South Coast Laurie

Coasting, Shoalhaven Laurie
Moaned about Lebs, Abos
and Towel-Heads
Too easy, no worries

He harboured a dislike
of blow-ins
and scabby sou'westerlies

His hobby: barefoot water-skiing
His trade: plastering
Drinking hammer and tongs
Dressed in Stubbies, singlet and thongs.

Anansesem

Captivating narratives

From Sky-God Onyamekopon

Spanning sea mouths, word

capturing spider stories for eternity

Bridge thread across Atlantic seas

Single strand, tensile strength

Spider Weaver of

change, continuity

Anansi

Looming

Pattern shifting

Taking story shapes

Transatlantic transformations spanning nations

Stitching silky kente, super-strength specialisation

Captivity transcending, time and space

Metamorphosing, asserting boundaried identities

Trickster turning tables

Plantation Tactics

Survival

Anansi

Akan uncanny

Spider weaving trickster

Spinning survival stories gracefully

Transforming transatlantic slavery gloriously.

author's note:

The term *Anansesem* refers to the storytelling tradition of the Akan-speaking people of West Africa. The word, when translated to English, means “Ananse stories” or “Spider tales.” *Anansesem* encompasses the performative art of storytelling associated with Ananse, “the Spider,” in the Twi dialect of Akan.

Carrie Lee Connel

This Is It

I didn't plan this, you know. I didn't get up this morning and think, "This is it. This is the day I get that fucker." My day started as usual. Two cups of coffee while sitting on the couch listening to talk radio. I don't remember what they were talking about. Maybe something was said, a certain word, you know, like when you've been hypnotised and a trigger word could make you cluck like a chicken. I drained my cup, put it down and got to my feet, went into the bedroom. My clothes were laid out on the bed. I stripped and put on underwear, an exercise bra, yoga pants and a t-shirt, all black. Over that, a black zip-up hoodie. Slipped my feet into black athletic shoes.

Out the door and I was running. I ran a long time, but didn't get winded. My muscles didn't hurt. I just kept running until I came to a park. It seemed like no one was around but then I spotted one person sitting on a bench. As I got closer, I recognized him. The same brown hair, plaid shirt, like in the photograph. He turned as I approached. It was the eyes, those watery blue, pleading "love-me" eyes of my abuser, not only of one abuser, but all of them: ex-husband, ex-boyfriend, cousins I hadn't seen since the last funeral and, of course, the one who did the most damage.

My running slowed to a walk. He stood as I got nearer. I felt a comforting balanced weight in my hand and gripped the handle tighter, felt the shape of the tool pressed against the back of my leg. He smiled, and I swung with all my might. The hammer caught him in the jaw, the sickening crack of bone breaking, his mouth askew as he collapsed. I followed his downward motion with another swing. Got him on the forehead. I could see the indentation when I pulled back;

reminded me of my home-economics teacher who'd hit a tree while skiing. I slammed the hammer again and again; I don't know how many times. It felt good to let go of every time I pretended things were okay, life was great, I wasn't fucked up. I let it all out.

But then, I came to myself. Realized I didn't do it. I was sitting on the couch with a cold cup of coffee in my hand and the radio playing some forgotten song. At some point, I'd gotten dressed in my running clothes, sat back on the couch.

I'm not sure why you're here. I've told you already I don't know who Jack Brown is. I would like you to leave now. I want to take a shower. There's something sticky on my clothes. Do you know what this is?



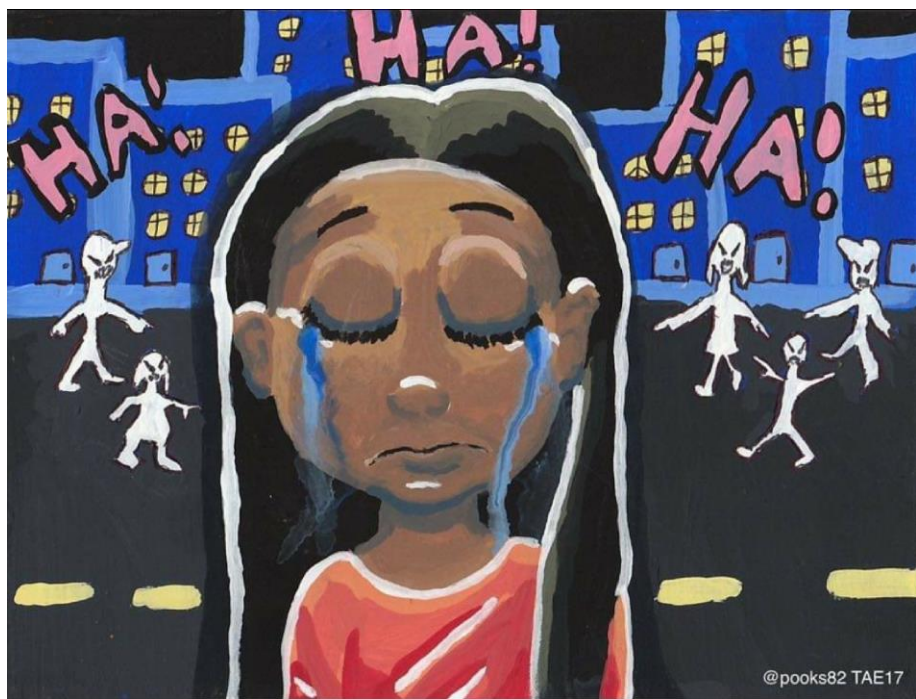
PAULINE KING SHANNON



PAULINE KING SHANNON



PAULINE KING SHANNON



PAULINE KING SHANNON

Dee Allen

Anti-Social Network

Listen, sheltered one:

The Black body poses no threat to you.

He's offering lawn-cutting services

Or just passing through

The suburban neighbourhood deemed safe—

Dream of a city dweller—

Maybe you locked up your

Sense of fairness in the cellar.

Would you be so quick

To reach for your cellphone,

Type in complaints, take pics

Of every Black man that roamed?

Station houses are flooded with

Aspersions, thanks to you.

False crime reports

Help the police state continue.

Neighbourhood watch gone digital,

Armed with audacity to profile.

Anti-social network next door

Runs on speech—racist & vile.

Kitty Jospé

Morning Meditation

Some say *days are fraught*
with the unknown
which sounds as sinister
as God punishing Onan
for spilling
his seed.

Others look to *under*
to see what lies beneath
suffer,
supply,
suggestion.

Surely, says another,
mention of summer and ice in the same breath
will allow unknowns of season to work
their magic but s/he ignores the bum holding
court with his sign.

Much,
says yet another,
can be
simultaneous:
koalas dying, ecosystems burning,
cyanide M-44s that eliminate
the undesirable

and some come to pin and pad *business*
to agriculture, learning, health;
topped with prayers for peace and panoply
to the parade

and some mourn so much of much murdered, under
another's mulch.

Mike Matthews

The Lost Nomads

The street lamps fry, cheap aluminum hum,
their light slowly strewn on empty plates
inside windows clamped shut
against the bodiless dark.

What truth within the lamplight's thin skin?

There are still nomads.

They are individuals who do not see fences,
only temporarily interrupted fields
set on by houses.

They are born into families
whose members do not know one another.
They are born into families
that do not know them.

They find one another
by the smell of each other's darkness,
and they feed on the tribes
that dwell in the other worldly community
where porch lights mark boundaries.

At the edge of the light's reach,
the discarded fodder lurk, forgotten,
reduced to necessity, waiting for invisible
moments when a crack opens in the dome
of neighborhoods, and a house is ready to leak.

Like paw-silent cats, they sprint through rooms
snatching crumbs, booty, quick-cash bits,
and drop into the background like moths.

Our luxuries are their meat.
They've breathed so much polluted air
from the words and piercing silences
from their homes. They don't know
that they've been poisoned.

To cling so tightly to the objects they swipe
forgets the mind and poisons the breath.
Valued materials become bodies.
To those within the night's light,
they steal a piece of people.
Though they've satiated a need for a day,
their poison grips them tighter,
until a shock can no longer crack their steel eyelids
enough for drops of sympathy to wet their pupils
and show them a sliver of a world outside their prisons.

Stuff can be replaced. Unbalanced hearts can settle,
and borders will thicken
between the half-starved
that pace the edges of a dusk
to feed off candy from piñata houses full of toys.

Eventually, the morning comes again,
and dew's spell lulls all back to dreams of routine.

Gregory Wm. Gunn

Quid Nunc?

A share of the masses
have their statues
in praise of the greats;
so then some must have
the palpable redeemer:
their Christ, Oramanes, Vishnu.
The genesis of it all
was formed and shaped
out of their circumstances;
the need for a secured
better understanding
and worth of being—
a special feeling of rising above
the bestial nature
of a divineless existence;
a pettiness of simply
being a natural creature.

What? Humankind
is not perfection? Can't be!
Hence God = good.
Mortal = bad.
Must try harder to be
more like God.
Quid nunc?

D.G. Foley

Passing the Plate

It's not one of those deals where the wallet
is lost in a snow bank. There isn't a rally
cry from the port-o-potties plopped in the hall
because the accessibility of fixtures was left
wanting.

My cigarette reeks of cabbage
and you offered no tray in which to grind
fermented ash. I'm unabashed
in my pontificates and a world Catholic
pretend. My forehead's vacant
but my trench coat's splattered
with soot.

See the priest standing in the corner at the dance?
What would he say if you asked him to join
in a foxy trot while the boys all turn to face the wall
at the sound of his creepy shoes?

Staying After School

Teacher tells me Josiah Sam was hung
for stealing his master's chicken.
I say it wasn't just the bird but the eggs
that would have hatched otherwise.
I get a detention for knowing the difference
between want and need.
For not-shutting-the-fuck-
up about fried and scrambled
and how there wasn't any time
in the morning before the slave-
work was expected to be done.

Before Seeing Wayne's World in 1992

I ask my friend's middle-aged hippie mom
why she ended up working on a
line making parts that make up
cars that make each summer hotter
than the one before.

*There's your ideals and then there's
reality*, she tells me in her jeans
and yellow bra, changing
into her powdered-flower blouse
right in front of me in her kitchen,
the any-shade-of-grey pull-
top tossed on a table we'll be
eating at soon. And it's not gonna
be vegan like I'd asked, my
friend in the bathroom upstairs
turning on the fan so we can't
hear him upchuck the suicide pills he
gulped down before remembering
we had dinner at six then a movie
at the multiplex he once picketed
against because of its money made
while the girl he wanted to do
got a shitty wage for putting heart-
attack butter on the popcorn
that neither of us could afford.

Sometimes

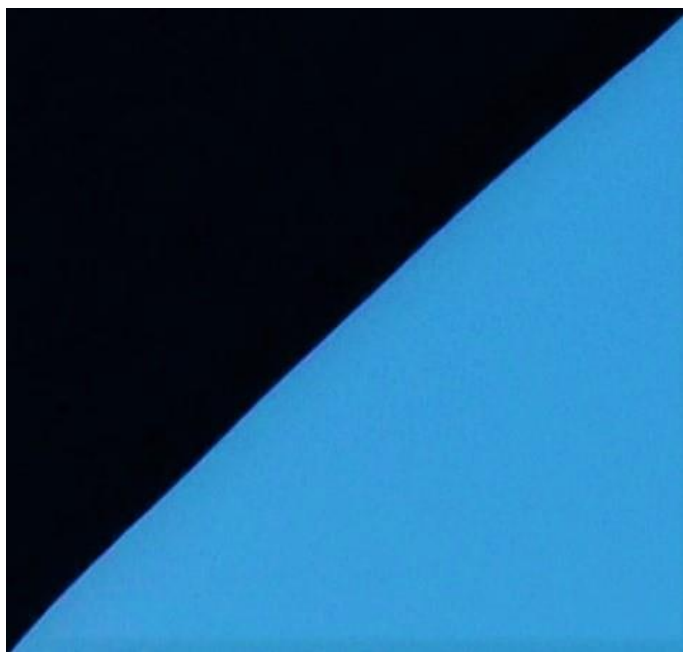
Sometimes my neighbour,
39 going on 50,
posts photos of her near-
nude self on Instagram,
twerking wearing as little
as she can get away with
on TikTok, but only
leaves the house to grab the mail.

Maybe it's just a bill,
from the mortician who buried
her husband 9 1/2 weeks ago,
a letter from the woman
who was her lover before she wed,
asking why she can't move in
now that Ed is dead,

all the while wondering
why she only got seven likes for a vid
she wanted to delete as soon as it was
posted, all from the same dude with six
sock puppet accounts and a penchant
for widows baring themselves for a smart-
phone camera, why none of the pervs
give a fuck that the grave has yet to be
seeded, the weather a perfect mix
of sun and then cloud and then rain.



D.G. FOLEY



D.G. FOLEY



D.G. FOLEY



D.G. FOLEY

Carli René Cropping

The Muse

This was

an author's

epic

in

Love, and War,

A panoramic view of Hell

these things

make poets and fools
rhyme

with

mythological

And supernatural

merits

Their labyrinth through

History, Tradition, and Facts

confirm

faith

with the Devil.

I'll write commandments

to the highest pitch

 crazed
drunk

And

 from
 the muse
covet

 a kiss

[from Byron—*Don Juan*—Canto the First CXCIX to CCVI]

author's note:

In the bottom of a box of discarded books, I found a 1950s edition of Byron's *Don Juan*. I flipped to a random page, picked up a pencil, and began crossing out words. While feeling I was committing the most hubristic of crimes as a 19th Century literary scholar, I also felt I was digging down to the very essence of Byron, getting past the flowery words and archaic images. Romantic poetry seems to have no place in today's world. It is ether trapped in a bell jar. Nothing to look at, no smell, no texture. The lyrical, or rather sing-song, nature grates upon nerves left raw by the cacophony of this world. Cadence and rhyme fall flat upon the ear, ringing false with no corresponding vibration in the heart. Crack the bell jar and the escaped ether lulls you into dreamless sleep—a romantic notion as the surgeon (she with pencil in hand) cuts open the body and excises the inner child.

Adeleke Kehinde Mercy

Point of View of a Depressed Soul

A month ago, I was lying on the red-carpeted floor in my room. It was so ironic to know that I was struggling to take in all the air I could get for my lung to get back in shape again. Someone had just cut off the rope that linked my neck to the ceiling fan. You guessed right, I had just attempted suicide, again.

Don't blame me yet, you wouldn't have done any better if you had to fight for your life ever since you got it. If you passed out often so quickly, like the switch of a light. If you grew up with whispers around you, "That's the sick boy." Or, if you had to live on a bag-filled prescription. They told me to be strong but I couldn't bear to see the look on my mother's face, she would have been happy if I was never born. Countless times I had tried to go off my medications, to make myself use up the air in my lungs. Whenever I passed out, I always woke up in the hands of the doctors. So, I decided to take the breath myself.

Don't give me that "you're a man" crap, I had had enough of all ugly things life could offer and I was certain death would treat me better. The doctors didn't have a cure and I was simply on my way to ask *God* if he has a cure.

You sure wouldn't be reading this if my brother had minded his own business. I definitely can't promise you that would be the last attempt, but if my name crosses your mind, say for me a word of prayer.

Child, Not Bride

I stood by the window and watched the ceremony unfold. Soon, I was going to be escorted out of the room by the other women. It would be the last time I would ever call the room my own and the last time I would be a young girl.

They were in the third phase of the ceremony, where the groom and his family were asked to introduce themselves. I knew how it would end, I had played it a thousand times in my head, I had seen it a hundred times before, like now, standing by the window with my friends one after the other and telling them I couldn't wait to see their babies. Just that today, I was the bride and my friends all looked like they had given birth to me.

A knock! And I knew it was time. As I walked out of the room into the midst of the crowd, I sought my mother's eyes to tell me everything would be just fine. I felt a chill run down my spine when she suddenly looked away and there she told me everything.

Another party will most certainly be held in my husband's compound in nine months, with the same faces I saw today if it's a baby boy.

Today, my attire was beautiful but what could have been more beautiful was if I was wearing a graduation gown and holding a certificate.

Lorraine Caputo

Ruta de Cacao

Under a tree
a shirtless man crouches
his skin the color of the cacao earth

Children's voices ring from classrooms

A woman stoops in front of
her home, loosening seeds from a pod,
onto the mound drying upon the blacktop road

Far beyond, the sea glimmers cerulean

A chocolate *conoto*, tail
feathers yellow, flies into the forest, amid
leaves deep-green & new-forged red-bronze

The Desert & Its Sea

Taupe desert dunes,
down to the tin-
colored ocean,
its horizon indistinct
against the clouded sky

Occasionally
the deep green
of an oasis

Occasionally
wind & wave-sculpted
rocks along the shore

Occasionally
the sun, a perfect sphere
lances sheets of light
upon those dull
fractured-mirror waters



ANDREAS GRIPP

The *Beliveau Review* stands in solidarity with ***Black Lives Matter*** and against the oppression, abuse, and exploitation of our sisters and brothers which have been going on for centuries right up to the present day. It's critically important to use the platforms we have to speak out in opposition to injustice, hatred, and violence—in this context perpetrated against the Black community; and also against Indigenous People (both in this country and around the world), People of Colour, People in Poverty, People with Disabilities, Women, Children, and members of the LGBTQIA2+ community.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dee Allen is an African-Italian performance poet based in Oakland, California. Active on the creative writing & Spoken Word tips since the early 1990s. Author of 5 books: *Boneyard*, *Unwritten Law*, *Stormwater*, and *Skeletal Black* (all from POOR Press), and *Elohi Unitsi* (from Conviction 2 Change Publishing). Appearances in 35 anthologies including *Your Golden Sun Still Shines*, *Rise*, *Extreme*, *The Land Lives Forever*, *Civil Liberties United*, *Trees In A Garden Of Ashes*, *Colossus: Home*, *Impact*, and the newest from Stairwell Books (York, England), *Geography Is Irrelevant*.

Lorraine Caputo is a wandering troubadour whose poetry appears in over 200 journals on six continents and in 14 chapbooks, including *Caribbean Nights* (Red Bird Chapbooks, 2014), *Notes from the Patagonia* (dancing girl press, 2017) and *On Galápagos Shores* (dancing girl press, 2019). She also authors travel narratives, articles, and guidebooks. In 2011, the Parliamentary Poet Laureate of Canada honored her verse. Caputo has done literary readings from Alaska to the Patagonia. She journeys through Latin America with her faithful knapsack Rocinante, listening to the voices of the *pueblos* and Earth. Follow her adventures at her website: <https://latinamericawanderer.wordpress.com>

Okolo Chinua is a writer who writes for many reasons, the beauty of tomorrow being foremost. Currently he's a student of English Language and Education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

Carrie Lee Connel lives in Stratford, Ontario with her husband and two cats. She has a Masters of Library and Information Science and a BA in English Language and Literature from Western University. Her writing has been published in *Synaeresis*, *Dénouement*, *The Toronto Quarterly*, *Fterota Logia 1*, *Tales From the Realm Volume One* (Aphotic Realm), *Smitten*, *NOPE Horror Quarterly* (TL;DR Press), *Piping at the End of Days* (Valley Press), and *Moonshine: A Canadian Poetry Collection* (Craigleigh Press). She's the author of three published books of poetry including her newest, *Written In Situ* (Beliveau Books, 2020).

Pat Connors' first chapbook, *Scarborough Songs*, was published by Lyricalmyrical Press in 2013. Other publication credits include *Spadina Literary Review*, *Tamaracks: Canadian Poetry for the 21st Century*, and *Tending the Fire*, released this spring by the League of Canadian Poets. His first full collection, *The Other Life*, is forthcoming from Mosaic Press.

Carli René Cropping is a Canadian poet and fiction writer who has published work in various literary magazines in recent years.

D.G. Foley is a Stratford-area visualist, scribbler, and has begun proof-reading accepted submissions to *Beliveau Review*. The initials which precede the surname remain a mystery.

Andreas Gripp is the editor of *Beliveau Review*. Their latest book of poetry is *Selected Poems 2000-2020* while their newest photo/art book is *Candelabra*, both published by Beliveau Books. They live in Stratford, Ontario with their wife and two cats.

Born in Windsor, **Gregory Wm. Gunn's** formative years were spent in a few small towns before settling in London, Ontario in 1970. Since his post-secondary education at Fanshawe College in the early 1980s, he has been carefully honing his skills in creative disciplines; published widely in various literary journals including *The Toronto Quarterly*, *Inscribed Magazine*, *Burning Wood*, *20 X 20 Magazine*, *Blue Lake Review*, *Synaeresis*, *The Light Ekphrastic*, and others. He has published 13 poetry volumes to date.

Brent Holmes lives to imagine, grasping at all the what-ifs that flutter through his mind and weaving them into stories. Brent's work has appeared in *Continue the Voice*, *Fumble*, *LKN Connect*, *Active Muse*, and has been accepted to Night Picnic Press. Brent has a PhD in mathematics.

Mark Jodon's poetry has appeared in unusual places, such as in a doctoral dissertation, contemplative worship services, and featured in a photography exhibit. Mark is an Iconoclast Artist. His full-length poetry collection is *Day of the Speckled Trout* (Transcendent Zero Press). He lives in Houston, Texas.

Kitty Jospé received her MA in French Literature from New York University and an MFA in Poetry from Pacific University in Oregon. Her work has been published in 6 books as well as in numerous journals and anthologies. Proceeds from her forthcoming book, *Sum:1*, will be given to East House in Rochester, New York, which helps move lives forward by providing stable housing and support services to individuals with persistent mental health and/or substance use disorders.

Edward Lee's poetry, short stories, non-fiction, and photography have been published in magazines in Ireland, England, and America, including *The Stinging Fly*, *Skylight 47*, *Acumen* and *Smiths Knoll*. His play *Wall* was part of Druid Theatre's Druid Debuts 2020. His debut poetry collection, *Playing Poohsticks On Ha'Penny Bridge* was published in 2010. He is currently working towards a second collection. He also makes musical noise under the names Ayahuasca Collective, Lewis Milne, Orson Carroll, Blinded Architect, Lego Figures Fighting, and Pale Blond Boy. His blog/website can be found at: edwardmlee.wordpress.com

Mike Matthews is the author of a book titled *Water of Joy*, published by Finishing Line Press. He teaches college writing courses at Central Texas College and has been published in the Scotland-based anthology, *The Book of Hopes and Dreams*. He lives in Copperas Cove, Texas, with his wife, who teaches ESOL at CTC, and his son, who studies mechanical engineering.

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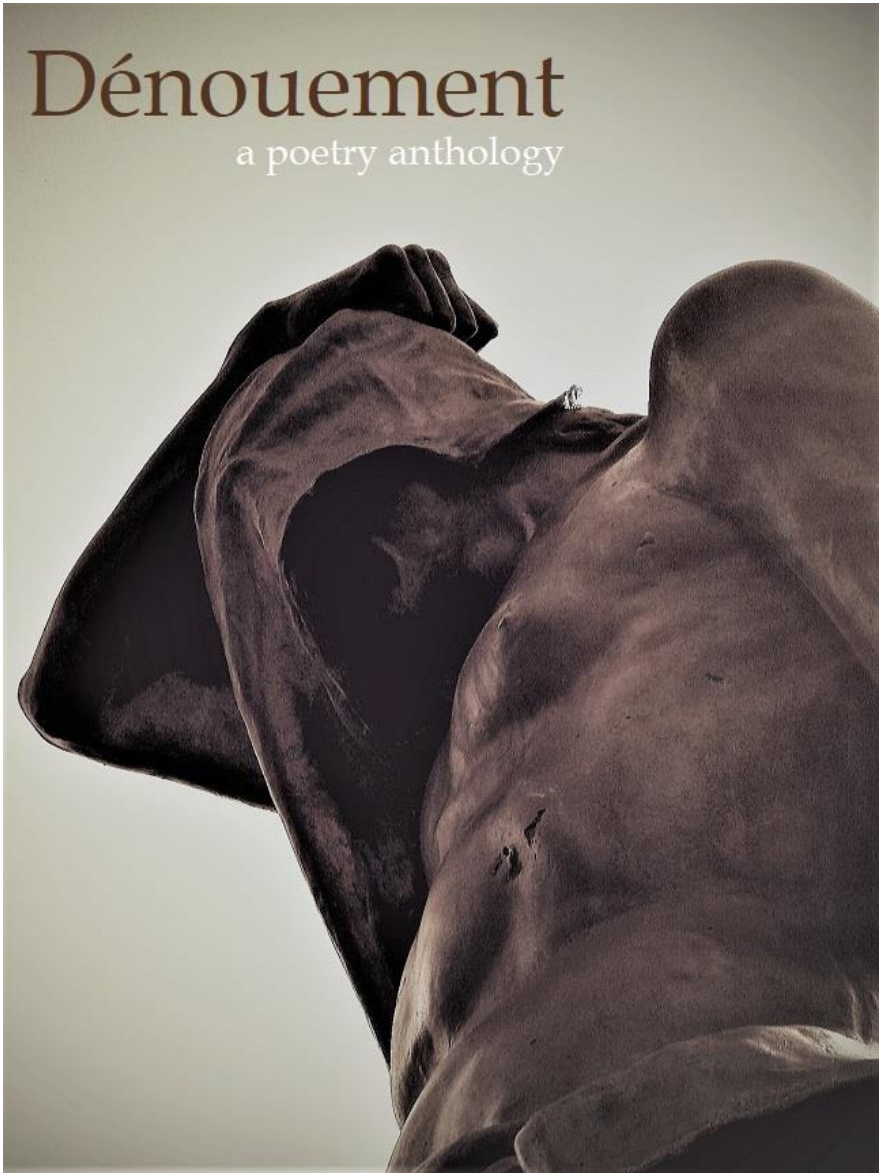
Andrew Geoffrey Kwabena Moss is a writer and teacher who has lived in the UK, Japan, and Australia. Of Anglo-Ghanaian heritage, his work seeks to explore and challenge liminal landscapes, complex identities, and the social constructs of race. Andrew is a member of the ACT Writers' Centre and has had work published by *Afropean*, *People in Harmony*, *Fly on the Wall Press*, *The Word Bin*, and *Golden Walkman Magazine*.

Pauline King Shannon is the artist, blogger, poet, photographer, and author known as **Pooks**. Her published book is called *Random Thoughts of an Alien Goddess*. From 2011 to 2015, Pauline was a New School of Colour artist and has had her art in approximately 25 art shows, including Up With Art (2012, 2014, & 2015) and the Twitter Art Exhibit (Orlando, Florida / NYC, NY / Moss, Norway / Avon, UK / Canberra, AUS). An independent Indigenous artist, she is the writer of the WordPress blog: *Pooks82 The Vault*. She lives in London, Ontario.

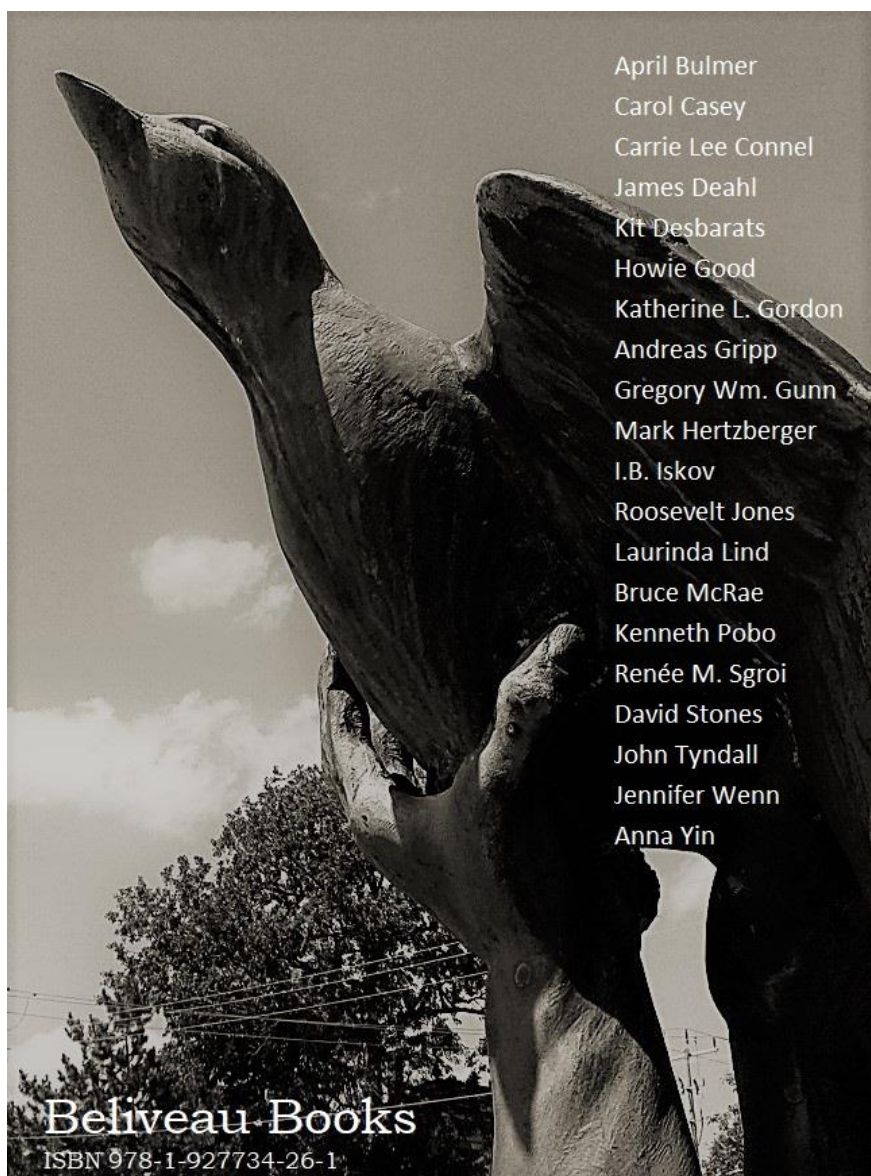
Concetta Tröszek is a student of Film, Art, Writing, and Translation. Originally from Trieste, Italy, she attends school in Ružomberok, Slovakia, where she is working on her first fiction manuscript.

Jennifer Wenn is a trans-identified writer and speaker from London, Ontario. Her first poetry chapbook, *A Song of Milestones*, was published by Harmonia Press (an imprint of Beliveau Books). She has also written *From Adversity to Accomplishment, a family and social history*; and published poetry in *Beliveau Review*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Open Minds Quarterly*, *Tuck Magazine*, *Synaeresis*, *Big Pond Rumours*, *the League of Canadian Poets Fresh Voices*, *Wordsfestzine*, and the anthologies *Dénouement* and *Things That Matter*. She is also the proud parent of two adult children with a day job as a systems analyst. You can visit her website at: jenniferwennpoet.wixsite.com/home

New from Beliveau Books



A digital anthology of poetry by a variety of writers that deals with finality, coda, and epilogue, within the context of our place upon this planet. Poems that acknowledge what has come before us, the drama of struggling to survive in the 2020s, and a look to possible futures whether the outcomes may be positive, negative, or stasis in nature.



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Carrie Lee Connel
James Deahl
Kit Desbarats
Howie Good
Katherine L. Gordon
Andreas Gripp
Gregory Wm. Gunn
Mark Hertzberger
I.B. Iskov
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Renée M. Sgroi
David Stones
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Jennifer Wenn
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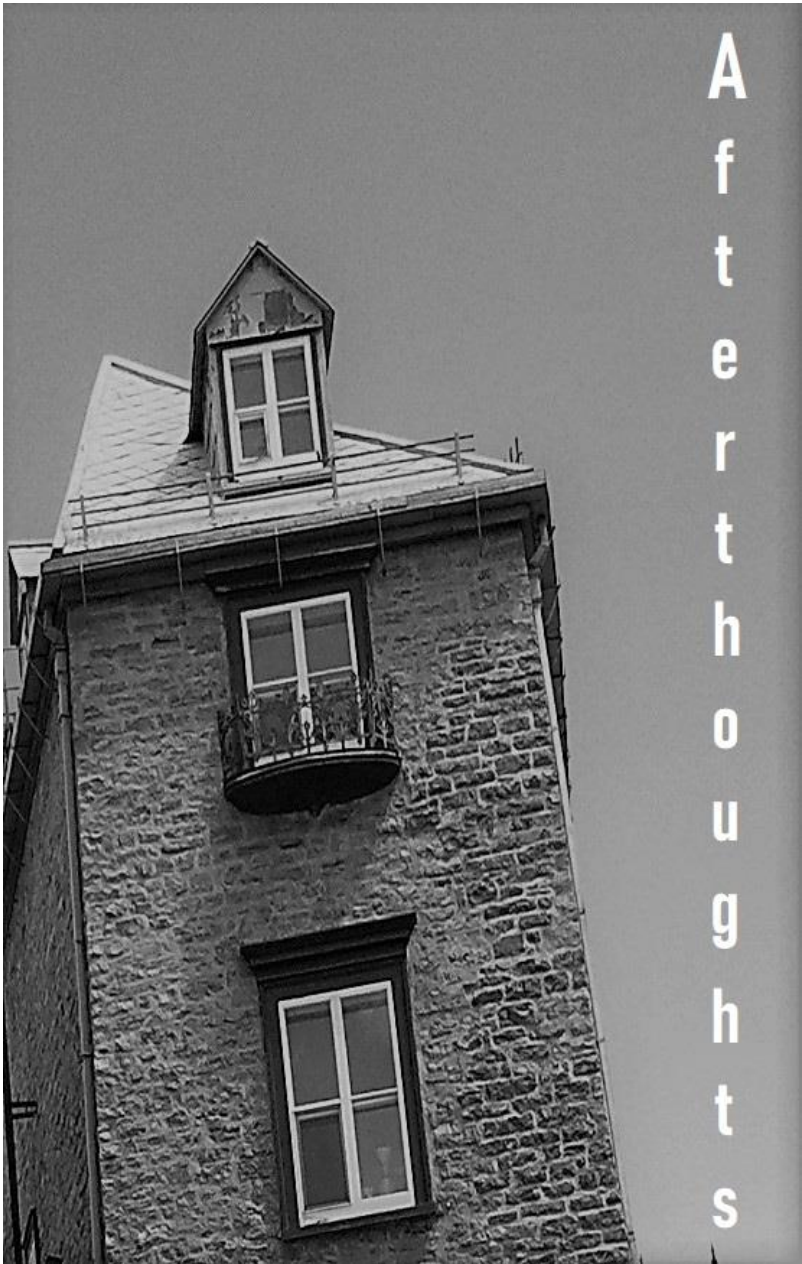
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A curated selection of poetry from *Afterthoughts* magazine, which was based in London, Ontario, and ran from 1994 to 2000.

The Best of Afterthoughts

1994-2000: an anthology of poetry



Beliveau Books

ISBN 978-1-927734-25-4

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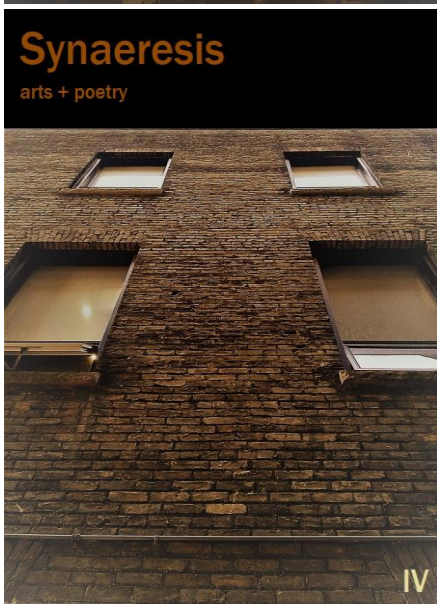
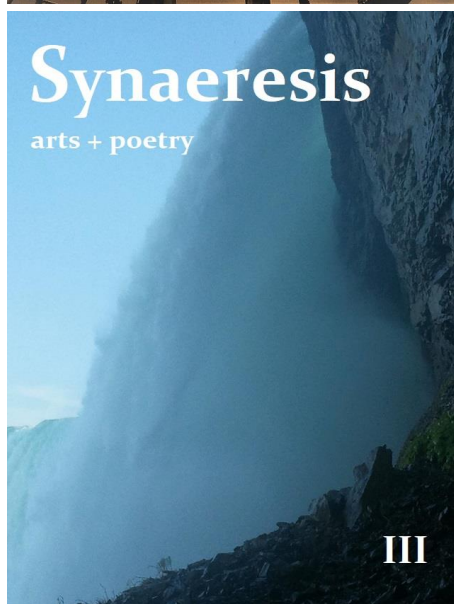
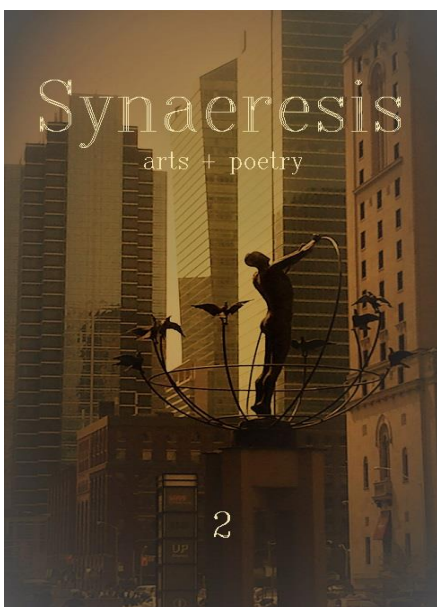
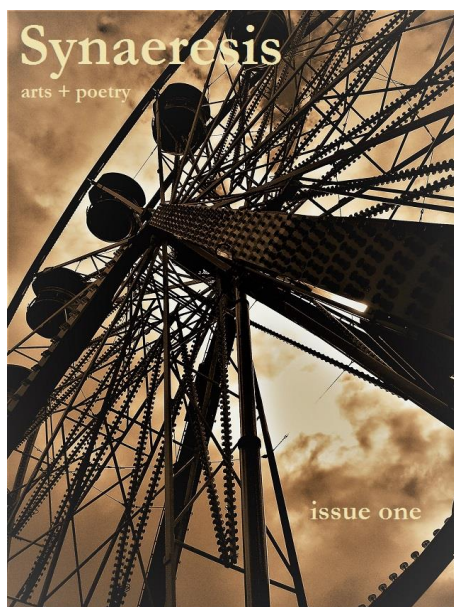
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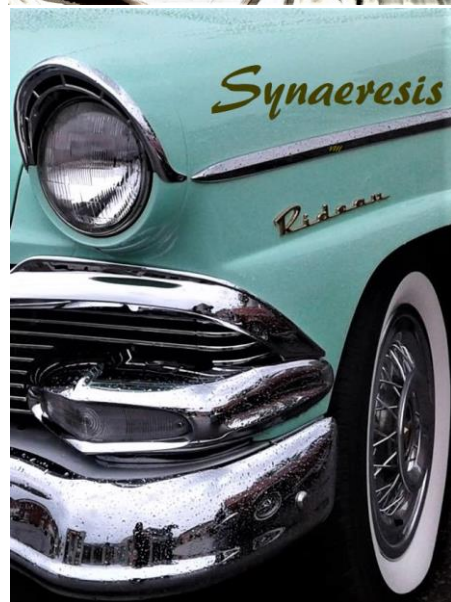
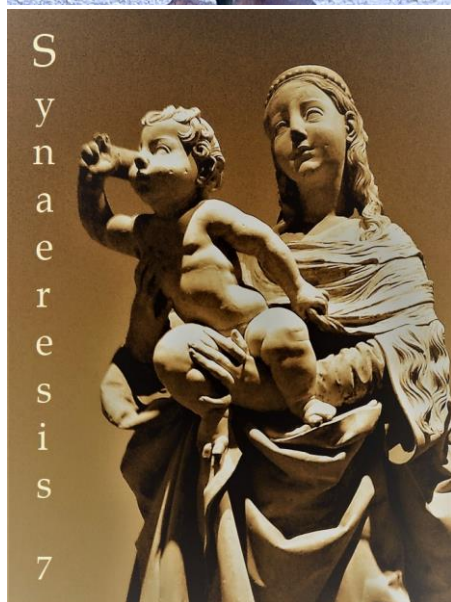
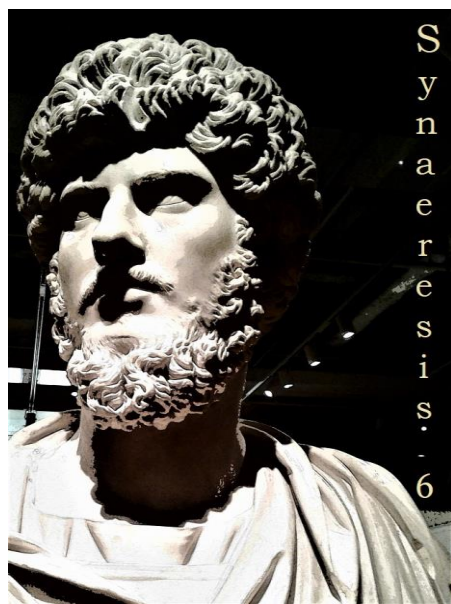
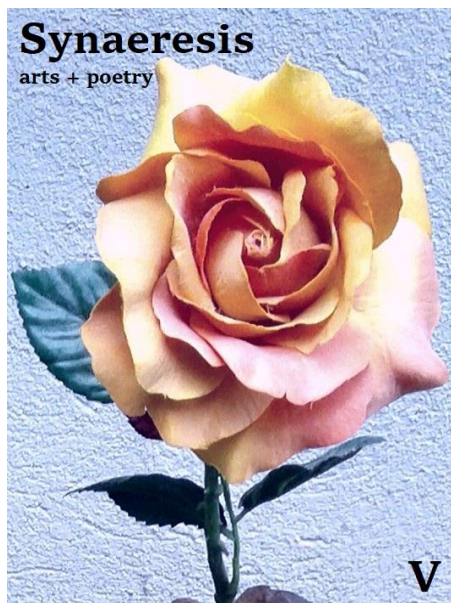
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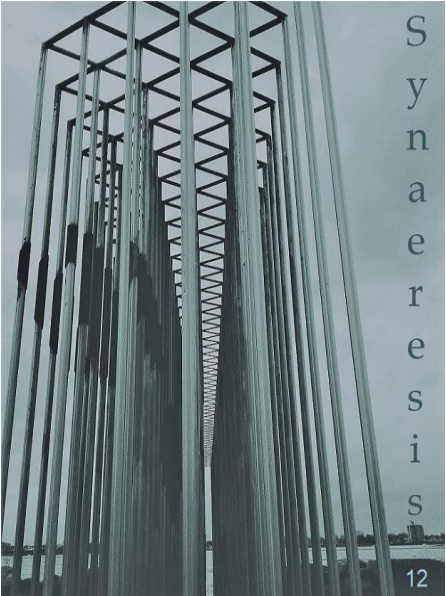
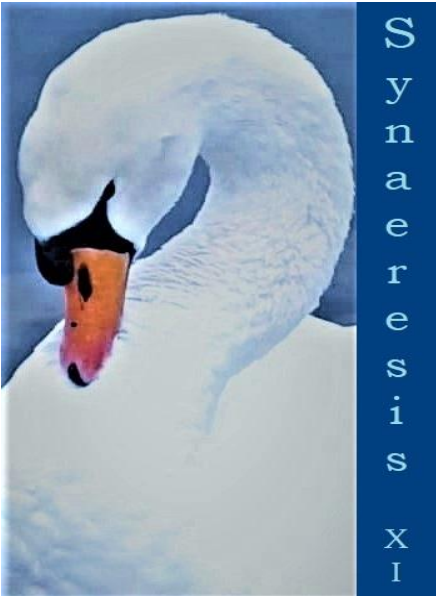
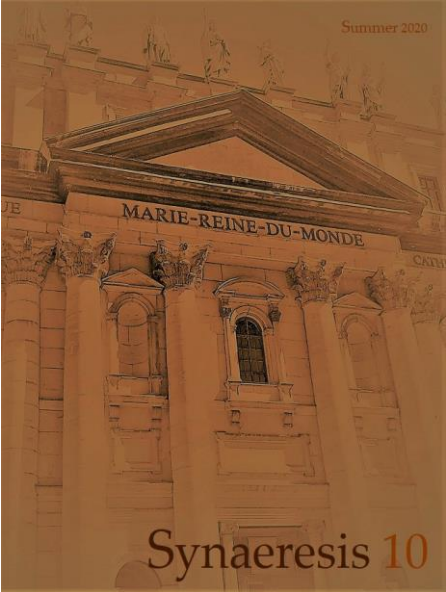
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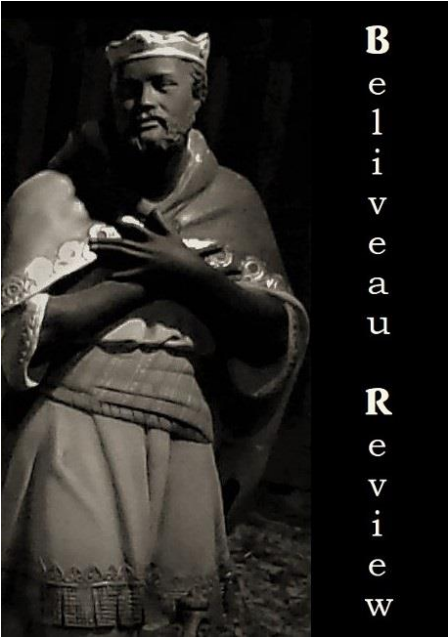
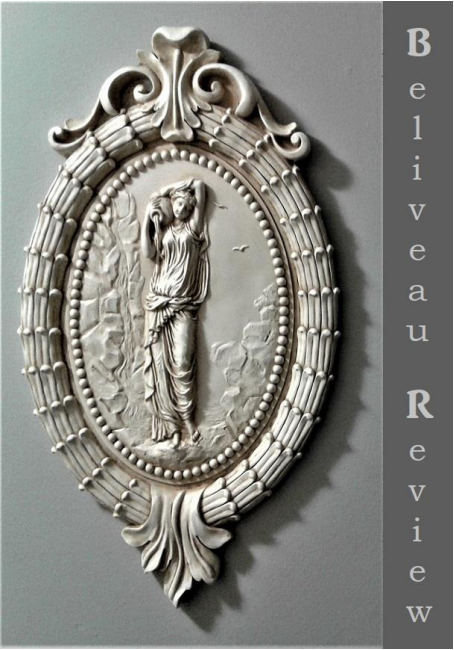
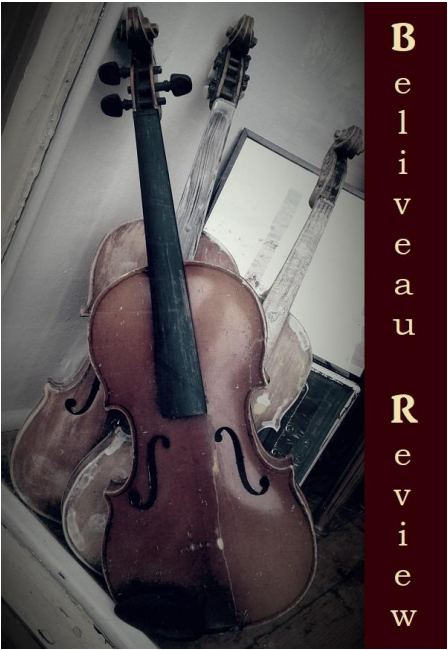
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