

estuary

acadia's creative arts magazine

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Poetry

"Green" - Danielle Megaffin

"Room 417" - Amanda Hachey

"Queen Street" – Kaitlyn MacPhee

"The Quiet Life of Disinterest" – Lauren Paterson

"Dimples" – J.D.

"The Painting" – Lauren Paterson

"Wit" – Rob Mousseau

"Winter Bus" – Emily West

"My Boxy Little Friends" – Tessa Cheng

"Oxford St." – Deanna McIntyre

"Fireflies" – J.D.

Prose

"Seven Cow Wife" – Emily Younker

"Apples and Potatoes" – Emily Younker

"Out of Sight, Out of Mind" – Nadia Bryden

Artwork

"Niki the Dog"- Nicole Westbrook

"Red Sand Snail"- Brennan Caverhill

"Acadia Art Exhibit" - John J. Housser

"Power's Out"- David Emmett

"Funky Glass"- Brennan Caverhill

"A Peek Inside" – Emily Read

"Aged Two Years"- David Emmett

Danielle Megaffin

Green

It is a green mourning,
A green morning too.
They all say,
“That boy there, he ain’t any good.”
I wonder why they’re talking in
Broken English,
But then I see all the open wounds;
Broken open;
Lots of red.
Lots of green and red mixing together,
While they all say,
“It ain’t Christmas, don’t do that.”
The nausea that comes,
Is mockingly green too.
Infinite options, constricting me
To the bed where
They all said,
“You’re gon’ have to stay missy.”
But the nurses in their green scrubs,
Can’t they see
All that green
It ain’t never gonna help me.

Amanda Hachey

Room 417

Scrubbed flannel moved across the blasted skin as he reached for his handicap
Both ways blinded, he picked up the smoothed black-and-white prophet
And caressed its precious pages

The gold band, seven years dulled, still rode on its skeleton bone
She hadn't visited for a while, but she will be here soon.
His spine bent back into the padded comfort of the wheel-chair

Whispers of memories soar around his head, picked off by the sharp-eyed syringes
He reaches wildly for the windows which yesterday has closed
The holes in the net have grown too big to catch them all

Strangers visit everyday leaving trophies of affection damp on his cheek
Have a big family and they will take care of you.
The mind is spent on days of 39 cent sodas and news from the front

Kaitlyn MacPhee

Queen Street

The air smells thick like incense smoke

Walking hot asphalt crosswalks in crowded city streets

the burn of daylight

Your scent stops me in my tracks

Amid the cars people honk sweat

I grasp at fading memories

Crave the sighs of midnight black

Soft whispering lips of confession

Sound hung weightless in the air

We strung time around our necks in careless beads

Laughter still echoes

Lauren Paterson

The Quiet Life of Disinterest

Stubby fingers and bitten nails;
My clothes don't look as nice as theirs
Empty glasses lined up in front of me.
My reputation to party.

This taste of smoke in my mouth
My makeup never accentuates the way theirs does
When I sing I am not complimented
When I am not heard.

My wallet runs out faster
And I find myself at the bus station alone
I am not the firefly that attracts the laughing children
I am not a monument to virtue

In your eyes who am I ?
Do I retain any of the beauty I see around me
Where is my love song;
or will I be forgotten before you can think a rhyme of me?

Cursing like a sailor
I am coarse like un-sanded yellowwood
My jokes do not hold an audience to laughter
I am left holding the shadow, and the quiet of disinterest

J.D.

Dimples

In a wooden sled
On the arctic ice
Pulled by 3 white blue eyed dogs
Sits a Native man
With rugged dimpled cheeks
Eating memories of the South

On a wooden stool
In a Mexican bar
Far from all the tourists
Sits a dimpled chinned blonde
Sitting in a pond
Of tears tequila and scars

Behind a wooden drum
Near the Brooklyn bridge
A young boy plays
In an orphanage
With pretty blonde hair and dark rugged skin
With three dimples on his face

Lauren Paterson

The Painting

Gold does not interest the sun beaten farmer;
only the gold of crop.

The mistress has no interest for the gelding
but to draw the carriage.

The crop has no interest in talking,
Yet the wind whispers through it.

The road finds no use for company
But the river flows beside.

The moon has no use for the sky
But bathes it in her ghostly light

The sun has no interest in the land
And shines for the world

And the tree has no need for time
but keeps summer's measure in its shade.

Rob Mousseau

Wit

Pencil shavings fall off in spirals,
Slowly unraveling, peeling away.
Revealing new truths while
Hiding the old ones;
An unendingly renewable voice.

Emily West

Winter Bus

People's sleep
Caught in mouths and feet
Between windows licked
With falling snow.

Hair against glass
And fabric tired. A cough,
A furtive sigh, and under
Fits for dreams once more.

Porcelain skin clutched
Under weighted bundles,
Legs as excess
Luggage under seats.

My eyes lidded
And moist with outside
Snow, melting into warmth
Of resigned trees...

Winter unsure
Of the oppression,
And softening to droplets
Of understanding.

Colours are covered nothing
And sharpness sanded
By stark, full cold; All
Landscapes indistinguishable
From myself.

Tessa Cheng

My Boxy Little Friends

From a city view
From an 11th floor couch
I look at the skyscrapers,
Tall, big, and brown.
Rocketing into the sky
As fast as company profits,
Bold, aloof, towering.

But what if they are looking at me?
What if deep in their engineered hearts
They feel ashamed, modest.
So naked and exposed for the world to see;
Purposely placed for the world to see.
The way Diana felt when Actaeon caught her,
Bathing naked beauty.
The way a shameful woman will cover herself
As her robes cascade past her shoulders, waist, thighs, and toes.
Head down, hand over breast and the other crossing the hips.

Is this how my boxy little friends feel, as they are shot into the sky?
Like the first girl to hit puberty in grade five,
Who is taller,
Gawkier, a sore thumb to the class.
But as they grow older into grade six, seven, eight,
The rest of the class catches up with them.
And all together grow tall, gangly
And awkward to each other.
These grade five girls only have two windows to their souls.
My boxy little friends have up to twenty windows to their souls,
Multiplied by fifteen or thirty,
And then another four.

Shadowed by their mountainous associates,
Naturally bolder,
Absolutely sturdier,

Mocking the vast empty space,
And glassy facade of my boxy little friends.
How inadequately defective,
When confronted by rugged earthly beauty,
Enough to make anyone's foundations crumble.

My boxy little friends need some help,
To overcome their humility, public indignity.
For years of being used for their bodies,
Turnover and turnover of so many people, who are only in it for the money.
When you pass by their feet,
Or look out the soul of one little friend to another,
Please avert your gaze and
Never ever stare
[You only make them more uncomfortable]

Deanna McIntyre

Oxford Street

When I saw that glow
As it poured through your window in the night
I thought the sun must be coming up,
But it was just the lights from Oxford Street.

And when I saw that beam
As it shone through my closed lids
I thought you must have been awake,
But it was just the lights from Oxford Street.

With the rush of the city
And the free life,
Those lights from Oxford,
On the corner of Jubilee,
It got so they felt like home to me.

When I saw that brightness
As it found its way into our sleep
I thought we must be dreaming
But it was just the lights from Oxford Street.

And when I woke in the morning
As I had left it the day before
I knew it must be over
Because it was just the lights from Oxford Street.

With the hush of the city
And the paid price,
Those lights from Oxford,
On the corner of Jubilee,
It got so they were just a distant memory.

J.D.

Fireflies

Let's eat a bowl of cereal; all Skittles
Instead of milk use blue Kool Aid
Watch the moon with me, quick.
Bugs for dessert
Fireflies perhaps, to make us glow and buzz
With audacious freedom floating
Like the laughing stars
Now be a stray mutt and slurp slop from the rusty dumpster
Wag your tail the whole time
Make it hit mine
I laughed so hard I cried white wine
I found you a magic snowflake
Feel it melt your tongue away and replace your flesh with dancing flames
You invented a new language?
Swink to you too, Princess Floopquip
Always scream when you say "amen", "omen" or "oh man"
But always scream it; empowering, glorifying, death defying; screams
Always scream it
Leaves for castles leaves for feasts leaves for pets leaves for fire leaves for underwear
Leaves for art leaves for flutes leaves for truths leaves for teas leaves for tease
Don't leaves

Emily Younker

The Seven Cow Wife

Many years ago, in a small dusty village, there lived a man named JoMo. He lived with his Tribe called Kikuyu, out in the country where the monkeys chattered like children and the lions lurked about his cattle pen. JoMo came to love a Somali woman named Imani. She had a long elegant neck with skin the colour of coffee beans. He knew she was quite special and wanted her to be his wife. In those days a man would make a gift to the father of the woman he wanted to marry. He offered Imani's father seven cows, which the poor old man gratefully accepted. JoMo's brothers scoffed and scolded, saying "Fool! You could have bought that Somali for three, even two cows!" JoMo sighed deeply, laughing at his brothers. He explained "Brother, when she walks to the water, and dips her pails into the well, the other Kikuyu wives will whisper 'There goes Imani, the seven cow wife.' And as she walks home, with the burning sun beating on her back, and the full pails weighing heavily on her shoulders, my wife will know what she is worth to me."

Emily Younker

Apples and Potatoes

Hannes Weisenbach lived on a wide street packed with old houses in the city of Dessau. He was just eleven years old, but already missed his younger years when he could play outside with the other children on the street, at least until suppertime. These days he was kept in his house more and more, crammed with his family like sardines in a little can. He hardly ever left the house where he lived with Mama, Papa, Grandparents Oma and Opa, two uncles Heinrich and Bert, plus his three little sisters Heike, Liesel, and Martine.

Hannes remembered watching Mama and Oma sew little yellow stars onto all of their winter jackets and Papa's work shirts. He remembered how proudly he marched to school with his newly decorated clothing. It meant he was Jewish, and Opa told him always to be happy for that. But when the other kids saw his clothes they hollered and threw the sandwiches from their lunch bags right at him. Nothing had been as happy for Hannes since that little golden star.

School got harder, and Hannes grew unhappier, until he wasn't allowed to go to school at all. He spent every day in the living room with his sisters while the older ones whispered in the kitchen. One morning at breakfast Uncle Bert told the other Weisenbachs all about Die Kristallnacht. The children were excited by the beautiful words: Imperial Crystal Night. But Uncle Heinrich scolded them and told them it really meant Night of Broken Glass. The city streets all over Germany were littered with burning boards and broken shop windows. All the houses and buildings owned by Jews were destroyed by the Nazi police. The Weisenbach children didn't complain about their living room anymore. They stopped asking Mama to go outside and play. Their whole family was scared they would have no place to live at all. That all changed one day when one of the Nazi police officers told them to pack one bag each, all Jews were to be taken away together. Oma cried because she would miss the house, but Papa and Opa said it would be okay. Heike and Liesel danced about the house, putting dresses and dolls into their little bags. Hannes packed a sweater and an apple to snack on. He was always hungry these days, and hoped there would be more of the food he remembered at his new house.

The Weisenbachs walked behind a wagon filled with old ladies and men all the way to the Bahnhof. There were hundreds of other families there, all of the children Hannes knew from his Synagogue. He was very happy to see his old friends after so long. The Officers in the black uniforms told Mama, Oma, Heike, Liesel and Martine to step up into one train, while Hannes, Papa and his Uncles got onto another one. Oma held Hannes's shirt sleeve but the Police said he was too old to

need his Mamas, and got onto the train next to Papa. Opa was shuffled onto a different platform, but he said he would meet them all at their new home. Hannes was excited by everyone running around. He hadn't been on a train in six long years. The Weisenbach men climbed the ramp and piled into a big wooden box that smelled like cows and sheep. There were far too many men in the box, but the train chugged along rocking back and forth. Papa lifted Hannes up onto his shoulders so he could stick his face out between the boards of the train box and breathe some of the country air. From up there he could see a young man's hands around his Uncle Heinrich's throat. Hannes fell asleep before he could eat the apple in his pocket.

When he woke up the apple was gone, but they were finally off the train, marching through a little town to a camp called Sachsenhausen. Hannes held Uncle Bert's hand tightly as they walked past the Police with Guns. Papa read the big words on the gates out loud. *Arbeit Macht Frei*. Uncle Bert said he didn't know of any labour that set him free. His legs ached, but he stood for many hours more with all the other men and boys who wore little yellow stars. He was moved into a room with Papa with lots of beds stacked on each other. Hannes wondered where the radio and bathtub could be. It was a big cold room, but he slept with Papa and kept warm every night. One day one of the men in the black uniforms came to tell Hannes about his new job. He was to be the very important Kartoffelschaeler! Hannes moved out of the room where Papa and his Uncles stayed, and into a small room near the camp kitchen. Hannes peeled potatoes from morning 'til bedtime, day after day. His little hands grew stiff and dry, but the Officer told him "We will always need a potato peeler." Hannes supposed this meant he would never have to work out in the stone yard with his uncles, or in the heat of the giant furnaces like Papa.

Even though Hannes lived right next to the kitchen, he never had enough to eat. He was too nervous to sneak a bite of the potatoes. He wished he had somehow saved the apple he had brought on the train. Sometimes when he was alone he would carve little pictures of apples in the potato peelings with his knife. Sometimes he would make little cat faces or hearts in the potatoes because he knew his sisters would like them, and it was getting harder to remember what they looked like.

One early morning after Hannes had already begun peeling he noticed a little red apple sitting right next to the bucket he sat on. He could not believe his eyes! An apple! In the room where only he sat. He knew it did not belong to him, but his belly was so empty, and his throat was so dry that he gobbled it all up and didn't stop once for a breath. Hannes worried the rest of the day that a black uniform would come asking for his missing apple, but when he returned the very next morning, there was another round little apple in the same place, almost hidden behind his small bucket seat. Hannes did not believe his fortune, and ate the apple more slowly this day.

A lot of time passed, and Hannes was almost content with his daily apple, and steady work. Papa was growing old and tired very quickly. Hannes had not seen his uncles in many weeks, but never asked Papa where they could be, and he never, EVER, asked where Mama and the girls were.

Everyday, an apple appeared in the Kartoffelschaeler's office, and everyday Hannes the Kartoffelschaeler grew more and more curious. He had little else to think about than his daily mysterious treat. He finally decided to wake up extra early the next day, and try to spy the person who left the apples behind. Very early, even before the sun was up in the sky, Hannes snuck out of his bed and into the potato room. What he saw was a greater surprise than he had ever expected. A small girl, about nine years old, with short yellow hair was crouching over the bucket, about to drop an apple from her hand. She jumped up with a start when she saw Hannes. He tried to thank her for all the apples, but she put her finger up to her bright lips to keep him quiet. "I'm Ulli" she whispered. "I've brought you an apple from my Papa's apartment. I live with him in the Officer's quarters on the other side of the camp." Hannes was terrified. Ulli's father was one of the black uniforms! She told him he must never sneak back in early, or she wouldn't be able to bring him apples. Her Papa, Herr Doctor Oppenheimer worked in the medical rooms in the centre of the compound, where all of the older men went in, but rarely came out. She made Hannes promise to eat his apples but never tell anyone. Ulli walked lightly out of the room, and Hannes watched her run swiftly back across the open yard to the Officer's buildings. He never caught sight of her after that, but the apple appeared faithfully, daily, and Hannes spoke her name over and over in his head as he peeled. Ulli Oppenheimer. *Ulli Oppenheimer*. It sounded like a circus, or a party, or a big festival with lots of food, and music, and warm blankets, all of the things from Dessau that Hannes missed desperately.

More months passed and Hannes peeled potatoes, until one day Papa told him the men had heard the officers talking of *The Final Solution*. Hannes grew excited, knowing the day would soon come when they could all go back to their houses, back to their families, and the black uniformed police would peel their own potatoes. *The Final Solution!* The problems had been solved, and the Nazis had found the solution! Hannes overflowed with hope. He could barely sleep at night. People were arriving at the camp by the hundreds. Something was happening. He peeled and waited, waited and peeled, more and more potatoes until he thought his fingers would fly off his hands, out past the gates and the burning furnaces. He saw Papa less and less, with all the new work, and the new visitors, until Hannes realised he didn't see his Papa at all. He hadn't seen anyone he knew in weeks and weeks. People were disappearing, but the black uniforms still told him "We will always need potato peelers."

And they did. Hannes worked in his little room by himself. He was still peeling furiously when the camp was almost empty, and the British soldiers walked into the room to tell him the Kartoffelschaeler could go home now. Home? How? With Papa? With Opa? Hannes had spent more than four years in his little room peeling away, and did not quite know how to leave. He had no belongings to pack, no train ticket; just the last two of Ulli's apples that he had saved that were now soft and brown. A fresh one hadn't arrived in weeks. Hannes walked tiredly out of the Sachsenhausen gates all alone, wondering if his potato peeling labours had set him free.

Hannes traveled slowly for days and days. Sometimes he walked; sometimes he rode on old trucks and tanks with English soldiers. He met a short American man who took him to his old home in Dessau. There was little but ashes and crumbling rubble where his building stood. The building where his family had lived, and where his bedroom had been. With no money and no home, Hannes had nowhere to go. The short American was a kind man, a Jew too, and he took young Hannes to live with him in America. Weeks later they arrived in Idaho, where they grew the most potatoes in the country. Hannes worked hard and told his story to all who asked. He talked about the camp at Sachsenhausen, the old days in Dessau, but mostly he liked to tell the tale of Ulli Oppenheimer and her kindness.

After Hannes had been in America for some years, he had his own home, a job, and new family in the American Jews, but he still felt troubled. He thought often of the little girl and her gifts to him, until one day when he told his story to a traveling man from Chicago. The traveler replied "Sir that is a unique name, Ulli Oppenheimer, and I know of one back in the city. A young lady, lives with her Mama. They lost half their family over in Germany and they live in Chicago now. I bring stuff up from here to their store." Hannes could not believe the coincidence but begged the traveling man to take him to her right then. He rode with the man and was dropped in front of the store-front window. It was indeed the same yellow hair and smiling face that greeted him from behind the glass. Hannes and Ulli married right there in the city where they raised their three children. As a grown man, and a father, Hannes would peel the potatoes and contentedly watch his wife drop them into a pot to cook.

Nadia Bryden

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

They are walking, *tout les deux*, through the market, but a short drive from Hull. She has bused from her home in downtown Ottawa; he has borrowed his sister's car for the evening to see her, and to remind her that he's there. Remind her that he cares.

He lights up, and offers her a cigarette. *You are not my father*. She accepts and assures him this is not typical behaviour, mother need not know. He acknowledges this much, and they find a corner table out front of the Hard Rock Cafe. Reclining comfortably, he recreates her childhood; she shifts in her chair.

« Votre mère et moi presque ne nous sommes pas mariés de tout. »

You are not my father. She nods as though this was common knowledge, and scrutinizes the stain on the table. Is it spreading?

« Ha! Sa mère désapprouvait ainsi. »

She looks ashamed, and he hesitates. Suddenly the smells emanating from the kitchen's back door are suffocating.

« Tu n'avais pas su? »

"It's fine," she says. *You are not my father*. "Sort of funny," she adds unconvincingly.

« Tu sais que je t'aime. »

"Of course."

« Tu ne me doutes pas, bien sur? » Leaning forward. Concerned.

"No, it's fine. I love you too, Papa."

Reassured, he settles back into the chair, and they both take another long drag.

"We must do this again sometime," she says.

Nicole Westbrook

Niki the Dog



WATERCOLOUR

Brennan Caverhill

Red Sand Snail



PHOTOGRAPH

John Housser

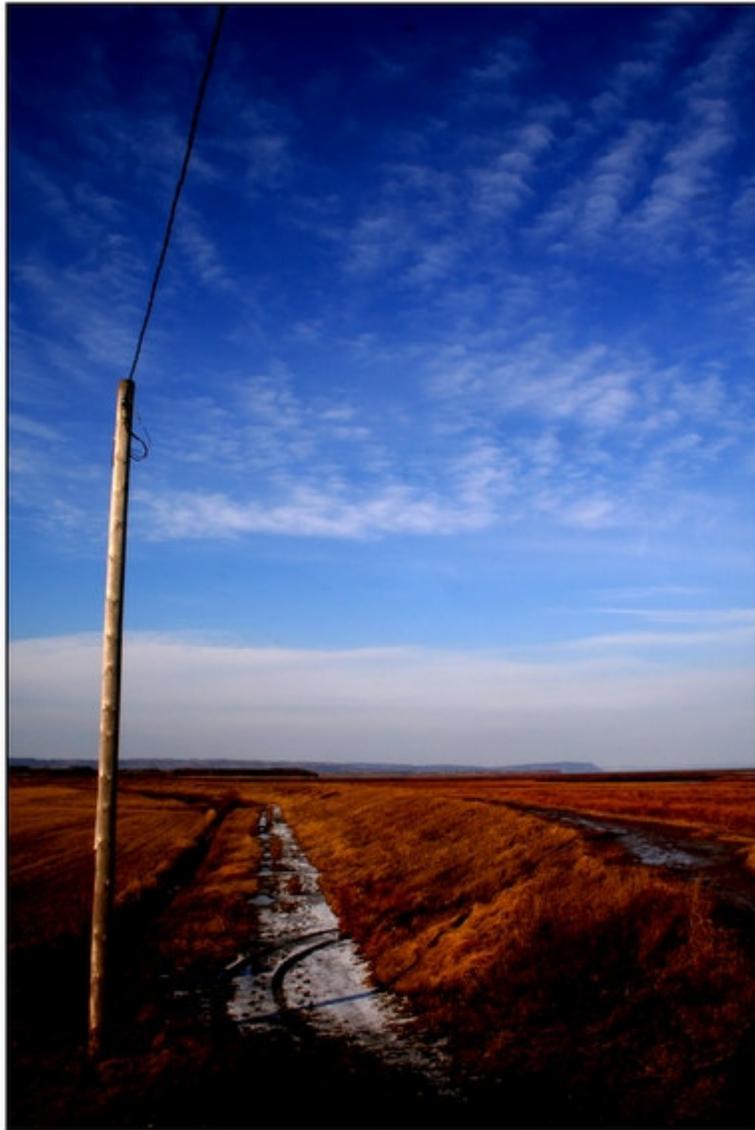
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David Emmett 2006

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