

estuary

ACADIA'S CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

2023

*“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”*

~John Keats “Ode on a Grecian Urn”

Cover Art: Talc Under a Microscope // Amanda Smith

Faculty Advisor and Layout // Wanda Campbell

Contents

Talc Under a Microscope // Amanda Smith	Cover
Editor's Note // Lukas Saklofske	6
Sunrise // Sophie Ashton	7
A Panic Attack in Writing // Alex Bazin	8
My Brother's Work Hat // Myla Briand	9
Crunchy Leaves // Mackenzie Burkhart	10
The Blue Dress // Rachel Cameron	11
Women to the Ocean // Dahlia Erick	12
Trilobite // Rachel Everest	14
The Pot // Abby-Jean Gertridge	16
Insomniac // Lindsay Godbout	17
Fuel // Erica Halliday	19
The Split Sunflower Necklace // Anita James	20
Flowers // Yas Jawad	21
Field of Winter // Megan Marshall	22
The Ribcage and the Willow // Kit McGarrigle	23
In the Blink of an Eye // Grace Naugler	25
Study of Madonna in Glory // Sophia Norris	26
Peppermint Nanny // Anika Potschka	27
reflect // Max Rowell	28
Ascending a Mountain // Lukas Saklofske	29

Curried Carrot Soup: A Love Poem // Jack Simpson	30
On First Taking Provencal's Intro to Greek Civ	
	// Jake Speiran 31
Full Circle // Lily Street	32
Brand New Face // Zach Strong	33
I Write to Remember the Mindless Love	
	// Julia Sylvester 35
Shower // Laura Taggart	38
To the One Who Saved Me	
	// Gwen Trombley-Prozenko 39
Pepper's Dare // Gwen V. Williams	40
Reasons Why You Haven't Written Your Poem Yet	
	// Ty Wright 41

Editor's Note // Lukas Saklofske

I would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Wanda Campbell for all of her help and encouragement in bringing about this issue of *estuary*.

This edition's creative works were submitted by a variety of students, all of whom produced exceptional work. Each entry contributes to the creation of a unified group that embodies the uniqueness and originality of our University. The Acadia creative arts journal wouldn't exist without these students' tireless efforts and wonderful artistry.

This issue of *estuary* is dedicated in remembrance of Mark Sylvester. He was a strong supporter of people's dreams and empathised with the suffering of anyone who needed to feel understood.



is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq nation

Sunrise // Sophie Ashton

It's a quiet winter morning
and nothing can be heard,
except a brush of wind swarming
the whistle of a bird.

It's as if the sky was sliced last night,
right as the sun was waking.
It opened up with colours bright,
released the beauty waiting.

I feel I own the world right now
as the sun lights up the dew,
creeping up the sky like a plow,
cutting through the calm blue.

The stinging crimson bleeds right through,
like the sky has been stained.
The bare tree branches reach up to
the cool air, unrestrained.

The sky's bright hot, crispy red
melts the cold below.
The dewy grass peeks up all wet
amidst the shining snow.

This wondrous spectacle floods the air
as I take in the show.
I only wish I could ensnare
the magic of this glow.

A Panic Attack in Writing // Alex Bazin

It's so cold in the **void**

floating far from yourself

Hide from it.

Warm up,

If you can

In the jacket you thrifted last summer

The nicotine memories of decades past,

Nostalgia for things you've never seen, clings to its

Plastic materials, loosely draped around you

It feels more real

Looks more real

Than you do

Are you real?

Try to ground yourself.

What is real?

This jacket has to be.

What do you know?

20+20=40

Yes, that's it

Facts, truth, **reality**

Hold on to it.

Find your footing.

It gets easier.

However.

It won't ever leave you

You'll never truly leave **it**

That **void**

So bring your jacket

To keep you warm

To remind you what's real
To bring you back

When you float

Inspired by $20+20=40$ by Celine Gabrielle
Annual Acadia Art Exhibition 2022

My Brother's Work Hat // Myla Briand

The once sturdy structure fell
shaped by rough callused hands
the skeleton bent and broken
now perfectly fitted to his head
the worn fabric stops his overgrown dark hair
from falling into his eyes

the inside rim is stained with sweat and dirt
rusty brown smudges confirming endless days.
12-hour shifts spent sculpting black rubber
4 am mornings spent hauling lobster traps
protection from the beating sun.
My brother's hat rarely leaves his head,
the cloth in constant contact with his sympathetic skin

The hat joins us at the dinner table
birthdays and events.
Held together with a delicate thread
woven with light and love
bonded by laughter and devotion
removed at the end of the day
in wait, on his bed side table
for the labour ahead

Crunchy Leaves // Mackenzie Burkhart

Life happens in between the lines. One day, when your life flashes before your eyes, it's going to be a compilation of the moments in-between.

Life is cached in the moment you laugh so hard your stomach hurts and your cheeks ache. It's planted in the moment of nostalgia when that one song plays on the radio, and sequestered in the moment the kitchen becomes a dance floor, and the ladle transforms into a microphone. It's wrapped in the moment of solidarity when a stranger offers you an unfeigned smile, and enveloped in the moment you discover the wisdom you need scribbled on the side of a bathroom stall. It's stashed in the moment you lick the spoon, and encapsulated in the moment your drenching hair and soaking clothes renders an unbridled grin. It's slipped into the moment you wake up dazed and disoriented with drool marks and sleep lines etched into your cheek, and buried in that tear-fueled snotty hug. It's disguised in the moment of pause before you finally say yes, and tucked into the all-encompassing awe embedded in a shooting star and forehead kiss.

Life is hidden in all the elusive unsuspecting moments, all the honest moments, all the moments saturated with passion – *in all the moments you surrender to the now.*

Someone once told me that the purpose of life is stepping on crunchy leaves. I get it now.

He was right.

The Blue Dress // Rachel Cameron

blue and bold,
acrylic and oil creating the definition of one's body
broken people surrounding them,
ungendered being;
defined shape of body filling the canvas
cut of the dress, dive of the V
light reflections on the gloss of the paint.
unframed, with height
different pigments in the skin
curves and outlines,
stance of a superhero.
from a distance
up close, the experience is blurred.

Women to the Ocean // Dahlia Erick

The sounds of the forest and the crunch of rocks under the girls' feet announced their presence to the novel place. One chatters about a boy, overthinking, her words change but the thoughts stay the same. The listener tosses in a compassionate "mhm" and "of course" like pebbles into the waves. They come out of the trees, salty air blowing in their hair, to a small precipice before a rocky beach begins. One takes it languidly while the other carefully scales down, marveling over the beauty of the ocean. Every step brings a new rock in view, promptly picked up, shared with delight, and dropped or pocketed. Blue, red, grey, smooth, full of crystals, too big to pick up, too pretty to leave behind. Soon the goal of their adventure unfolds: one pulls out her towel and swimsuit from her backpack, hesitating to change in the open. The other encourages her friend's liberty, herself having forgotten and resorting to underwear and her oversized hiking shirt, a giveaway-bag find worn on adventures for the pockets.

With the camera set up on a carefully selected boulder, pre-pictures are taken until both young women are satisfied that the atmosphere of anticipation and adventure has been captured. They're cute and a tad awkward, the pictures, but the genuine joy calls out from their expression. They turn the video on and plunge into the ocean barefoot over the rocks, they wade and then dunk under the water. The water is shocking cold, and salty for two who'd both grown up far away from beaches. Thrilled with their bravery and independence, they splashed to shore, one ensuring the video has captured their escapade and the other surveying further

down the beach, to a waterfall beckoning with the promise of washing away the sticky salt residue.

“Isn’t this incredible?” She was leaning forward, tense with anticipation and yearning, face quivering with joy that raged through her veins on occasions like these, eyes scouring the skyline restlessly. “This is what I’ve dreamt of my whole life. Having these exact adventures. Every time I do something like this, I can feel myself getting closer to the woman I want to be, y’know? She does things like this.”

“Don’t be ridiculous! You are that woman.”

Trilobite // Rachel Everest

My eyes do not scan building top
Boring, is their towering circumstance
Nor probe the skies for birds in flock
The celestial bodies induce no trance
There's nothing above my head, to revel
In fact, I don't even hold eyes level
Although our design might encourage
And the contrary pose, neck pain discourage
The joys I know and do search for
(Pavement and development deciding)
Special rocks, dear reader, hiding
Underneath the earthen floor
But sadly, dear reader, true love of mine
Is slightly trickier to find

I venture to nearby forests to forage
My shoes tread pavement, the low effort searcher
I abandon pathways, yet despite my courage
This ground is too new, I must go further
So I drag myself up mountain tops
Towards Cambrian slates, to my favourite rocks!
Past outcrop that sadly lacks the preservation
That's seen at my early Phanerozoic destination
This trek, dear reader, is not like the last
The scenery along it feels older, more natural
With towering rock faces, a genesis so masterful
These rocks hold much beauty, but I must go past
Up Walcott quarry, on broke rock, I sit
Now let us spin time back a bit

Traversing ancient seas routinely
Till the day that life and death do meet
They assume their place to rest serenely
For an eternity, beneath my feet
But eternity is now cut short
By my trusty geologic pick of course
I break the slate, I clear debris
It's as if he's left there just for me
Upon my find, I gaze, admire
How long he's lived in this formation
His moon shaped eyes, their configuration
And the tail his kind did always require
Double check the sutures, it's Olenellus alright
The perfect early Cambrian trilobite



The Pot // Abby-Jean Gertridge

I'd like to label myself a Phoenix, rising
from the ashes of those pains that linger
Shedding my old skin and with it, those memories

Instead, it would be more accurate to compare me to a
broken pot
Smashed to dust but still reformed, the old wounds bent
into the current shell, with mostly careful hands adding
clay and forcing me into shape

While I cannot escape like the Phoenix, I can grow
stronger like the pot,
each firing turning the ash
from the old into the new

Insomniac // Lindsay Godbout

Sleep was the mistress I served
But she was never fair.
All I wanted
Was her to sweep me up in her intoxicating arms,
Spin me into the sea of linen,
And allow me to drown.

But that never happened.

My eyes would burn,
But Sleep always kept her distance.
Sometimes, I could feel her presence
Start to fall over me.
But Anxiety and Regret would chase her away.
Sleep didn't belong to me the way they did.

How many times did I try to summon Sleep
By counting the blades of my ceiling fan?
1...2...3...4...5
1...2...3...4...5
1...2...3...4...what's the fucking point...5.

Sleep was largely untameable.
There were nights where I thought I'd find her
At the bottom of a bottle of cough syrup
Or after a parade of tablets.
But elusiveness isn't so easily persuaded.

Eventually, I held man-made Sleep in the palm of my hand
Throw it back,
Swallow the bitter reality.
Begrudgingly, Sleep would make her appearance,
But only because she had no other choice.
There was no dance,
No grand seduction in which I couldn't fight.
Only darkness.

That is, until I met you.
I do not know what deal
You must have struck with Sleep,
But she was always at your beck and call.
Ready to serve you.

I don't believe it a coincidence
That Sleep appeared for both of us
The first time you made love to me.
I think even she knew that you were something special.

Slowly, Sleep started to linger.
You always fell asleep first
But I didn't mind.
I could feel your even breaths
Caress the back of my neck
And lose myself in them.

I always woke up first,
But I didn't mind that, either.
I could pull you in a little closer
And breathe in the cologne I grew to love.
Sleep became a language only we could speak.

I was starting to think that Sleep was now a part of me
But some things are not to be.
Circumstance and Misfortune
Chased you away
Along with Sleep.

Now, as I reach over to the empty space in my bed,
Remembering what I once had,
I know that there are some things
That can't be taken with a sip of water at bedtime.

Fuel // Erica Halliday

May I liken love to a burning flame?
Destructive by nature, it yearns to wound.
And yet, its warmth still draws you in, untamed.
Alluring, tempting, but you are attuned.

In the beginning, you float in pure air
But in due time, you will plunge to the ground
And when it does become too much to bear—
Will you be lost, friend, or will you be found?

They say that now, we are the most alive
Tell me, in what world does that thought hold true?
Surely what we do best is just survive
Wholeheartedly, I hope you see this, too.

Come on, quick - burn with me, ignite a fire.
I am the gasoline to your lighter.

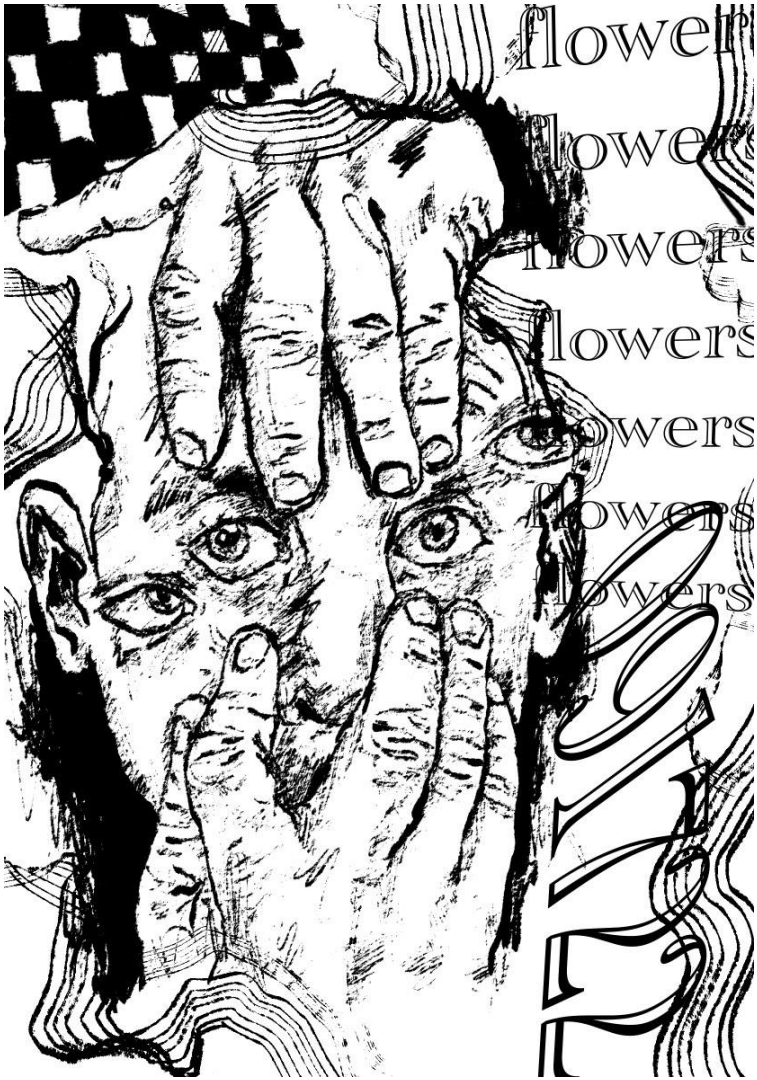
The Split Sunflower Necklace // Anita James

Strung on her neck, a sunflower in bloom,
petals golden, sparkling in the light,
one piece of a whole, half of the full moon,
it's yellow gem reflective of delight.

Silver traded for gold, freedom from cuffs,
bought to replace what was once a chained love,
healing and hope in place of boasted bluffs,
one half of the flame, suspended above.

The other half to her whole, gifted t'me,
a symbol of sisterhood and strong bonds,
mirror of her own, perfect symmetry,
on my collar rests, the words I respond.

Romance kills the blooming face of the sun,
but sisters fight a battle to be won.



Flowers // Yas Jawad

Field of Winter // Megan Marshall

The path guides me,
like a familiar friend.
The crisp air turns my breath to fog,
resembling the clouds in my head.
As my breath dances with the falling snow,
I can begin to let go.
The fluffy snow covers the unbeaten path
and looks like a soft blanket,
waiting for me to crash.

My new boots now have a mud stain,
at least I can prove I tried.
At least this attempt
shows not all my hope has died.
“Go for a walk,” they say,
then the feelings will melt away.
The fog begins to clear from my brain,
as it has lifted from the path;
maybe, maybe I’ll be okay at last.

For now, I have this,
this friendly path.
The only friend,
I know won’t go bad.

Inspired by *Field of Winter* by Lori Gallant
Annual Acadia Art Exhibition, 2022

The Ribcage and the Willow // Kit McGarrigle

The earth beneath me is rough, grass flattened under my bulk that has settled here. What is here. I'm not sure anymore. It's strange, I should be worried. But I'm not. There is no wind in this place, but the air is damp and cold, it has seeped into my bones, settled in central parts of me and burrowed deep. I've been sitting here for a while, at least I think so. I don't have anywhere to be, so, I am here. There is something sitting with the cold in my bones. It's heavy, different from the constant damp and chill of this place with no wind. It twists within me, curling around and shifting ever so slightly. I think I know why I'm here. This curling, twisting thing deep within makes me heavy, hard to move. I am so tired. My head turns, my eyes settle.

There is a ribcage against the tree. The tree is a pretty thing, gnarled and twisted and covered in the green spreading growths of lichen and mold. The bones that are propped against the trunk are also covered in this expansion of green. There is something tugging me. The tree, a willow sings to me. It does not move, there is no wind. It sings within me.

I watch the ribcage. From within the confines of ivory white there are twisted approximations, vines and flowers pulled together and woven into a facsimile. Red catches my eye, a mass of roses. Off tilted slightly to the left. The roses move. They shift, rippling, rhythmic. The thing that sits in my bones ripples in turn. The singing willow is so loud, it tugs with a sharpness, but I do not move.

With the shifting of the roses there is a movement of green in turn. A mass of vines, woven and with small blue blossoms expand and retract. Is it breathing? I am so

heavy, and so tired. The thing in my bones moves, pushing against the cage that I am. The singing changes, it grows softer and louder with the movement of whatever is inside me.

It's sharp, but not painful. I can track its expansion inside of me. Even as my eyes are fixated on the ribcage against the willow tree. A willow tree that sings. A tree that is and isn't. I take a breath in, it's sharp and tugging. I cough. A single flower petal slips from my lips. The singing stops and my desperate inhale is loud.

My eyes focus on the ribcage as my vision swims. Our breaths match in time. I let go.

In the Blink of an Eye // Grace Naugler

Porter explores perspective through her designs,
all twenty-five eyes perfectly unique yet aligned.
Stimulating swirls, radiant lines, or sweet petals
in ordinary things we must search for the special.

Filled with fear, fire, or tears,
eyes evoke emotions words can't come near.
Learn to paint, play a sport, read a book, don't quit.
To reach passions, goals, and dreams, we must commit.

Understanding different opinions is key,
no two people will perfectly agree.
Sacred traditions, contradictory world views, everyone is
free
what will you choose to see?

Life moves swiftly, from childhood to corporate.
A constant cycle, you must work for it.
Innocence and joy turn to decisions and stress in reply,
all in the blink of an eye.

Inspired by *In the Blink of an Eye* by Heather
Alexis Porter, Annual Acadia Art Exhibition, 2022



Study of Madonna in Glory // Sophia Norris

Peppermint Nanny // Anika Potschka

A token of love takes its form,
white, round, fresh.
Clatter, knock, clatter, knock,
comfort is squished into a pill bottle.
A small gift wrapped in a Kleenex,
welcomes the feeling of warmth.
Chalky white fills the gaps between your teeth,
and leaves you wanting more.
A delicate nudge reminds you to share,
control your urge,
be gifted with friendship.
Bottles of peppermints, sweet treats scattered,
here, there, everywhere.

reflect // Max Rowell

narcissus,
do you see yourself
in this, too?
you never watched my face
defrost. you never saw sweat
run down my back. you never saw
anything good

everything that ever happened
happened to you. i heard it all.
if you look too long,
you'll fall in.

i throw a stone
and cast ripples across the surface.
it's beautiful
not to love you
anymore.

Ascending a Mountain // Lukas Saklofske

As the pollution of noise decomposes
into the air, my breaths
draw slower, weaker, more desperate.

Speckles of humid honey drip from my skin
while the wailing wind whips relentlessly.
It had never felt so authentically valuable to struggle.

My conditioned relief kicks in
as I stagger into the Oasis.
Back and forth, we chuckle familiarly.

The temperature drops as my smile lifts.
A blanket of rejoice muffled my eager ears warmly.

The prolonged innocence
made memories all the better.

Curried Carrot Soup: A Love Poem // Jack Simpson

I took down the walls between the dining room,
parlor, and kitchen for moments such as these.
Laptop and papers strewn about our harvest table,
my back to the wall, the tick-tock of the clock,
“tick-tock, tick-tock.”

A Norman Rockwell moment, our boy at the
piano – *Good-bye Yellow Brick Road* wafts
through the house like a smile, our curly pup-pup
sunbathing on the wingback chair,
that she is not supposed to be in.

Humming turns to singing as verse turns to chorus,
my wife’s harmony cleaved from the moment with an
indignant “Mom, stop,” the piano melody carries on.
“Nobody appreciates me,” she shrugs,
and laughs it off.

“I do, can I help?” I ask. “Just write your poem, I’m good,”
the retort. The cutting board clatters, chopped onions, cubed
winter squash, and carrot coins pile high. A side dish of
love, cinnamon sprinkled sliced sweet apple –
a cold stored Golden Delicious.

A quick sauté of olive oil and onion, a tilt of the cutting
board and slide of the knife, a stir of the vegetables and a
twirl of spices. Pressed bulbs of garlic, ginger minced,
turmeric and cayenne in slight measures, coarse salt pinched.
Intangibles – genius or love?

Add stock, bring to a boil, stir occasionally,
be attentive. Reduce heat, pull up the covers,
I mean cover and let simmer. Puree until smooth.
Spicy, sweet, savoury, and with lots of love –
Curried carrot soup.

On First Taking Provencal's Intro to Greek Civ
// Jake Speiran

Much have I wander'd cross the campus green,
 On shining winged sandals have I flown
 Over fields of thought, and much I've known,
Boldly charting lands I'd never been.
And yet that ancient world remained unseen,
 A world I could not enter on my own,
 A dead tongue spoken by men made of stone,
The world of Homer, 'cross the wine-dark sea.
But then did Provencal stand up and roar,
 Three times, enwrapped in Pallas' fierce blaze,
The mist then fled, I saw the Trojan shore,
 A vital life revealed – I turned my gaze
To that glittering shield Achilles bore
 And witnessed visions of a golden age.

Full Circle // Lily Street

Thought I knew what I wanted. When you broke my heart, I was destroyed.
THANK YOU
But little did I know, someone new, someone better, would come along.

- Lily Street

Brand New Face // Zach Strong

In darkness stalks a sludgy pool,
through clicking clocks and brainless drool.
In darkness lay a broken man,
whose pain displays an endless span.

Betrayed again by worthless scum.
A year it's been since heartbeat's drum.
Betrayed again by friend and foe.
Into the den his heart does go.

Its tendrils yearned to find a place
where on it burned its brand-new face.
His tendons yearned for something more
before he turned to selfish gore.

For not but anger fuelled its form—
its conscience vanquished in the storm.
For not but anguish characterised
the loss of sanguine he devised.

So at its touch within the night—
and after much initial fright—
the broken man took in the goo,
a single candle lit anew.

It spread upon the sweating skin,
a lightless dawn of breathing sin.
Its talons dug into his chest—
a gentle hug to rouse from rest.

And at his neck it stabbed in deep,
a call to beckon life to seep.
A bloodline oozing out of reach.
A madman choosing not to preach.

A jagged mask completes the suit,
to always bask in joys minute.
Devoured limbs enjoy the grip,
a tad more slim from every sip.

It felt its body then its bond.
Another godly being spawned.
A rumble stirred within their throat,
the beings lured to friendship's boat.

A warmth appeared inside the two.
They would be feared without ado.
A world of fire in the brain
for those up higher soon to reign.

The goo revelled upon its host,
for each compelled to rid a ghost.
Attached forever, like a reef.
Their sole endeavour: end the grief.



I Write to Remember the Mindless Love

// Julia Sylvester

Snapped lovingly by my mother
in just one quick click,
she captures everything important to her,
click.

Posing in front of row boats, a floating dock nearby,
my father,
with tired eyes,
holds onto my brother and I.
He holds my fingers mindlessly,
with softness, but strength.
Like he did most things;
kindly while demanding respect.
He always loves me in these ways;
little, without thinking,
but I don't feel their magnitude
until they're
taken away.

We stand before him, strong and tall,
proud, honoured, and safe.
We know he'll catch us if we fall,
no reason to feel unsafe.
Our childish toothy smiles,
a reflection of our dad.
Silly, goofy, over-the-top,
he'd do anything to make us laugh.
The boat has been packed since morning,
life jackets, first aid, a whistle just in case.
Always organized, prepared,
protective,
ready for anything we may face.
He wears his favourite fishing shirt,
green and worn out.
Faded letters with a barely-there picture,
it was practical, reliable no doubt.
That shirt had been through hell,
fish guts, worm dirt, and blood.
But a fighter, it only gained strength
when it got dragged through the mud.
'Oak Bay Resort 2004',
signed on the back by my mother.
Her way of writing so that we can
remember.
Yellow sun chairs with chipped paint,
seaweed infested waters.
Earwigs around every corner;
Oak Bay should have earned our hate.
But to my dad,
chipped paint adds character,
and seaweed is a natural exfoliant.
"Earwigs need love too" he'd say,
when I cried out to exterminate.
Gloomy grey skies line the photo,
to some it may seem dull,
but we learned grey skies meant great fish,

dad had blue skies in his soul.
He was the finder of silver linings,
always on the bright side;
our bridge over troubled water,
and he could turn the bridge into a slide.
Like my mother, I also write
so that I can remember.
Or maybe so I don't forget,
my best friend,
my fan,
my mentor.
I write to remember the touch of his hand,
coarse, callused, hard-working,
but with a softness so soft
it could only come from within.
I write to remember the smell of his shirt;
putrid, sour, stale.
But now I long for one more sniff,
to remind me he was real.
I write about this photo
in the year 2004,
so I remember my family not as three,
but as a unit of four.
In death, love persists;
love never dies.
Like his green shirt and photos,
it withstands the test of time.
I write so I remember
I write so I don't forget,
the unconditional love I once had,
and will probably never again get.
I write so I remember,
his eyes, his smile, his skin.
I write so I never forget
how lucky I am
that I got to
love him.

Shower // Laura Taggart

The tiles are tooth white. Crest white strip grimaces of a dozen disapproving PTA moms. Between them chiselled a green plaque. At my feet the pearlescent squares succumb inwards to the cavernous drain. I am assaulted by an odour of body spray caked onto porcelain. The water beats impatiently on my back. Lukewarm liquid fingers feel down my shoulders, tracing down my spine, hips, waist, thighs. Caressing and coveting my every ephemeral curve and quality. It ricocheted off of me and disturbed the curtain, feeble like a bride's veil. The light above me is prison bright. Harder to look at than a hungover sunrise. Demanding, exposing like an interrogation, stripping me to a new layer of nakedness. The humming snicker of the LED, the tsk tsk tsk of the drips on the tile.

My features carefully chosen by generations of love, now said dirty, accountable, bidding to be hurt, surveyed. I crank the nozzle to the end of the red line and the water scalds down my stern. It is at its zenith but not hot enough. I am cooked to dizziness but still not satisfied. I need to feel my body and let it prove to me that it remains mine. Let it transmute my wanton husk into arcane purity. along my bumpy knees and dalmatian speckle bruises. The languid water passes over me and slides past my flesh unsuccessful. Maybe it isn't the heat but the pressure. If only it hit me a little harder, a little sharper. I could be permeated. the water could boil through my skin and flush me clean. Purge me of the chemicals, their eyes, his hands. Alas it trickles on tantalisingly gentle. Droplets fall from my moisture darkened hair onto my feet. My big toe is plum purple and I don't remember stubbing it. They are calloused, crooked, wrong. Not quick enough. The droplet lingers, before trickling down the eggshell tiles to join the confluence of grime. All the strangers' hair, the blood and the sweat and the urine that must go down that drain. In the quiet harshness of the water box I try to scratch myself clean. But it is clean like a basement clinic.

To the One Who Saved Me // Gwen Trombley-Prozenko

You are the reason I breathe.
You are the reason I breathe.
You are the reason I breathe.

I see you a moment before.
You cross my mind, despairing.
And I know I could never leave you,
Never deprive you of this devotion.

I am crushed under the unending weight
of today, of tomorrow, of history.
You cling to me, and I heal,
just a little. Just enough
to stay.

And I want to return to that place, to our honeymoon sweet,
An impenetrable bubble that the outside world couldn't
touch.

To hold you in my arms and you hold me,
and we can be alone.
all alone.
together.

We vowed to part not, until death.
I'm sorry that I wish to cut it short.
You see me, you tell me that I am yours,
and you are mine, and we are forever.
To just hold on a moment longer,
a day, a week, a year,
because we made a promise.

You are the reason I breathe.
You are the reason I breathe.
You are the reason I breathe.

Pepper's Dare // Gwen V. Williams

Up and down, vibrating,
in black, electrified, sharp smudging,
Pepper is down one life.

Four charcoal paws cling tight,
tense and crisscrossing, and
Pepper regrets her dare.

From roof to solid black line,
roped between dark rickety poles,
Pepper dared herself to cross.

Zig-zagging tail down between her legs,
fur and pointed ears shocked into quills,
Pepper is pleased she'll land on her feet.

Inspired by *No. 5 Nine Lives of Pepper Boucher* by
Wayne Boucher, Beveridge Arts Centre, Acadia

Reasons Why You Haven't Written Your Poem Yet // Ty Wright

1. The dog you passed by on Main St. didn't let you pet it, so it's obviously not going to be a very good day for writing.
2. It is 10:15 and you were supposed to start writing at 10:00, it's better now to wait until 11:00 (*ad infinitum*).
3. You decided to drop out (again) and are spending all your time looking up hostels in Thailand.
4. You fell back into that dreaded period of flatness, where all inspiration feels distant and all colour gray.
5. The caricature of Marcel Proust on your wall has been silently criticizing you all day and you will never be able to write half as well anyway.
6. You have taken up a monastic oath and renounced all things of this world (including poetry).
7. You spent too much time watching the night sky and your thoughts feel really small.
8. The practicing Wiccan on the corner of Elm has cast yet another enervating spell over the town and you are much too tired to do anything.
9. Your wireless headphones are dead, so you can't rip off Bob Dylan anymore (like he did with everyone else).
10. Your creative faculties have been severely impaired by a steady diet of caffeine and ramen noodles.
11. All your top material was used up in the first three weeks and you feel like you have been faking it ever since.
12. You have been trying your best—there's just really not enough time in the day... but you'll get there.

estuary

is published at the Acadia Printshop by the Department of English and Theatre. Digital versions can be found at <https://english.acadiau.ca/get-involved/estuary-arts-magazine.html>

estuary // 2023