

VOICE

∞ VOLUME 28
∞ SPRING 2021
∞ DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH & THEATRE
∞ ACADIA UNIVERSITY

estuary turns twenty

Twenty years have passed since founding editor Christine McNair put together the very first issue of *estuary*, and now she herself is an award winning poet. Over the years so many fine young writers and artists have found a home in the productive pages of Acadia's creative arts magazine. Because of the challenges posed by the pandemic, students in the 2020 Advanced Poetry Class stepped in as an editorial collective to shape the special 20th anniversary issue in which over forty past and present Acadia students are represented.

Along with the creative writing and art of current Acadia students, this special anniversary edition includes an interview with founding editor Christine McNair, a list of all former editors including Rebecca Dobson, who put together a special issue on the 10th anniversary of *estuary*, and creative highlights from the last decade.

Anniversary Issue Cover Photo:
Joshua's "Hermit Crabs" by Alex Pardy



estuary

ACADIA'S CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

2020

ESTUARY TURNS TWENTY

THEATRE REVIEWS
Trashcan Crusades
Uncle Vanya
MiniFest

ATLANTIC UNDERGRADUATE
ENGLISH CONFERENCE

ENGLISH ASSOCIATION EVENTS
Holiday Gathering

AUTHORS @ ACADIA
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Shalan Joudry

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THEATRE REVIEW

A TRASHCAN HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES

By Rhea Davis

This fall, Acadia made it possible for our Theatre Company to perform live, in front of an audience made up entirely of Acadia students and faculty members, despite the unprecedented circumstances. Mirroring the chaos that has been 2020, the talented playwright and director, Michael Devine, decided to create a

The playwright describes this work as “a boys’ adventure tale” titled, “Three Boys.”

This episode follows two warriors and a hermit on their crusading adventures. The boys face encounters with authoritative figures, invasions, hunger and more. Consequently, this piece was exciting and rambunctious; however, the pace was kept beautifully by three exemplary and comical narrators. One addition worth mentioning is the unique use of a projection screen to explain the continuous travel, or to intermittently depict God speaking to the actors.



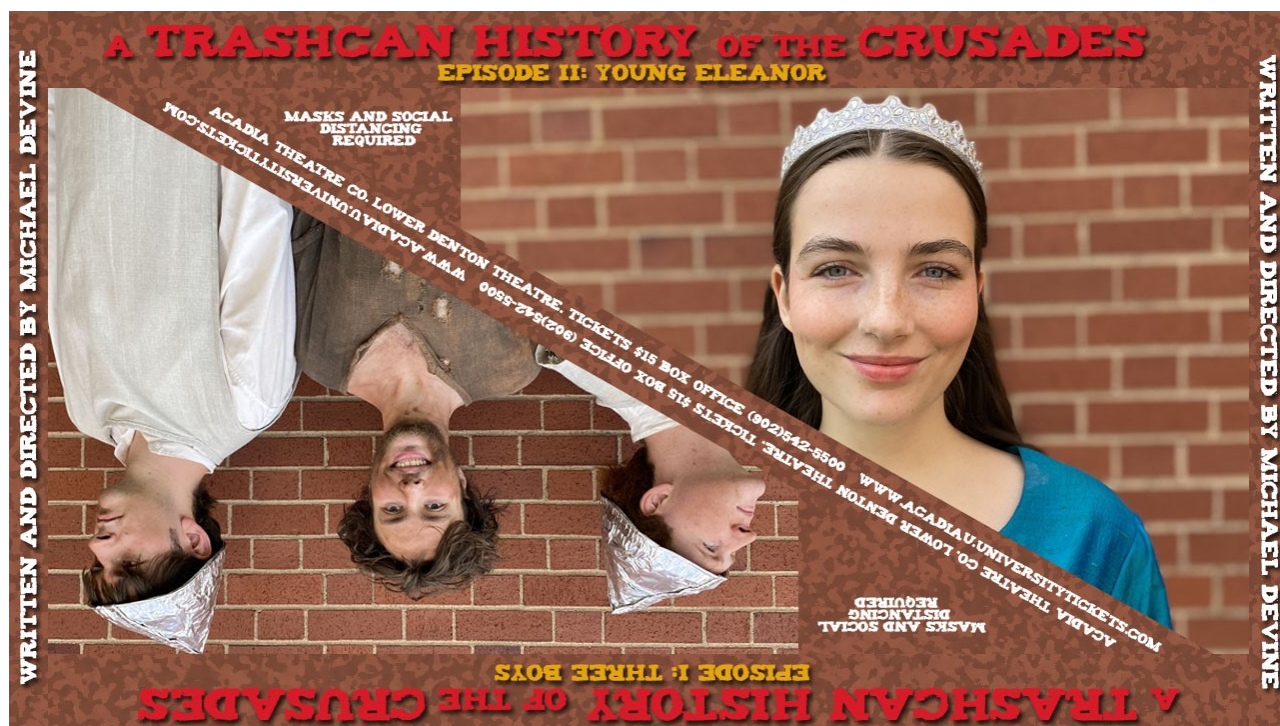
piece surrounding the narrative of The Crusades titled, *A Trashcan History of the Crusades*. Following weeks of quarantine research and writing, Devine generated a piece blending history with comedy, while incorporating certain modern anecdotes. On each of the opening nights—following strict social distancing guidelines—Acadia members gathered in lower Denton theatre to experience the production.

On Wednesday, November 25th, 2020, the Acadia Theatre Company completed their first performance of the “first episode” of the show.

*The “Three Boys” (left to right)
Aidan Karcha, Max Gustafson
and Myles Bradley.*



*Alynn Sinnema as
“Young Eleanor”*



The Second episode premiered the following night, November 26th. This piece, titled “Young Eleanor,” surrounds an adolescent yet wise noble in her battles with love, family and status in a turbulent time.

I thoroughly enjoyed the musical elements, and that, although historically serious, each episode evoked consistent laughter from the crowd. The actors made excellent use of the entire stage; I admire the use of limited props as well as the swift set and costume changes which were impressive with such a small cast. Both performances were interesting, thoughtfully produced, and displayed the talent of our many wonderful performers and crew members at Acadia University.



UNCLE VANYA

By Rhea Davis

On May 8th at 7:30pm, I attended virtually, via Eventbrite, the Acadia Theatre Company’s production of Anton Chekhov’s *Uncle Vanya*,

adapted and directed by Anna Migliarisi. This 100-minute event was exceptional to view; the company produced an immaculate performance with a cast of under ten members.

The play was divided into four acts, set simply with a background representing an old Russian estate; the costumes



Joe Brown and Lauren Amirault

were minimalistic, which helped to intensify the drama. Acadia's theatre company was successful in portraying the thoughtful and deeply emotional story of a Russian family, and their close friends, living in the country.

Although this play was originally written many years ago, the themes of financial success, love, the purpose of life, climate change, beauty standards and health are all important to recognize today. The company delivered these messages seamlessly, while the music elevated the desperate and exciting tones throughout the show. Evidently, the scenes encountering the discussion of climate change, and even an epidemic reflect our current situation in the modern world.

I thoroughly enjoyed this presentation and look forward to seeing what the Acadia Theatre Company has prepared for next year.



THE ATC & THEATRE IN FILM INITIATIVE PRESENT:


UNCLE VANYA

BY ANTON CHEKHOV

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY
ANNA MIGLIARISI

DIRECTOR
OF PHOTOGRAPHY
ROBB LEPPER

PRODUCTION
DESIGNER
KATHERINE RYAN

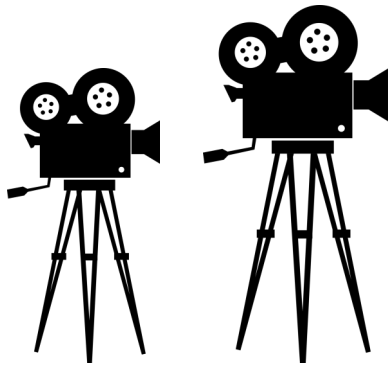


AVAILABLE FOR DIGITAL VIEWING
MAY 6TH AND 7TH 2PM AST
MAY 8TH AND 9TH 7:30PM AST

TICKETS: [THEATRE.ACADIAU.CA/PRODUCTIONS.HTML](https://theatre.acadiau.ca/productions.html)

Man is endowed with creativity in order to multiply that which has been given him; he has not created, but destroyed. There are fewer and fewer forests, rivers are drying up, wildlife has become extinct, the climate is ruined, and the earth is becoming ever poorer and uglier.

~Anton Chekov *Uncle Vanya* 1897



VIRTUAL MINIFEST

less of a fest, more of a parody

By Roudraksh Jankee

This year was my first time experiencing MiniFest and Acadia's first time experiencing and experimenting with a virtual format for MiniFest. MiniFest is one of the biggest events in the English and Theatre department at Acadia. The actors, the professors, and the people behind the scenes work assiduously to put up a brilliant show. Since this was my first time attending MiniFest, I had no previous experience to compare it with.

Because Acadia's theatre company was working with putting up a virtual visual spectacle, I commend them for their unique concept of one plot presented in three plays with varied interpretation.

The festival opened up with an ingenious concept of three student-actors having an online chat about what MiniFest is about this year. The three student-actors helped glue the three different plays together with their playful commentary.

The first play in-line was *King Larry*. The show was off to an interesting but uneven start. While maintaining the

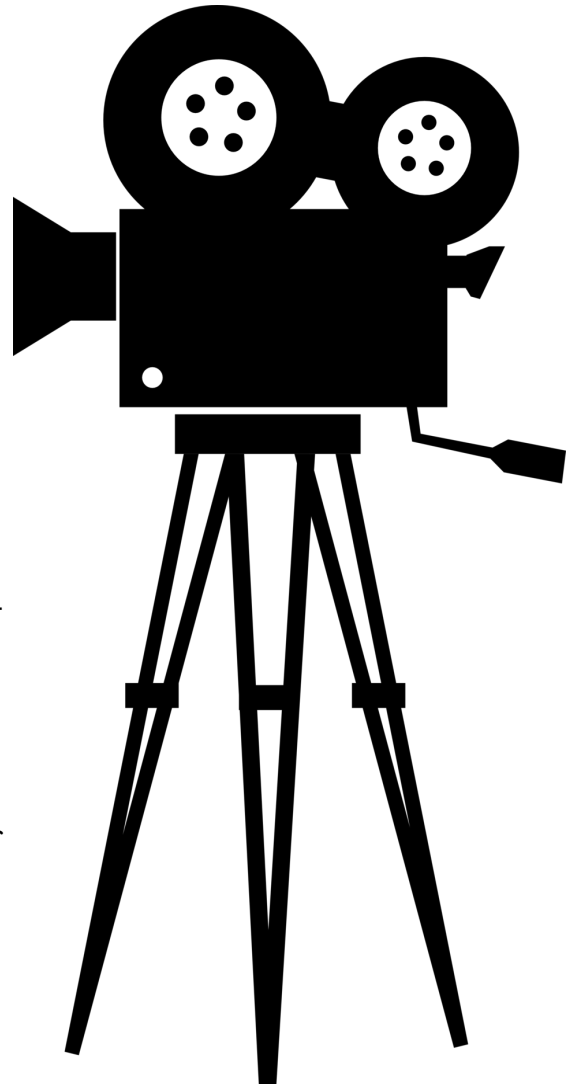
time appropriate technicality of presenting a black and white mute film with closed captions is understandable, I contend that authenticity could have been compromised for the sake of entertainment. Especially since the plot is central to the three interwoven plays, it was tedious to try and follow the narrative of the play with closed captions. The experiment sometimes worked, but sometimes failed to keep me engaged.

The second play titled *Off-Course* opened with 2019's recipient of the best female actor (for MiniFest) Claire Chateauf. Justifying the role of the high-pitched and snobby leading character, I laud the second play for being much more entertaining and for retaining my attention. The loudness and chaos of the characters in *Off-Course* certainly helped offset the drab tone of *King Larry*.

The third and closing play of MiniFest was *The Jelly Fish Swimming Club*. The presentation of the play was more contemporary. The pathos imbued in the monologue of the leading character was effective in addressing relevant contemporary themes of loneliness, isolation and solitudes, especially

in relation to COVID-19.

The three plays, ranging from monotonous, to entertaining to reflective, respectively, were an honest attempt on the part of the Theatre company to not let their annual and anticipated festival crumble down because of the pandemic. While the technical aspects of the plays—the dodgy camera work, the rough edits, the noisy audio—at times adversely impacted the experience of the show, the earnestness of everyone involved is what made the 2021's MiniFest experience pleasurable.



ANNUAL ATLANTIC UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH CONFERENCE 2021

By Rhea Davis

The AAUEC, or the Annual Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference, is an event in which students from post-secondary institutions around Atlantic Canada are selected to present their works of literature, either research-based or creative, to fellow students, faculty members, and coordinators. This year, I was lucky to attend the conference, which was held virtually by Grenfell Memorial Campus on March 5th and 6th.

Student works were separated into categories, reflecting the content of each essay or creative work.

Students were permitted to attend any of all sessions; personally, I attended my section, “Commodities, Desire, and the Spirit” on the Friday evening, as well as the creative section held Saturday morning. The Acadia presenters and faculty members met virtually various times prior to the event to practice and receive

helpful feedback to prepare adequately. Rylie Moscato presented a paper “Writing Women into History: Margaret Atwood’s and Dionne Brand’s Interrogation and Relocation of Power” and Emma Cole presented a short story entitled “Matter of the Heart.”



Keynote Speaker Maria Reva

During the event, we were lucky enough to attend

presentations by guest speakers, such as the inspirational keynote speaker Maria Reva, and a creative writing workshop was also featured that students could attend at their leisure.

Following the event, Department faculty member

Dr. Kait Pinder delivered meals from the Church Brewery, which Acadia’s student presenters enjoyed virtually over conversation. I am grateful to have enjoyed this wonderful experience with my talented peers and professors.



**GRENFELL
CAMPUS**

**MEMORIAL
UNIVERSITY**



Our AAUEC presenters Emma Cole, Rylie Moscato, and Rhea Davis enjoying the virtual banquet hosted by Dr. Kait Pinder



ENGLISH MAJORS' HOLIDAY GATHERING

By Rhea Davis

In late December, following the fall examination period, the English Society and

faculty members of the department organized a holiday gathering. Although this event would typically be held face-to-face, with refreshments and activities, this gathering was unusual as it followed COVID-19 protocols. This event was held via Teams; various English students and professors of the department gathered online to chat about life, literature, and the events of the semester.

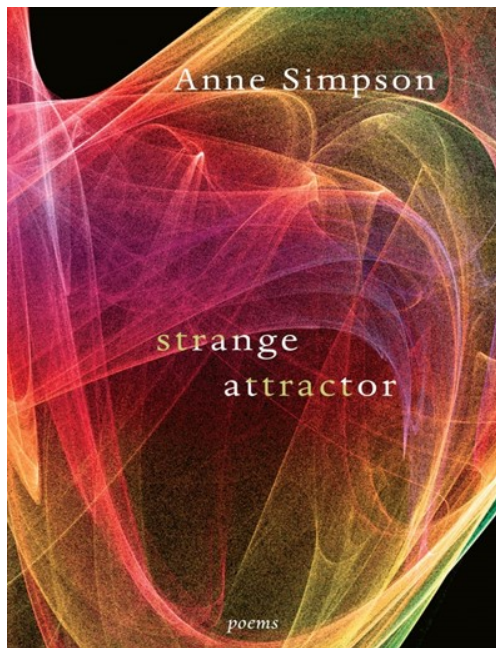
We were encouraged to wear our ugliest festive sweater and join in on the conversation. Even though the situation was unprecedented, those involved made the best of this brief gathering, and celebrated each other's accomplishments. The small group made the meeting intimate and personal, one of the many benefits of attending Acadia University.



∞ AUTHORS @ ACADIA ∞

ANNE SIMPSON
By Rhea Davis

On October 28 at 7:30pm, students and faculty gathered in Huggins 10 to enjoy the first installment of the 2020-21 Authors at Acadia event. In Covid fashion, this event was held on campus for the Acadia community, and was extended through zoom to others who could not be physically present. The night began with an introduction from Dr. Wanda Campbell, during which the audience learned of Anne Simpson's numerous award-winning collections of poetry, her novels, and her books of essays. It was intriguing and inspiring to learn of the author's diverse works, spanning further than poetry on its own. Initially, Simpson read from her most recent collection of poetry titled *Strange Attractor*, then moved backwards, incorporating earlier pieces, finishing her presentation with an essay on poetry.



To begin, I admire Simpson's employment of personal experience in her poetry; I was especially moved by her poem about a car accident. She uses descriptive imagery as well as exceptional and almost

graceful diction to depict a horrifying narrative. However, it was evident that the audience was equally as impressed by Simpson's varying inspiration, other than personal experience. She admitted that although much of her work springs from personal events, she also draws inspiration from her interest in art and photography.

She spoke of her varying motivation which includes ideas surrounding both the individual and universal. Her style is interdisciplinary; she is influenced by history, writing frequently about existing paintings and real-life photographs, making way for Ekphrasis pieces. Simpson explained that she often finds herself writing what she sees; many of her pieces are very visual responses, emphasizing the connection between real life and art. The author underlined that she even takes inspiration from philosophical ideals, biology, and anatomy. As for poetic devices and form, it was obvious that Simpson experiments with

various techniques. She read pieces of free verse, while also including a collection of corona poems which follow strict traditional form. Something I found interesting was her decision to use simple titles, often one-word titles including "Test" and "Photograph." Sometimes, I believe that a specified title relating

to the context and theme of the poem aids with the overall comprehension. Furthermore, the poems read were written in present tense, which is effective in drawing the reader into the story, allowing them to become part of the experience. Anne has her own very distinct poetic voice, which became increasingly evident through her oral presentation.

To conclude the reading, Simpson answered questions, consequently providing excellent advice to the audience. I learned that it is not always beneficial to constantly use personal experience in poetic pieces. She explained that gathering impressions of others and observing the experiences of others is helpful; as a poet—"you are an antenna for the world." Simpson highlighted the importance of editing and trying different things in the process—she suggested cutting the beginning and the end of a poem, to dive directly into the shock factor, the meat of the poem. She concluded: when there's a sense of wholeness, or unity, the poem is done. This was an amazing experience, especially considering the circumstance. The Acadia community is so very lucky and grateful for this learning opportunity and looks forward to future events!



SHALAN JOUDRY
By Roudraksh Jankee

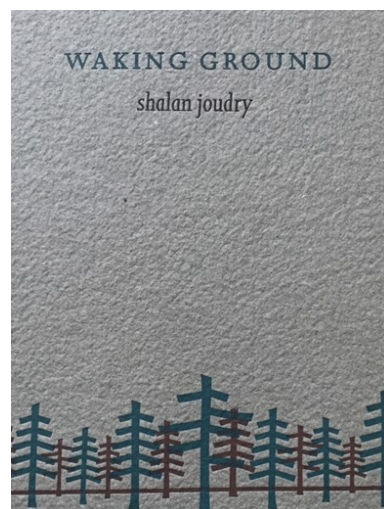
The first Authors at Acadia of 2021 saw poet Shalan Joudry narrate and expand on poems from her latest publication *Waking Ground* (Gaspereau Press). Joudry is a Mi'kmaw poet, playwright, oral storyteller, and ecologist. Using her theatrical background, Shalan brings Mi'kmaw stories to a new generation of listeners, as well as recounting personally crafted narratives that follow Mi'kmaw storytelling custom.

I really liked the way she started off her presentation with an activity of listening to your heartbeat. She affirms that that is her way of remaining grounded and staying in touch with her roots. She then proceeded to an acknowledgement of plants and animals and expressed her gratitude to them for their sacrifice. While I strongly believe that Indigenous writing and writing by marginalized peoples should be read outside of a Western literary discourse, Joudry's introduction for me represented the meaning of postmodernism. Similar to how postmodernism is a movement that attempts to make sense of the present by remaining grounded or in touch with the past (a past probably untamed and untouched of a dominant Western worldview or colonisation), her introduction, the process of leading oneself within, resonated with the ideology of postmodernism.

Her writing encapsulates her experience as an Indigenous person. As she states, the collection of

her poems stemmed from an upwelling of conversation about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and about what treaties have meant for Mi'kmaw people.

Joudry spoke about how the collection of her poems have been organised with the intent to depict a story and she successfully offered us a glimpse into the narrative that binds her collection together. She also states that her writing is grounded in language and culture. What stood out to me was when she mentioned that she fabricated the narrative of the poems based on three different rivers and that she gave them their mi'kma'ki names back. In the narration of her poems, I could see several postcolonial moments. The most stark one is when she re-names the rivers. I see that as a re-appropriation of colonised sites.



The other equally important post-colonial feature in her writing is the inclusion of the mi'kma'ki language in her poems. Through code-switching she claims the colonial language of English and makes it her own.

With the professional background of an ecologist and as an Indigenous person, Joudry states that she perceives parallels in the treatment of nature and Indigenous peoples. She states that the rapid endangering of species and the continuous habitat loss mirrors the cultural and language degradation that the Indigenous community faces. These parallels are evident in her poems such as "Monarchs" and "Raising Forests".

In the question-and-answer section, Joudry was asked about the ways in which she resorts to poetry as her medicine. She replied stating that poetry and writing allow her to engage in a conversation with her thoughts and her inner and outer conflicts. This vulnerability is weaved throughout the narrative in her poems. It was both an honour and a pleasure to attend her talk.

INTERVIEW WITH
CHRISTINE MCNAIR
(EXCERPT)

What did you find to be the most challenging part of being the Editor for *Estuary*? How did you overcome these challenges? How has what you have learned benefitted your own work and editing process?

The hardest part was probably setting up the publication. I didn't work alone, but rather with a group of fellow students with ties to other departments. They helped us reach past the English department for submissions and creative work. We had great support from the English department (Dr. Campbell in particular) as we merged/took over a previous publication that had gone

dormant (*Perpetuum*) with a glance back at the former *Alpha Arts Magazine* run through the ASU, which had a broader base than just the English department. I loved learning a little about design in those initial years and it helped



shape my interest in book design. *Estuary* convinced me that I could (occasionally) lead which wasn't something I had considered before. I preferred to slip into the background.

Christine McNair has published two books of poetry with *Book*hug*, *Conflict* (2012) and *Charm* (2017). Her chapbook *pleasantries and other misdemeanours* (2013) was shortlisted for the bpNichol chapbook award. *Charm* won the Archibald Lampman Award for Poetry in 2018. She was previously the co-publisher for *Chaudiere Books* and works as a book doctor in Ottawa.



COMMENT FROM
REBECCA DOBSON

Ten years ago, I compiled an anniversary edition of *estuary* that contained works from each past issue—a process I enjoyed very much as one could see an evolution of student culture over time. Fast forward ten years, and our modes of communicating such as social media sometimes seem to inhibit us from engaging with one another in meaningful ways. But yet, art persists—and in new and exciting forms.

Once again, Acadia students are coming together to select pieces from another decade of issues. I am delighted that this tradition continues; I hope that one day Acadia will see a one hundredth anniversary edition of this arts magazine. I look back fondly on my time at Acadia and my time as editor. May *estuary* endure as a natural habitat ebbing and flowing with student expression for years to come.

~Rebecca Dobson

On the tenth anniversary of *estuary*, editor Rebecca Dobson put together a retrospective edition containing works from the first decade of issues; the 2020 anniversary issue continues this tradition by selecting texts and artwork from each of the last ten years. Past issues of *estuary* can be viewed here:

<https://english.acadiau.ca/get-involved/estuary-arts-magazine.html>

estuary

editors

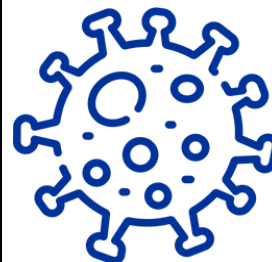
2000 Christine McNair
2001 Steven Fortune
2002 Tegan Zimmerman
2003/2004 Chris Chisholm
2005/2006 Jennifer Knoch
2007 Jennifer Dibble
 & Nadia Bryden
2008 Kaitlyn MacPhee
2009/2010/2011
 Rebecca Dobson
2012 Jill Glasgow
2013/2014 Ceileigh Mangalam
2015/2016 Andrea MacMurtry
2017 Georgia Woolaver
2018 Micah Carruthers
2019 Madison Tully
2020 Abby Secord
 & the Fall 2020 Editorial Collective



...suppose
*Devouring pestilence hangs in our air
And thou art flying to a fresher clime:
Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou comest:
Suppose the singing birds musicians,
The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence strew'd,
The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more
Than a delightful measure or a dance;
For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
The man that mocks at it and sets it light.*
~William Shakespeare, *Richard II*,
(I. iii. 285-294)

The year 2020 was unlike any in living memory with a global pandemic raging around the world and across Nova Scotia, but people everywhere are responding to fear with fortitude, to ignorance with imagination, and to the Corona Virus with creativity. In these unusual times, Acadia's advanced poetry class took up the challenge of creating corona corona. A sonnet corona is a sequence, or crown, of sonnets concerned with a single theme where each sonnet is linked to the one before it by repeating the final line as its first line until the crown is complete. This form is a challenge for a solo poet, but even more so when created in collaboration and yet, like so many during this difficult year, these Acadia students have lightened the "gnarling sorrow" of the world through generosity of spirit.

Wanda Campbell
// Faculty Advisor
to estuary



Viral Threat

by Taryn Muldoon

[The first sonnet in a corona corona]

1.

No chance to say goodbye, a choking strike;
the virus's name means "little halo"
for the way it becomes sudden angel
under microscope. Glowing maybe. Like
emperors, crowned and emptied, lost. Ghostlike.
Haunting plasma with runny grip, painful
bloom festering through the body. Glacial
death, or perhaps survival. A hitchhike
through cytoplasm, sweating into the lung
of a world gasping for the chance to grow
canals lush as rainforests. A strange trade
for beauty. Humans trapped by their cells. One
remembers the origin – snake, bat. Show
us chance, world made verdant. We are afraid.



PATRICIA RIGG BECOMES PROFESSOR EMERITA

At Convocation 2021, Dr. Patricia Rigg was awarded the title of Emeritus in honour of her distinguished academic career and exemplary service to Acadia. Dr. Rigg is retiring on December 31, 2021, after twenty-one years of full-time service to Acadia. Here she has taught an astounding twenty-one different undergraduate courses, thirteen different graduate courses, and three different online courses through Open Acadia. She has also been much in demand as an undergraduate and graduate thesis supervisor and examiner both internally and externally.

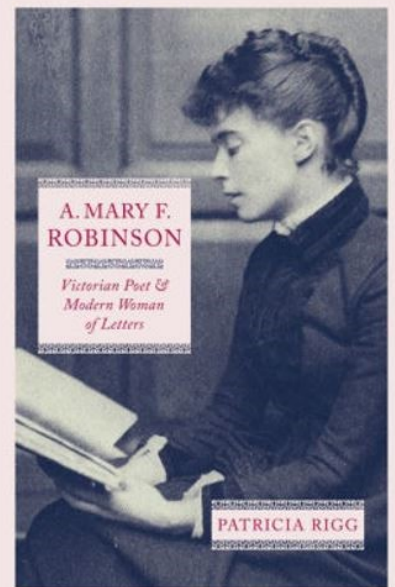
One particularly impressive example of the way that her pedagogy and research inform and enhance one another is the

trip to England she took in April 2019. As a SSHRC grant recipient, Dr. Rigg took two students from the Department, MA student Athena Grantwell and Honours student Emily McClean, to do research at the British Library in London, an experience that proved transformative for both students. For more about this trip see *Voice* 4, Vol. 26, Spring 2019.

Recognized nationally and internationally for her scholarship, she has published two critically acclaimed books *Robert Browning's Romantic Irony in "The Ring and the Book"* (1999), and *Julia Augusta Webster: Victorian Aestheticism and the Woman Writer* (2009) described by reviewers as "scrupulously researched" and "ground-breaking." She has a third book forthcoming this fall: *A. Mary F. Robinson: Victorian Poet and Modern Woman of Letters* (2021) which reviewers have described as "a major contribution to research [that will] make a huge impact on the field," and "such an important resource to scholars of Victorian poetry. It is hard to overstate how much previously unavailable information about Robinson this work collates." Work is also well underway for her fourth book, the SSHRC funded project: *The Anglo-French Literary Community of the Fin-de-Siècle: Sexual Diversity, Neurasthenia, and the "Genius" of Italian Poetic forms*

in a Transitional Society, and she plans to continue her overseas research as soon as pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Her service to the University and academic community has been nothing short of dazzling, as evidenced by her recent Faculty of Arts Award for Excellence in Service. Her most generous and enduring contribution to the Department was serving as Chair from 2006 to 2012. She has served on countless committees, as a Senator and University Marshall, shepherding Acadia's graduates across the stage on their big day. She richly deserves this distinction and we wish her well in her final semester and the new adventures that await.



VOICE

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