



# estuary

**Acadia's Creative Arts Magazine**



# estuary

Winter 2017

## estuary creative arts magazine

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*estuary* is published with the help of Acadia University and the Acadia Students Union. We publish one issue per year, which is also available in an online archive. The publication is a selection of the best works submitted by students throughout the academic year.

Have a submission?  
*estuary* accepts submissions of creative works, including poetry, prose, and visual arts. Submissions can be emailed to [estuary@acadiau.ca](mailto:estuary@acadiau.ca)

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# **POETRY**



The

space

the

space

between  
the leaves  
and  
buildings  
between  
the soles  
of your feet

on the pavement

the hours of missed sleep  
between your eyelids

I'm getting rid  
of the dust on my bookshelf  
so I can feel the trees  
between my fingertips  
and the

space

the

the words leave behind  
that are never  
quite--

space

the light moves through the trees  
as the space between  
sun and stars decreases  
and it fractures in the grass blades  
and the whites of your eyes

there's distance  
in everything

and the way the wind  
moves through that space  
is

spectacular.

EMILY CANN

## Irreconcilable Circumstances

Out of focus save for  
a lock of chestnut hair,  
my father wholly in shadow  
and his hands around my chest.  
My mother watching but even then  
consumed by her own darkness.

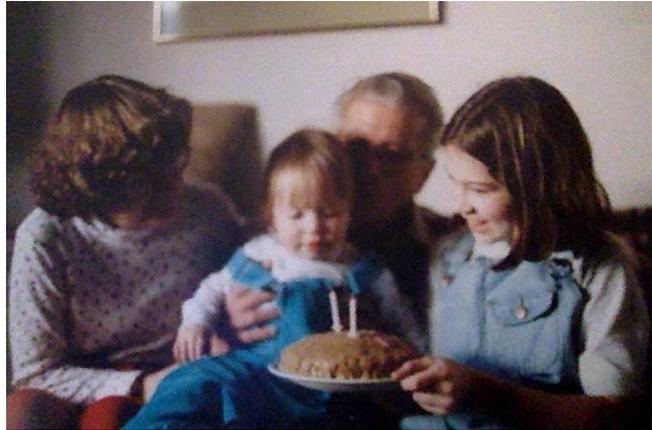
It's my second birthday, and my  
father  
is just home from sea, still in  
uniform, his gold bars  
on his shoulders.

Not one face clear,  
but you can tell  
they tried;

five years into a failing marriage that  
in five more  
would fall through.

But I remember that couch.  
I know that painting, only  
the bottom edge  
visible.

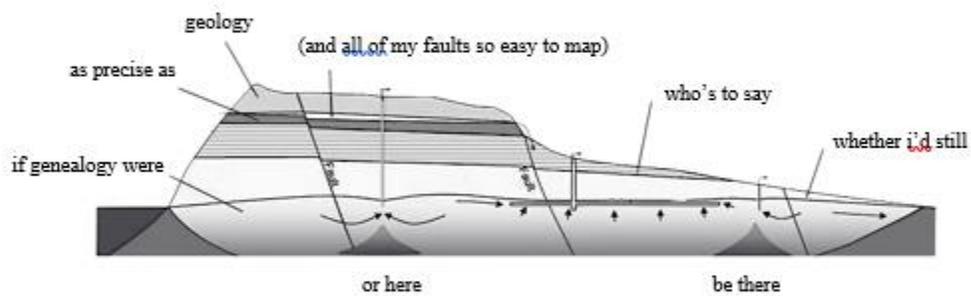
It's a homemade cake  
with unlit candles  
but you can tell  
they tried.



21 April 1995

AMY PARKES

## Cross Examination



AMY PARKES

## Boot Work

Once a sandy colour;  
now a deep weather-stained brown.  
Wrinkled where the foot bends,  
on and on,  
around the shop during a day of rain;  
tinkering with equipment.

Early mornings, late nights;  
treads against skid-steer pedals.  
Straw wedged between cow dung and  
the  
sole of the boot.

Committed, worn insoles.  
Grain, straw, hay stuck to them;  
evidence of where they've been  
before  
and will be tomorrow.

Tongues snug against shins,  
embraced tight by black ties.  
New laces, same old boots.  
Laces tied. Untied. Repeat.  
Laces broken from constant use.

Rubber outsoles tattered; likely from  
kicking up dirt,  
or a tractor tire, absent mindedly  
while broke down in the wrong field  
at the wrong time.

Soon it will be winter;  
time for the boots to retire

to their dusty basement spot,  
only to return when the ground  
thaws  
and the winter rubbers take their  
place.

Rips from the wear of long days;  
the tear of long nights.  
Gashes, holes from tools fallen;  
words said.

Aglets, dirty from countless fields  
bedded with  
dust, mud, dirt, clay, sand.  
Scuffed from hooves running  
frantic across them. Steel toed;  
thank-god.

Work through the extremes;  
rain and shine; through the  
illness, frustration, the success.  
Through holidays, funerals, and  
storms.  
These boots walk  
through the door, every morning,  
heavy and worn; drained from  
a good (or bad) day's work.

When tucked in the corner of the  
warm and sunny yellow porch, they  
are at  
ease, at rest, after long work hours.  
Snuggled tight next to one another;  
enjoying the night as if there is not  
another day of work ahead.

These are the boots of a farmer.

ATHENA GRANTWELL

1

Here are the inventions  
that austerity has left us  
the last delights  
that can survive  
Here are the laws  
of beauty we obey  
now that we must be true  
This is the vanity  
that will be kind to us  
by the merit  
of its devotion  
Thus when we come  
to play the fool  
they will trust in our spirit

\*\*\*\*\*

2

In the embarrassment  
that spoils my solemnity,  
I ask  
that you do not forgive me;  
For I have used my privilege  
to anticipate your finer hatreds  
so that you might  
surrender to my labour  
and speak no more

\*\*\*\*\*

JAMES HAWKINS

## On the Island

Gravel roads and the puddles that  
flood them.  
Rain and storms rage, yet everything  
still stands.  
Window's light from small houses in  
tandem,  
As dusk hovers over these little lands.

The air thick with humidity and heat,  
Crowded sidewalks, and a slow  
walking guy.  
Restaurants and shops all line the  
main street.  
The light filters through the overcast  
sky.

Hand written signs are plastered  
everywhere,  
Near the products, noting specials  
and sales,  
The cashier with the hastily tied hair.  
Ice cream on the roofed porch,  
showers and hail.

An island getaway, beaches and  
shores.  
Accept the fact that when it rains, it  
pours.

LESLIE MACKINNON

## The Lecturer

You collected our eyelashes in jars  
But greedily, kept the wishes for  
yourself  
Starving like birds, mouths opened  
wide were ours  
You shoved your doctrine down, first  
book then shelf

Until we had swallowed a library  
Your food leaves sharp paper cuts  
down my throat  
I should hate you but on the contrary  
I wait for more in this rocking boat.

Our mouths stuffed with scrolls, ink  
bleeding down chins  
Our hands tied tight with rubber  
bands that bite  
We are bound and gagged, to prevent  
any more sins  
Blinders on, already gave up the fight

You are our lighthouse, so steadfast  
and true  
Blinding us, so all we can see is you.

MICHA CARRUTHERS

## Egg

A craftsman's hands  
thick and chapped but nimble  
gingerly built it, stone by stone  
this vessel for transformation.

And once he had completed  
his half of the ancient pact  
he placed his work on the enchanted  
tongue of the sea

and waited.

And the sea complied, nodding  
its head, lapping into the cracks  
of the stones, taking in the offering,  
fulfilling the promise embedded in  
the stone.

And the transformation came  
hatching from the rock, bursting  
into the blue as the sculpture  
was immersed. And the craftsman  
watched it

nodding.

*Editor's Note: This poem is an ekphrastic piece, inspired by an in situ sculpture by environmental artist Andy Goldsworthy. The untitled sculpture was made by stacking pieces of slate on a beach in an egg shape, and then allowing the tide to swallow the work.*

NICOLE HAVERS

## Wounded

Jaw clenched like your Volvos gears  
grinding.

The eggs are cooking- bacon too.  
Our great love-sort- of is unwinding,  
You say this is something we can get  
through.

Your stance changes, your words  
cease  
cerulean eyes flicker, gaze ignites.  
Suddenly you sound like sizzling  
grease,  
“Darling, what time is your flight?”

I am to leave and she is to return,  
Will you remember this Sunday  
morning?  
I want to help, I flip the bacon, I  
burn.  
You bandage my wound, is this scald  
a warning?

I part my lips as if I could possibly try  
to persuade  
My flight at noon and I leave with  
nothing but this band-aid.

TANISHA WILSON

## Winter Exhalations

Chapped lips,  
rough like orange peels,  
mist citrus puffs of air –  
  
blown kisses  
rising softly  
into cold December skies.

## Daydreams

If my imagination is a flower,  
let it be a weed.  
Let it be a briar patch.  
With every breeze, every invading  
body  
that rustles its barbs  
let it tighten its grip.  
Pricking thorns puncture new  
thoughts,  
print a scripture of the foreign field  
across the skin,  
Each stroke a spark.  
Sharp sensations, crisscrossing  
synapses  
crackling with ferocity and exploding  
in a frenzied moment –  
fading  
to soft, pale outlines of themselves;  
needling welts needing to be  
scratched  
to bleed back in that lifeblood colour.  
That inspiration.  
That spark.

RACHEL FRASER

## One Trimester

You and I both know  
what haunts this house  
is of our own design,  
our flesh and blood  
wiped clean from history.

We tread so carefully  
between the silence  
that threatens to snap,  
run thin like threads  
plucked by a constant sorrow.

Your eyes no longer trace  
the dash and comma of my  
collarbone  
with tender care and comfort.

Your hand is stiff and coarse,  
dry pine in mine –  
detached and heavy  
as our hearts.

The loss is ours;  
the fault somehow mine.

RACHEL FRASER

# PROSE



## April Rain

My front porch is my favourite place to sit during a rainstorm. The awning completely covers two cushioned chairs and a small side table, where I can sit and see the rain hitting everything around me and soaking everything unlucky enough to be without shelter. People scurry to and from their vehicles, birds dart from one leafy perch to the next, and children look longingly from their windows at the large puddles appearing past drooping flower gardens. I'm in the middle of the storm, but I don't feel it. It's almost as if I'm invincible, like if the rain can't touch me, nothing can. I can smell the wet heat rising from the pavement and I can hear every drop of rain hitting the ground like little rocks that explode against the earth. The sky is grey and angry, but the pot light in the awning acts as my own personal sun beam. After a few hours of sitting here, though, in these comfortable cushioned chairs sandwiching the small side table, the inevitable happens; despite how escapable I convinced myself it was. Once that single drop of rain somehow drives from the clouds into a foot or a leg or even my face, that personal beam of sunlight abruptly begins to feel painfully artificial. Suddenly I'm soaking wet, just like the rest of the world around me. As it turns out, I am not invincible, but my front porch will always be my favourite place to sit during a rainstorm.

KELSEY CROSBY

Selenic (or: on the swivel-chair astronomer)

“Last night I dreamt I walked on the moon,” he says, still looking up at me through the glass window.

“Yeah.” says his partner, eyes trained on the screen.

“It was weird. I didn’t feel any lighter. I just walked. Didn’t even need a spacesuit.”

“Randy.”

“But it felt, I don’t know...nice.”

“Yeah, OK, that’s great. It’d make you the first man on the moon since, like, Nixon or something.”

“Or the first Trudeaumania.”

“First—look, *focus* Randy. There’s a life out there and we’re missing it.”

“I’m in no hurry.”

“Well, too bad. Everyone else is.”

Eyes return to computer screens.

“She’s very beautiful tonight.”

“Excuse me?”

“The moon.”

“Why ‘she’?”

“Why not?”

“Seems kinda...ro-man-tic? I mean, like, it’s just *the moon*. Existed long before humans were around to define gender.”

“We defined ‘moon’, too.”

“Still doesn’t explain why we need to make it ours.”

This one man is getting on in years but he still insists on staring up at me through glass windows. He moves to the window, as if he could close the distance between us.

He whispers, “We had our adventures, didn’t we?”

And even as he remembers, I cannot look away.

STUART HARRIS

## The Water

I have always found peace in the water. When my mind is lost to the chaos of the world, I'm able to escape in the depths of the water, drowning only my pains, washing away anxieties, feeling the freedom of weightlessness. It's like I can breathe again.

I step into the shallows, feeling the smoothness of each tile beneath my feet, but also the rough grout that holds them together. The water is always cold, but not cold enough to stop me from plunging beneath its depths. As I become one with the water, the cold seems to slip away and as I float along the calm surface, I don't feel anything. It's just me, held up by my breath, unable to sink. The smell of the chlorine is soothing. It's a warm welcoming reminder of an unconventional home, and a promise that I'll be clean of my worries. I can only hear my breath in my head, the water creating a barrier between the outside noises and I, allowing me the peace I have longed for. My eyes are closed, tired and worn from sleepless nights and long days. The darkness within my own mind a pleasant relief. Though I can see the soft glow from the lights above me and around me, they seem almost to disappear as my mind and body are able to let go of themselves in the moment. There is no need to hold myself up, to work the muscles in my body to keep going. There is no need to feel the world around me, or to see the endless pages of reading or the eyes that are always judging. In the water, it's only myself. Breathing is the only effort I have to continue; and so I count my breaths, allowing my mind to escape in the peaceful quiet that surrounds me.

KELSEY WIESENDAHL

## Burnt Coffee Beans

He didn't pick me up. We met outside a coffee shop. It was cold out, and he was late. I was standing outside talking to a friend; he watched her as she walked away (I don't blame him). We went inside; he asked me if I wanted anything and then when I declined nicely, he thanked me: "I don't have that much money in my bank account." We took the window seats. I unzipped my jacket a little, then zipped it back up, realizing I didn't want to get too comfortable. I stared out the window as I listened to him talk about himself. You could tell he'd done this a few times by the way he sat in his varsity jacket; almost too confident. He told me he liked my bangs, but didn't like how sarcastic I was.

I watched the unfamiliar faces pass by, and wondered if they had ever sat in a coffee shop with a stranger.

Occasionally I would engage in the conversation; I'd offer an "oh really? Tell me more," just to make him think I was still interested. I felt bad, for he didn't know that he had lost my interest the second he started talking; he didn't apologize for being late.

An hour passed, and I couldn't wait for another 30 minutes to go by, so that this "lecture" could be over. He told me he didn't do relationships; I wondered why I was wasting my time. My friends had told me he was the "catch of the town", but I was trying to locate the nearest pond so I could throw him back in.

On the way home he asked me what my plans for the upcoming year were; asked if I'd met anyone of interest. My parents didn't raise me to beat around the bush. I told him that no one matched that description, but when someone did he'd be the first to know. His jaw dropped and he stopped walking.

I didn't apologize for deflating his ego.

# VISUAL ARTS





"Artichoke Flowers", Rachel Fraser



"Inch Tall Forest", Rachel Fraser



"Afternoon Tea", Nicole Havers



"Beach", Nicole Havers

The following artwork was originally created as an anonymous gift to the professors of the English Department of Acadia University, by 2016 Honors graduate Allison MacDougall. The display was put up afterhours across from the English department main office, for Professors to see as they arrived the next day. While the source of these drawings was intended to be a mystery, secrets are hard to keep in such a close-knit community, and the artist was quickly identified. In the interests of preserving history, and highlighting the talent of a recent Acadia graduate, images of the display and the individual drawings have been included in this edition of *estuary*.



The Display



View from Hallway

"At fair Acadia of Olde,  
In a major that surely enthrals,  
Ye shall find the saints of English,  
The best profs of all."

Dedication to Professors



Saint Christine

Christine Kendrick



Saint Andrea

Andrea Schwenke Wylie



Saint Herb

Herb Wylie



Saint Jon

Jon Saklofske



Saint Quéma

Anne Quema



Saint Pat

Patricia Rigg



Saint Wanda

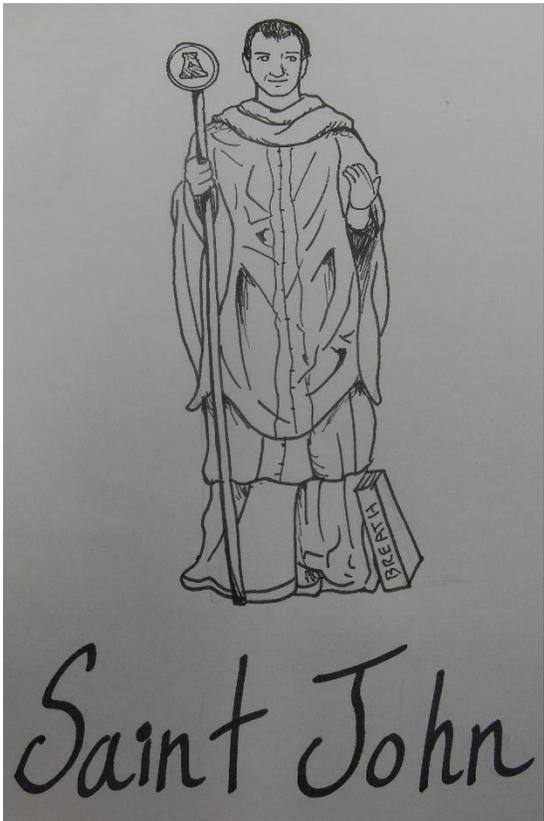
Wanda Campbell



Jessica Slights



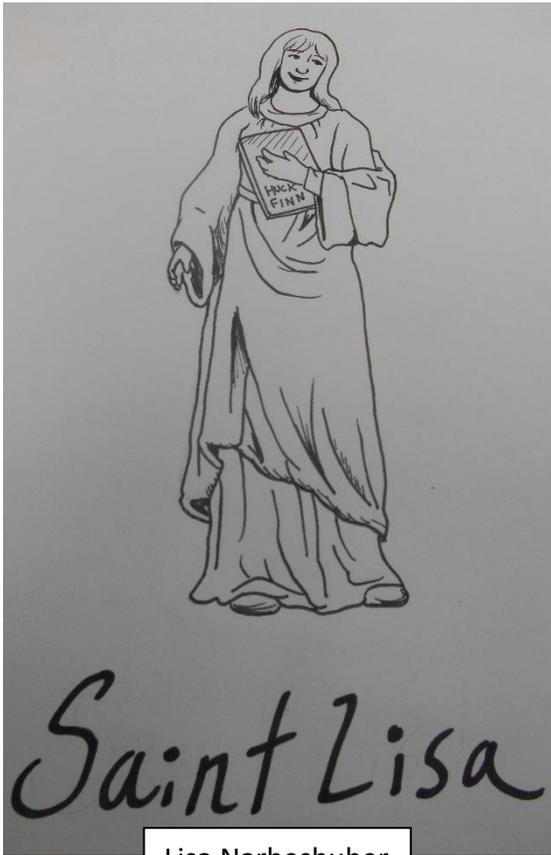
Stephen Ahern



John Esutace

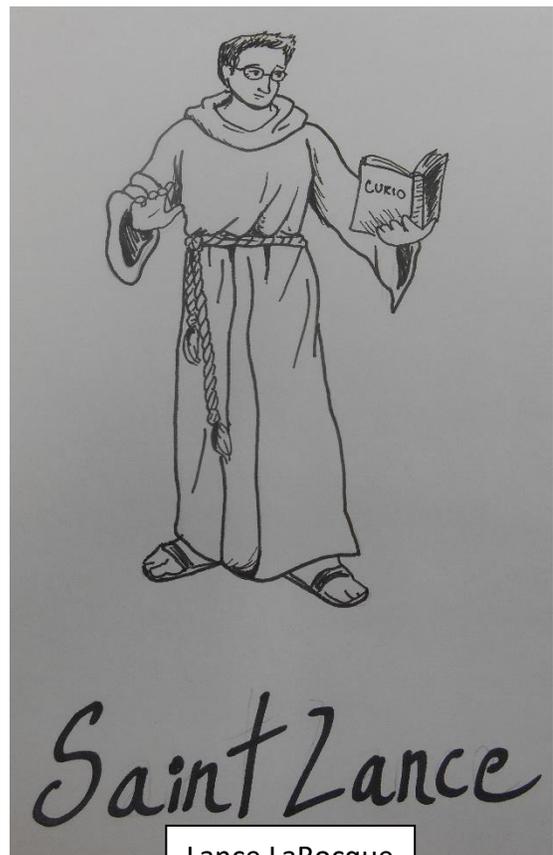


Kevin Whetter



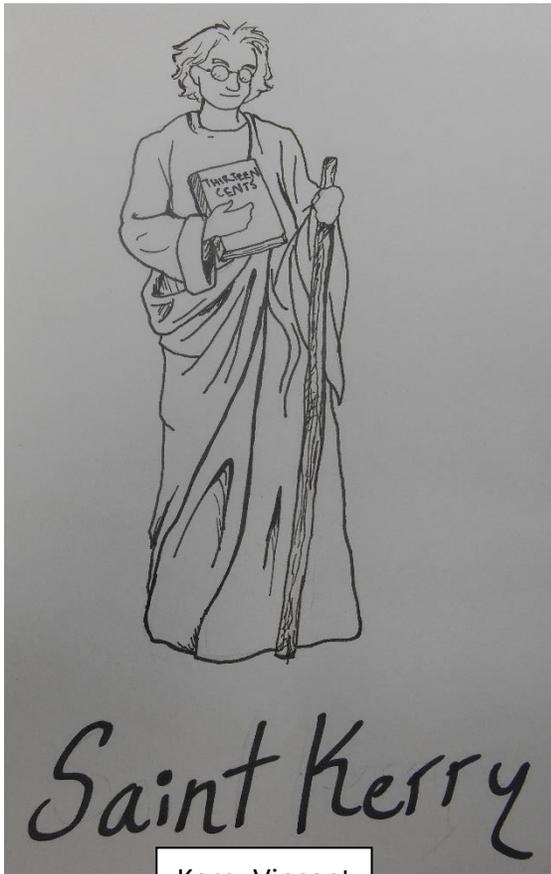
*Saint Lisa*

Lisa Narbeshuber



*Saint Zance*

Lance LaRocque



*Saint Kerry*

Kerry Vincent



*Saint Richard*

Richard Cunningham