

estuary

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The Glance

Blue eyes the color of tropical waters
reflecting the beauty around them,
look into eyes of dark blue like northern cold,
frozen, numb.
they cut through pain, emptiness and loss.
they melt the frozen depths
if only for a moment the tide of pain recedes
then just as quickly as it started the moment is lost
and the pain returns,
the happiness just a faint memory.

~ *Matthew MacDonald*

Happy Birthday, Mom

I once thought my mother was a damsel in distress
But she put herself in the tower
And stayed there
Until He knocked it down
It was a chivalrous gesture

You couldn't find her for awhile, Mom, searching without grabbing
Still holding on to furniture in storage

Until She left you,
Grand-mère
Amongst a house holding too much history
Left only to rebuild
Tearing apart one life
To build your own
"Ma! Es-tu folle?" would She say
But there's no tearing, only mending
On both sides of the fence
I thought it was for crying, when She left
The house, sitting at the full empty table
Leaving Her notes on Her whiteboard
But I know now the painted blue turned beige siding house
Is for smiles, your own, mine - Hers, and the laughter
You picked up the primer with your own two hands
And are filling in the cracks
Messages of love come from the upstairs loft
That once held three rooms, 11 children
Non, c'est n'est pas de la folie, She would be "Some fière"

Just leave the rocking chair where She left it
Hitting its back into the kitchen sink

~ *Chasity St. Louis*

Clare Reflection

Apart, I reflect on a district, Clare.
In the horizon a full moon illuminates distance.
Loneliness this night prompts philosophical thoughts.

My characteristics differ from the Acadians.
French is not my mother tongue.
Erect scaffold around my atria and ventricle.

Unblock and elevate me from my solitude.
I can't foolishly laugh as an Outsider.
Expulsed by Acadian social order I cry aloud.

Daybreak brings no relief from loneliness in Mavillette.
I do not belong to this unified closed community.
My huge heart lies on the shore of Saint Mary's Bay.

~ Nadya Zacharczuk

Tiny Fish

rain pounding off most saturated mud
looks like static on the t.v. to me
or maybe thousands of tiny fish
swimming as close to the surface
as they can get without drowning --
-- drowning in air. swallowing air.
gulps and gasps, choking --
-- like the marble in this floor,
dirty reds. rusty, grey-oranges
drawing me up and in and underneath
--
seven sugars in my tea.
everything is bitter nowadays.

~ *Courtney Harris*

Bicycling

eyes
cry for
moderation
wind
brazes
uncovered
knees raw
harnessed gravity
pulls you back
up again,
momentum is
a wonderful
thing
as long as
brakes
work

~ *Tyler Boucher*

Channelling Mrs. Sedgwick

The beautiful apartment, chandeliers tumbling from the ceiling in crystal shards. Parisian posters gracing the beautifully unscathed walls, boxes filling the beautiful rooms, playing host to pots never to be used and clothes rarely to be worn.

Each day it becomes the next day she will get settled in, each night coming home too brokenly strung out on a powder that momentarily keeps the sadness at bay. So badly she does not want it to cloud her pretty little head.

She has put her passions on hold.

The once loved paintbrushes put down, tucked into a newspaper lined drawer.

Fingering through her shiny hair she looks into the mirror as though gazing at a strangers reflection in a glassy pool.

Where did the feeling go?

Where did she put it?

~ Nicole Heelan

Modern Art #2

The immaculate marble floor
so scrupulously cleaned my father could perform a surgery
sloped down at a gentle angle
spanning all corners of the gallery
In the middle of the exhibition
there is a sculpture
I study it intently
never discerning its true nature
My friend stands at a distance
in front of a vacant canvas
white as the noise beyond our realm
Beside him is a woman
project unto either whatever suits your mood
they will follow.

~ *Nicole Heelan*

Teabag

Sometimes I look at you
and realize you aren't mine anymore.
'Surrealism is orange' you say, and I stare.
'Romanticism is chamomile.'
'Cream? Sugar?'
I smell the essence of rose and peppermint
and understand
how I could come to drown
in a pot of boiling water,
held under by the lost electricity
that stopped traveling between our synapses.

I turn my head and nod; "Is it ready yet?"
'Be patient.'

I can't understand
why we insist on selling ourselves
false prophecies by the cup
(if I still had money you'd tell me
about my daughter who will only like vanilla,
and you'd pay me to tell you how
rain will run down to be steeped in hibiscus);
we both know we only drink
tea when we're lonely

~ *Kelly Bowen*

Catch Me in the Rye

Burns last request

Wintering underneath yourself
I find you empty in the highlands,
sounding out the names of your six dead children silently.
I ask you why you prefer looking to the side,
and who taught the meaning of words.
Now is the time to regret pushing aside your father's Manual of Christian belief,
to regret the dirt that never came loose from under your fingernails,
to regret how many women you left motionless, bathed in disregard.

Among the things
you consider important enough to remember are
dreams of Jamaican emigration
shattered by poverty at seven,
or funerals you never intended in New York and Oregon.
A tooth you never found left you crippled and homeless.

*"Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?"*

I called you Scotland's favourite son,
or the heaven-taught ploughman.
You called yourself Syvander,
an invisible crater in the crowd.

Salinger's Unendorsed Biography

Wintering underneath yourself
you put on a military jacket
and sit sideways thinking about Utah Beach.
I implore you, to close your eyes, and reflect on the days you spent selling meat in Vienna.
Now is the time to regret straying from your father's kosher cheese,
to forget the harrowing soberness of religion,
to forget your inability to play yourself.

Among the things
you consider important enough to remember are
high school students in Windsor
who sold you too cheaply,

or calling Hemingway soft.
Selling anything you owned made it no longer a piece of you.

*“That's the whole trouble.
You can't ever find a place that's nice and peaceful,
because there isn't any. You may think there is,
but once you get there, when you're not looking,
somebody'll sneak up and write 'Fuck you' right under your nose.”*

I called you Fitzgerald's successor
or a Buddhist with a reclusive nature.
You called yourself an anti-hero,
the invisible man in a cape.

Holden Caulfield's Pretentious Reflection

Wintering underneath yourself
you light up a cigarette and stare at frozen Eskimos.
All the languages in the world couldn't understand you.
I ask if it's hard being the phoniest person alive.
Now is the time to regret your brother Allie,
to regret mishearing the song you wrote,
to regret being unable to play yourself, if even for a moment

Among the things
you consider important enough to point out are
child predators
who lead you to believe someone cared,
or laughing at McCarthy's red obsession.
These kinds of jokes left you wishing you were a communist.

*“What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it,
you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours...
that doesn't happen much, though.”*

I called you David Copperfield
or the most terrific liar in the world.
You called yourself Robert Burns,
Jesus Christ with ulterior motives.

~ Jen Huizen

A Rare Joy

There is almost nothing in his room
Nothing modern of any sort
No computer, no calculator
He has even discarded his old slide-rule

Instead only piles of paper await him
With a pencil or two at hand
A book maybe but only for reference
He usually relies on his own mind

His room has but one window in it,
Which looks out into pure nature
He has no contact with any others
With the possible exception of his own kind

His used papers have nothing
Except for numbers and abstract symbols
Many look down at them in confusion
Only a rare few see Nature's beauty in them

He does not care what use
His numbers and abstract symbols will be.
He only sees them as an art form
And it brings in him a pure joy

~ J.C. Saunders

I've Seen Enough

Violet-orange crashed clouds
tiger-stripe the sky.
Straight-laced sun shoots down, pooling pink
like overturned paint cans.

The ground pulls out
past the whale-bone basin—
a sail boat spread
loosing itself in deep-green sheets.

I've driven, too many times,
those broken-back roads.
Past chipped, peeling barns, squandered community halls,
and fleets of sunken houses supporting satellite bowls.

I've seen enough
self-reliant, forced-compliant
farms mired in self-conservation
from a regicidal country that never looked back.

The national amnesia,
the bludgeoning paradigm shift.
The sting of salt-licked bays and crying shores
in a place I've come to call home.

~ *Carey Bray*

The Workman's Labor

Scottie digs up wires and pipes
to pay for a wedding band.
An alchemist turning copper to gold,
he wants to make her honest.

Toiling tirelessly he digs up trenches
of earth only to fill them in again.
They do that with graves too.
I ask him: "Why do this?"
"It gives me time to think."
After thinking he adds:
"Everyone works for someone.
I work for myself"

He pushes through.
Each day's work a
purifying pilgrimage
shaving from him
all the knowledge
and ignorance
necessary to ruin a man.

~ *David Oastler*

Photo Shoot

Photography was the new thing in Yarmouth and Shelburne counties. Clubs were forming all over the place and more people started Facebook groups for their newfound careers as photographer extraordinaire. There were also groups like the Cutest Baby Contest that weren't really about photography at all, just how cute the kid was, and even more so the popularity of the kid's mother. Almost anyone can be a photographer, if you have patience along with learning a few tricks of the trade. Anyone can take pictures of the ocean. Anyone can shoot prom. Anyone can shoot anything, so I did. As soon as I got my camera for my 12th birthday, I took it everywhere- just in case. So when my uncle joined the local photography club in Pubnico- he was an odd duck, because most of the photographers in the club were women, my Mom suggested that I join too because I carried my camera around with me like the plague. My friend Karley, who was also in the club told me that I sniped photos, all unsuspecting, like a sniper. Like I killed them. All the words used to describe my work had nothing to do with seascapes, overgrown woods. They suggested violence, war, blood. Like the song says: Rape, murder – it's just a shot away (1).

Uncle Jimmy picked me up from my house every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. in his purple Dodge van even though he didn't have a wife or children. He didn't have a truck like most men because he didn't go fishing like most men. He did photography instead. He had a bad back and was on disability, and van's seats are more comfortable.

We met at the West Pubnico Lion's Hall under the dingy lights, our chairs, with the gray hollow steel legs and the orange plastic seats and backs, resting on the thin carpet with holes from cigarette butts when people could still smoke inside. We rested our elbows on plywood tables with gum stuck underneath. People who really knew what they were doing would give talks-Uncle Jimmy was one of them, so were Andie Spencer from the Vanguard and Julie Jacquard who had been taking professional photos for years, like the one of my brother and I one Easter picking up our eggs and opening our baskets, taken by Julie. The pictures are real. We are in our pyjamas, my face is not tear-streaked from having to put on a dress and having my hair pulled in curlers, like many of the family photos I had seen in my friends' living rooms. We didn't have to sit stiff-backed under blinding lights. We were free. And in this way Julie was ahead of her time. I looked happy. I was happy.

They taught us things that anyone who has taken any amount of photography will be apt to try eventually, like shooting from different angles. I knew a thing or two about angles. When my brother, Trav and I were younger, we would sit for hours on the couch, him lying backwards upon my outstretched legs, his head on my lap, looking up at me so that he was upside down to me and I to him, peering down. Our eyes seemed huge and globular like the green rubber aliens sold at the Dollar Store-like foetuses. We laughed until we did it so many times that it was no longer funny. Then we stopped altogether. I was sixteen, he was fourteen, so we hadn't done it in years. Well, not until about a month ago when we were asked to do an angle shot. I took pictures of my brother's eyes, then zoomed in close so there was only one- like Cyclops. Tried to capture the globules of sweat forming at the beginning of his hairline and his face's newest development—zits and the ugly peach fuzz forming on his upper lip. He wasn't intending on growing a moustache, so why didn't he just shave it? The skin is a fruit but the pulp beneath is salty not sweet, and it's red, not clear. I called the collection "Adolescence." They were all appalled. Uncle Jimmy too, and even Julie. Adolescence is disgusting, I wanted to say, don't you remember, you fools.

We also learned about action shots, and how to bring one object into focus in the foreground and the rest out of focus in the back. We learned about ISO, about shutter time, the importance of keeping a steady hand, searching for nature's natural frames, zooming. I listened, I tried, but mostly I just shot as if I was taking no prisoners, as if while meditating over the set-up of a shot, I was risking my life. I always had the most photos. My parents bought me a memory card that held 1200 pictures for my birthday but by the end of the week, I often had to dig out my 400 one as well. I tended to see the world in terms of photographs, a series of fragments instead of one continuous motion. The green leaves of a tree against another tree's red, then the abandoned house being broken down by the earth, not the sidewalk and my neighbours' houses in between.

Our first photo shoot was in July at Dennis Point Wharf. I didn't take pictures of the wharf. Well, I did, but not of the boats floating in a rainbowed group, their reflection on the water. Mine were of a rusted gear wheel, a piece of fish rotting on the side of the road, a bloody gash in a fisherman's hand, seagulls ripping apart herring that fell out of the tankers at Little Island Fisheries, bird poop on the machinery. I snuck inside the fish plant and took pictures of the roe, potential babies ripped out. They looked like babies too - huge, overgrown maggots cuddling snugly in a box, but pinker, like newborns wrapped in receiving blankets. The others craved decay? but only if it was beautiful.

In October, they announced that we were going to do a field shoot on the farms of Yarmouth next week. The focus would be still-life. I was excited because those were my favourite shots, the memory of the movement that once was. They set us loose in a field -with the farmer's permission. There was lots of hay and cows on one side. There were some carrots, tomatoes, beans, cucumber and squash nearby waiting for the next farmer's market. There was also some tall grass with milkweed and wildflowers. Karley went over there, just as I suspected. She liked zooming in on flowers, on butterflies.

The first picture I took was of her ankle scraped by a brier and blood droplets.

I walked through the hay, the wheat, the tall grass, I wasn't quite sure which, brushing it with my hands. If one hand touched, so did the other. It needed to. I was a photographer, I understood symmetry. I looked at the crows flitting about, revolving around the wooden fence posts threaded with wire, "Don't touch the wire," they warned us before setting out, "They're cow fences, higher voltage for their thick skin." The crows seemed to know this. "One crow sorrow, two crows joy, three crows a girl, four crows a boy..." I couldn't remember the rest. I wondered where the rhyme came from, how I knew it and why it was created.

I thought of Van Gogh's paintings that I had looked up online after seeing a print of "Starry Night" that Karley's Mom had bought in their living room. One of my favourites was "Wheatfield with Crows," crows in the shape of an M, much like the ones I could draw. But there was something about it that made it special, sinister, like they were swooping in to hover and to hover to say something, to whisper in the ear of the non-existent person that should be at the end of the ploughed road leading into them and up to the moon. Or is that a cloud? It is supposed to be Van Gogh's last painting, and supposed to represent his troubled mind, brewing with suicide in the making. How he thought the dark thoughts, his mind was enclosing in upon him, lurking, waiting for the attack. I wished for night instead of the blinding Saturday afternoon sun. I wanted the moon. A Chinese girl I knew, an exchange student at our school was talking about the moon one day. How

the full moon represented a circle, reunion, wholeness. They even had a moon festival. So why were we supposed to be so afraid?

I continued walking through the wheat, it rustling gently in the crisp autumn wind that made me think of biting into apples and wanting warm apple cider. Then I saw it. I got a crow when I wanted the moon. It was dead, just lying there, not enough weight to make the wheat crumple significantly underneath. I knew my subject. I knew that my only photos of life on the farm would end up being of death. Of dark thoughts when they hovered as close as needed then crashed to the ground. I inspected it at first from above. It seemed fresh enough and only let off a slight stench. I moved closer and crouched down, seeing the flies swarming upon its body and ants crawling out of its eyes. I was fascinated. I zoomed in on the eyeball and the ants. I had the urge to touch, to tousle a feather. To break one off and take it with me as a souvenir. But I could not. I only poked it slightly with a stick, then thought of my grandfather's funeral and dropped it. I wondered how long it would stay, indefinitely like the porcupine on the side of the road on Minique's Hill? Or maybe it would be picked up by some piece of farm equipment, its flesh scattered as fresh fertilizer. Or if it stayed, a particularly healthy crop would grow, and that spot would be greener than all others. We wouldn't only be eating lost flight, I thought (2). We would be eating decaying flesh that's lost its caw.

I heard someone coming. I jumped. It was Uncle Jimmy and he laughed, "You ain't scared, are ya?" He had taken my photo.

A couple of days later, I went with him to Superstore to get our pictures developed. I handed Uncle Jimmy mine and he handed me his, flipping through them while still in the parking lot, offering "helpful" critiques. Then, I stopped short. It was the picture of me. I was in a more awkward pose than I could ever hope to happen upon. My back was hunched at a weird angle, my shoulders oddly close to my neck, caught in the weird spastic jumping of surprise. As for my face, my glasses were practically on the end my nose from looking down at the crow, and my hair was insane from the wind. I wasn't wearing any make-up so all of my splotchy freckles were visible, along with my pimples. I had a lovely double chin and my mouth was gaped open like a cold dead fish. I stared at my eyes, the look that was already gone. The rest of the way home, I looked at his pictures of the vegetable garden.

- (1) From The Rolling Stones "Gimme Shelter": "Rape, murder!/ It's just a shot away"
- (2) Reference to Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*.

Amanda

~ Rachell Pearson



Horsnip Face

~ *Danielle Pierce*



Pinwheel

~ Sherall Freeman



John Lennon

~ Amy Buckland-Nicks



The Fielding

~ *Andrew Williams*



Rust

~ Tyler Boucher



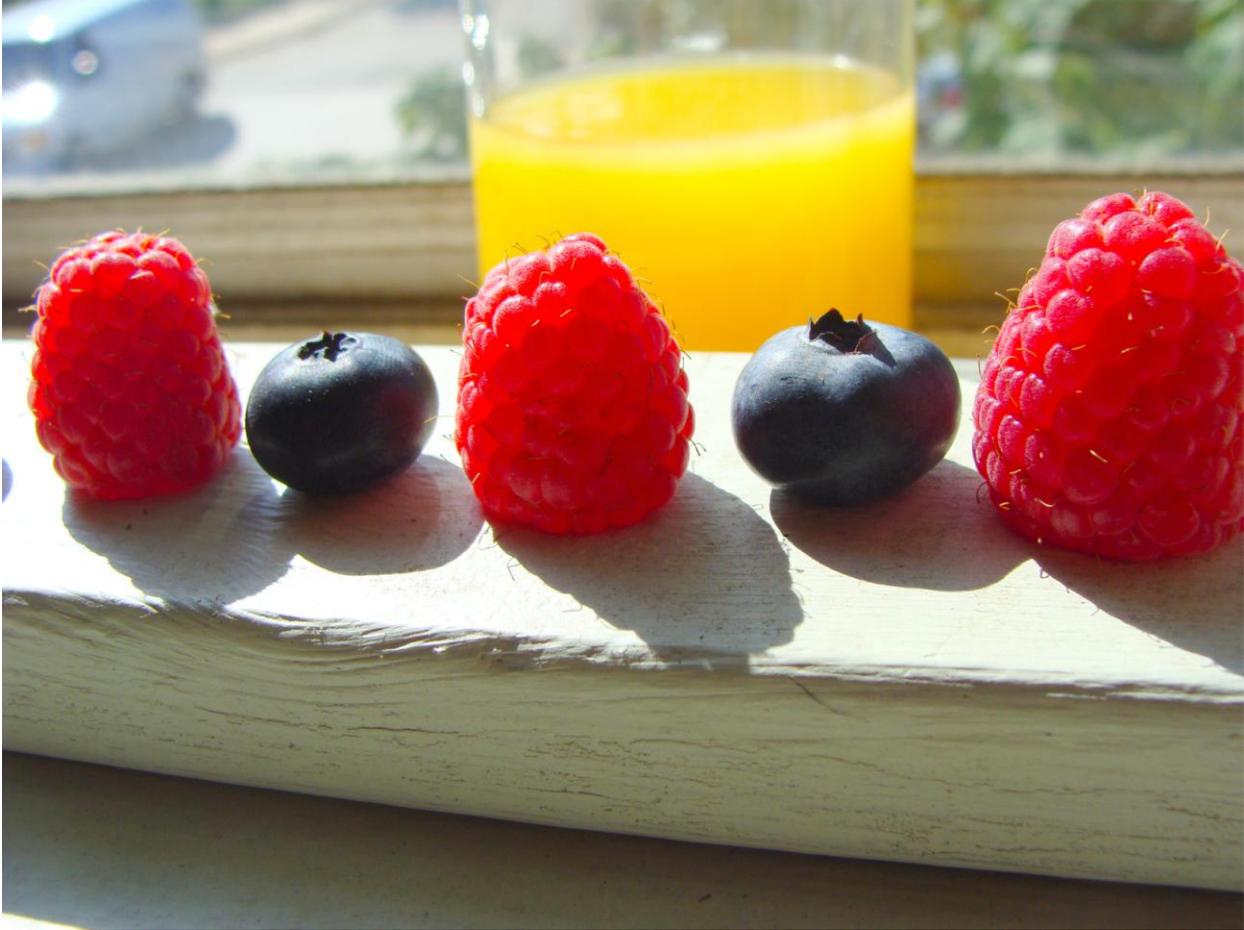
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