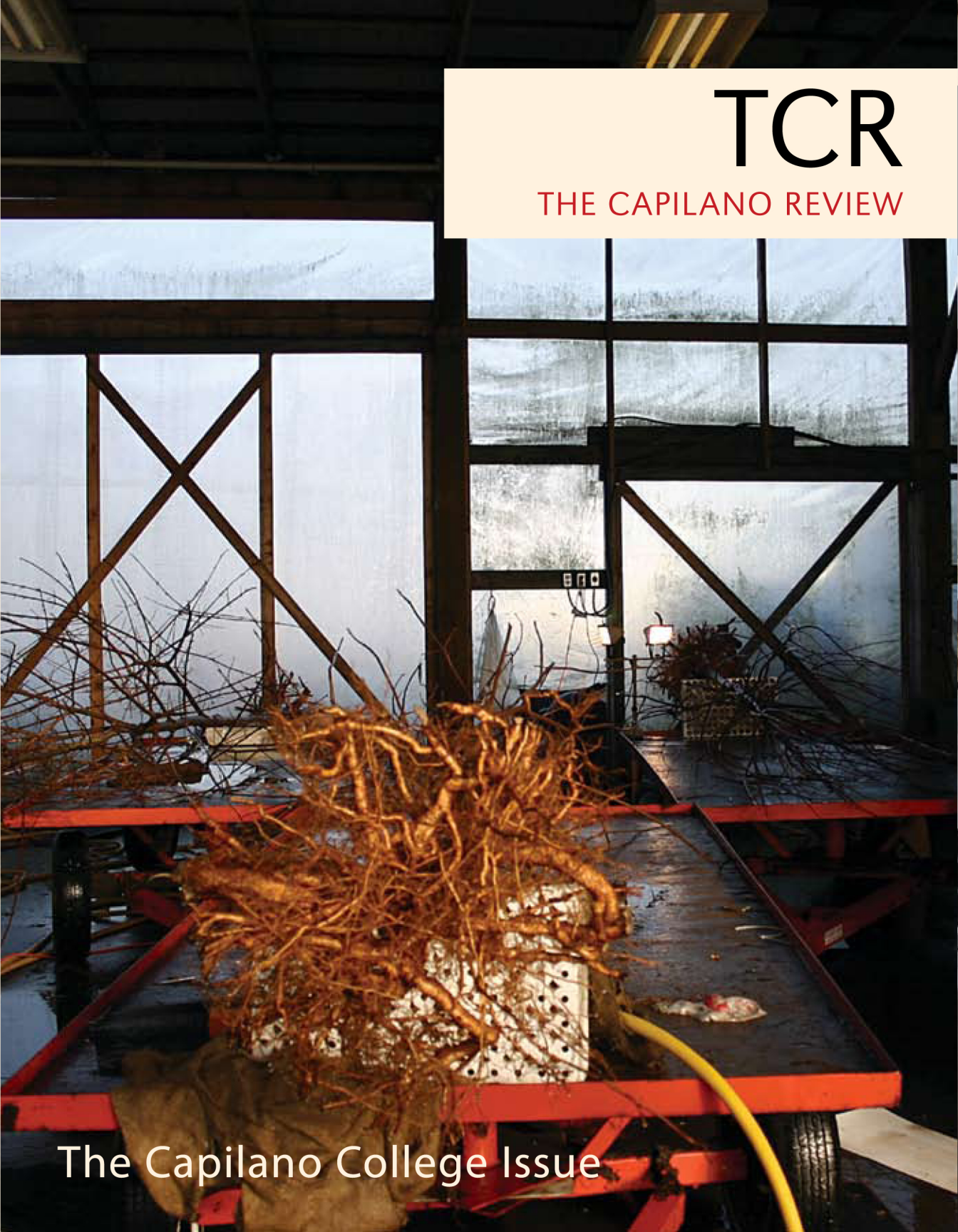

TCR

THE CAPILANO REVIEW

The Capilano College Issue

… on the first ridge of hills on the north shore of Burrard Inlet across from the city of Vancouver, just beyond North Vancouver's industrial foreshore, where piles of sulphur and containers full of widgets are heaped on the docks… by a canyon road that runs up to the top of a hill, set within a stand of mostly cedars and firs…

—STAN PERSKY

… an instance of proof about some aesthetic matter of the day.

—SHARON THESEN

The Capilano Review is published by The Capilano Press Society. Canadian subscription rates for one year are $25 GST included for individuals. Institutional rates are $30 plus GST. Outside Canada, add $5 and pay in U.S. funds. Address correspondence to *The Capilano Review*, 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver, BC V7J 3H5. Subscribe online at www.thecapilanoreview.ca

For our submission guidelines, please see our website or mail us an SASE. Submissions must include an SASE with Canadian postage stamps, international reply coupons, or funds for return postage or they will not be considered—do not use U.S. postage on the SASE. *The Capilano Review* does not take responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, nor do we consider simultaneous submissions or previously published work; email submissions are not considered.

The Capilano Review gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of Capilano College and the Canada Council for the Arts. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Magazines Fund toward our editorial and production costs.

The Capilano Review is a member of Magazines Canada (formerly CMPA), the BC Association of Magazine Publishers, and the Alliance for Arts and Culture (Vancouver).

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NUMBER 151335. RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO CIRCULATION—TCR, 2055 PURCELL WAY, NORTH VANCOUVER, BC V7J 3H5

ISSN 0315 3754 (Published May 2007) Printed in Vancouver, BC by Advantage Graphix

TCR

3·1 & 2 / Winter & Spring 2007
The Capilano College Issue

Preface to The Capilano College Issue

With 100 issues in the archive, *The Capilano Review* enters its 35th year and its 3rd series. It does so looking back over a rich history. The long list of over a thousand contributors—poets, writers of fiction, playwrights, visual artists—proposes its own quirky ontology of emerging writers and influences within the BC, Canadian and international scene. It also reminds us of the role played by Capilano College writers in the evolution of local and national literary history. The Review owes gratitude to the Canada Council for the Arts, and it owes a particular debt to Capilano College, which has steadfastly supported the Review by financing the editorial staff and by enduring risky forays into experimental terrain. In a clearing in the west coast rainforest, Capilano College has attracted and nurtured an active community of writers and editors—practitioners of the crafts they teach.

This double issue pays homage to Capilano College faculty, past and present, who over 35 years have either made contributions to *TCR* and/or served on its board. It includes a conversation amongst past and present *TCR* editors plus a sampler of visual art by past and present college faculty.

Jenny Penberthy, editor

TCR Editors / Series 1 & 2: Talking History

Six out of eight past and present editors of *The Capilano Review* met on December 9, 2006 to mark the beginning of the third series of the magazine, to reflect on its 35 years, and to page through past issues—100 in all.

Editors and editorial terms: Pierre Coupey (1972-1976), Bill Schermbrucker (1976-1982), Ann Rosenberg (1982-1985), Dorothy Jantzen (1985-1988), Pierre Coupey (1989-1991), Bob Sherrin (1991-1999), Ryan Knighton (1999-2001), Sharon Thesen (2001-2005), Jenny Penberthy (2005-).

Jenny: Thank you very much everyone for gathering here, especially Sharon and Bill for coming from afar. I think, Pierre, it's your job as founding editor to start us off, tell us what started you off: the originary impulse, please!

Pierre: I wish I could say it was just a lark at first, though it turned out to be that. When I came to Cap College at Bill's invitation, Bill issued the challenge, "Make a contribution, man! Do something—you're not just here to teach." So Bill was the local kicker to get me going, but I'd already done *The Georgia Straight* and *The Western Gate*, and I was interested in publishing, period. At McGill we had two terrific publications: *Forge*, a literary magazine, and a monthly sheet called *The Page*, a little broadside—single person, single poem, two sides, and it generated a lot of interest. Both publications were important to me. At McGill I took creative writing workshops with Louis Dudek, who was a pioneer in Canadian publishing, with *CV2*, *Delta* and the *McGill Poetry Series*. That background gave me something to work from when Bill challenged me to do something. Well, let's do a magazine. And I suggested that to Bill, and he said, "Draw up a proposal." So I did and presented it to the English Department for approval, and then it was a question of getting the money, which is another story.

Bill: I believe $500 was the total budget, and you also had to go and sell some advertising.

Pierre: Yes, it was all shoestring, $250 from the Administration and $250 from the Student Society, which was very generous of them at the time, and then I hit the bookstores, and sold advertising. Duthie Books and many other locals were supportive—it was amazing how many people were willing to support this crazy idea, even people from other areas of the College, like Bob Johnson.

Jenny: Bob Johnson?

Pierre: Bob Johnson, yes, a very sweet man who taught in the Commercial Art Department at Cap College. He volunteered to do a complete design for *The Capilano Review*, so it was able to come out with a professional look and feel right from the beginning. And then Michael Morris of The Western Front gave me free access to his Image Bank where I found the "Amazing Ray Day" collage by the English artist Jeff Keen, and we thought that would make a great first cover. It matched my mood at the time… And it worked with our first visual art section, which was a selection of collage/concrete poetry works from a show put together by David UU.

Jenny: Did you have to use black and white?

Pierre: We couldn't afford colour, we couldn't afford much—maybe the whole budget was $750, something like that. We even printed in-house at Capilano College to save money.

Jenny: That was Spring 1972?

Pierre: We started thinking about it in the fall of 1971.

Ryan: I was six months old! Sorry!

Pierre: And we never imagined it would last this long—never dreamed of that!

Jenny: Can you talk about the Russian contributors in the table of contents of the first issue? Those were cold war days…

Pierre: Oh yeah, Andrei Voznesensky and Evgenii Yevtushenko. Well, it was an interesting Spring—Voznesensky came to town to do some readings, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Robert Bly came up from the States to read with him at SFU, a reading I think I video and audio-taped. I was hanging out with Pat Lane at that time, and we went to all these wonderful parties with Voznesensky, Bly, Ferlinghetti and the KGB. We had a great time with the KGB. They were even more interesting than Voznesensky, tough guys but lots of fun. It seemed natural to ask Voznesensky for some work.

And then of course I just called people like Earl Birney and George Bowering, Phyllis Webb and John Newlove. And the visual poetry section was easy to pull together with the help of David UU and other people. At the time *The Capilano Review* started, the only other institutional magazines in town were *Prism International* and *Canadian Literature*, both from UBC, neither of which we wished to emulate. The other magazines available were *TISH*, *Talon*, and *Iron*, which I didn't know about at that time, and bill bissett's *blewointment*, and I can't remember if Gerry Gilbert was doing something then.

Bill: *BC Monthly*.

Pierre: *BC Monthly*, yeah. And neither *The Malahat Review* nor *Line* existed then, so the field was open for us, and none of those other magazines had the visual dimension I craved.

Jenny: There's a strong American presence in these early issues; far more so than the later generation of issues.

Bill: Pierre's a Montrealer, and in Montreal they think they're part of the States!

Pierre: I guess we were also influenced by Warren Tallman and the *TISH* group. This was the work I'd come to Vancouver to get close to, which was so different from the work in play in Montreal back then.

Sharon: I think *The Capilano Review* has always had a post-60s West Coast aesthetic. Especially the poetry. Maybe not so much the prose, but I think the Review happened inside the space of the *TISH* and the SFU English Department influence, also represented in *Boundary 2*. And there was the Buffalo connection, the San Francisco connection and the Black Mountain connection, and those poetics also had a kind of home at Coach House Press, hence Victor Coleman, Michael Ondaatje, bp Nichol, George Bowering, Fred Wah, Daphne Marlatt, Roy Kiyooka—a kind of meta-community of poetics at the time in the 70s that certainly was not represented in the prairie magazines and the Maritime and central Canadian magazines.

Pierre: Certainly not the Montreal magazines…

Sharon: … and I think that trajectory and its tributaries has wound through all of our editorships, at least as far as the poetry goes, although overall we've published a wide range of poetics.

Pierre: We were bringing all those people in for readings—Margaret Atwood, bp Nichol, Michael Ondaatje, and The Western Front was doing that too, so there was a critical mass of events, especially in 1974, between what was happening here at Cap College and The Western Front. The presence of the Review at the College attracted alive and alert students, and many of them became the audience for readings in the rest of the city. It was really interesting that whenever you went to a reading somewhere else, especially at the Western Front, a large part of the audience was Cap College students.

Sharon: And then Daphne Marlatt became poetry editor, and then I became poetry editor, so for a while many of the people associated with the Vancouver poetry scene—Daphne, Gladys to some extent, yourself, people like David Phillips and John Pass—were either teaching here or were associated in some way with the Review. I think the Review has functioned as a sort of independent writing and arts institution within the larger community. The

writers-in-residence, the lecture series, the Writing Practices Program, the public readings sponsored by the Review such as the Robin Blaser and Robert Creeley reading two years ago, the festschrifts such as the one for bill bissett, and the special issues have all helped shape—and in some ways critique—the Vancouver writing and arts scene.

Jenny: What about the art—the visual sections? What was their relation to the poetry?

Pierre: Looking back at the first five issues I can see I must have been a bit of a magpie, grabbing what was at hand, especially with the student photography. I think I was looking for work that would reproduce well in black and white since we couldn't do colour initially, and I was looking for work that would be provocative as well as beautiful. I was interested in people who were trying out new things, people like Eric Metcalfe, aka Dr. Brute, Brian Fisher, Christos Dikeakos, and Darcy Henderson. An eclectic range of artists, but all of them interested in something more than the merely representational.

Jenny: Pierre, you did the first ten issues, then Bill took over. Bill did 10 to 25.

Bill: Pierre started the magazine with a real rush of creativity and energy. There was a great sense of youthful vitality about the College and the magazine, and Pierre quickly produced three issues, and by the end of the third issue he began to be fettered by the College. The magazine was starting to make a splash and Pierre was operating with whatever help he could get, and by the end of the third issue it was determined that Pierre needed to have an editorial board to work with. Partly that came out of the political accident that it was International Women's Year, and I believe it was Issue #3 that had the nude front cover. The feminist and pro-feminist groups on campus went up the wall because there was this nude woman on the cover with her face tilted back so you couldn't see it. It became a scandal. Nobody noticed that the photographer who had shot this cover was a Cap College student who had also shot at least one beautiful facial portrait of his girlfriend inside the magazine.

Jenny: Ah, but Pierre didn't put that on the cover.

Pierre: No, I didn't—and I enjoyed the scandal. I always wanted the magazine to be challenging and controversial. And in the end, the issue tested the resilience and tolerance within the College. *The Capilano Review* survived. I remember when the first issue came out, Tony Emery, who was then the Acting Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery, asked me if I was trying to get fired! Well. I wasn't trying to go that far with either cover, but *TCR* covers have almost always been compelling.

Bill: Anyway, an editorial board was formed, and for the rest of his period as editor, Pierre worked with the board which was sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. By the time we had gone through the fiasco of issue 8/9, which was supposed to be the special Quebec issue, and which ended in telegrams and anger…

Pierre: The Quebec issue wasn't going to be a double issue…

Bill: When I took over the editorship, I brought some creativity to it, I think, but not nearly the kind of stuff Pierre and others had brought. I was more of a managing editor, distributing the work of editing to the departments. My interest was to work more as a collective. Daphne Marlatt found it difficult because, as she said, "You can't run a magazine by a committee," and an editorial board seemed to be like a committee. I had one bad experience of this collective during Pierre's editorship. We did the first fiction special, and we were looking for up-and-coming writers who needed a boost. We had published a couple of Jack Hodgins's stories, but he hadn't yet published a book. So the student fiction editor, Wendy Pickell, and I decided we wanted to do Jack Hodgins. So we went over to Lantzville, interviewed him at his house, and ended up getting from him the manuscript of his first book *Spit Delaney's Island*. We brought it back, and we were just so ecstatic about this, we were going to do it as a special issue of the Review. But we got voted down by the editorial board. And that was very hard to take. But you kind of live with these things and go on. In that issue, we did a special of Audrey Thomas which was very successful.

Very soon after my taking over the editorship, I did two things. One was I moved it to four issues a year, and that's why the issues suddenly become

much smaller. The other thing I did was to try to move into the political scene a bit more. We had a situation with the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association (which has now become the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association [most recently, Magazines Canada]), where the distribution manager was trying to get rid of the literary and art magazines because they were a pain in the ass to him. He wanted to put all his money into distributing Saturday Night and larger distribution magazines like that. So we teamed up with *Room of One's Own* and *Event Magazine,* and we effected a kind of coup of the Board of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association. So John Levin from *Event*, Eleanor Wachtel of *Room of One's Own*, and myself from *The Capilano Review*—we got on the Board of the Publishers' Association and changed the direction that it went for a while. So that was a big thing.

The other thing that I think of during my editorship was that we involved students a great deal. All of the departments had student editors. I was just looking at the list of them today. On the editorial collective, on the faculty we had Sharon, we had Ann Rosenberg, Jean Clifford, Penny Connell, Bob Sherrin, Reid Gilbert, Dorothy Jantzen—later on we had others, but those were the ones in my time. On the students we had Wendy Pickell; Steve Harris—I believe he's now at the University of Alberta; Marc Cote, who is now publisher of Cormorant Books; Janice Harris, who was the recent mayor of North Vancouver; Janet Cotgrave, I don't know what's happened to her; Deanna Leavis, who's gone on to teach creative writing and other things; Lois Redman, who became the curator of the Charles H. Scott Gallery—if I'm right, Pierre?

Pierre: Not curator, but she was working there.

Bill: Aaron Steele, I don't know what happened to him; Jim MacDonald, Stuart Morris, Pauline Nestor, who now teaches in a community college down in the States; Andrea Kumard; Diane Relke who worked as managing editor or—what did we call them in those days? Editorial Assistant or something like that—and who is now a full professor and founder of the Department of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Saskatchewan with a big string of publications to her credit; there was Joanne Foster, Susan Benton,

Christine Walford, Leslie Fenton, Michael O'Shea, Claire Guffey—I mean these people formed a kind of co-op pool.

Pierre: We also had student editors when the editorial board came into place after issue 3, a faculty editor and a student editor for each genre. That editorial board structure, even though it was more or less imposed upon me, was wonderful. We had a lot of fun. And learned so much about writing and editing. Those board meetings were always lively.

Bill: It's interesting that when Don Winkler was making the NFB film of Earl Birney's life, he asked Birney where he would like to be photographed doing the reading for the end of the film, and Birney had had Pierre as a student, and he knew about Pierre and *The Cap Review*, and he gave an answer which was something like "I'd like to be filmed in an important cultural energy centre in Canada—Capilano College." And so he was filmed here. That was a tribute, I think, to Pierre's contribution and to *The Capilano Review*

I found in my own contribution to the Review, both when I was editor and at other times, what interested me the most was doing interviews. I think those interviews are very interesting in terms of information within the cultural community. Ann Rosenberg, in her interviews, stripped out all the extraneous material, and you just got an artist's statement boiled down out of the interview. In some of the early poetry interviews every um and ah and sniffle were included. I was particularly interested, looking through the magazine last night, in the interviews with Kim Echlin and Joan McLeod, Cathy Ford, Brenda Riches, Audrey Thomas and Brian Fawcett—you remember that one [to Sharon]. That was an interesting dynamic. Then it came time for me to depart, and Ann Rosenberg took over.

Jenny: Any recollections of Ann's term?

Pierre: Ann shifted the focus more to visual art, as one would expect, and she developed special issues, something Bill had done as well, but focusing on individual talents like Arthur Erickson or Gathie Falk. Those issues are some of the most memorable *The Capilano Review* has done. They offer a critical look at a particular individual, something the cultural tradition in Canada lacks, especially when it comes to visual art. We don't have many monographs on

individual artists. *The Capilano Review* has made a bit of a contribution towards that.

Jenny: Sharon, there was a special issue that you did under Bill's editorship—the Ondaatje and Marlatt…

Pierre: … that was beautiful…

Sharon: I remember having dinner with Daphne and Michael at an African curry place in Gastown and talking about the issue. Daphne had a little studio nearby, and so we went up there and we continued talking about the manuscripts and Michael was—I think he'd given me the manuscript and I'd marked it up a bit—it seems implausible now. I wrote a little introduction to that issue, and of course Michael's piece was later republished as *Running in the Family*.

Jenny: There's a great cover for that issue as well.

Sharon: That was a photograph of Kim Ondaatje at Michael's family home in Sri Lanka—weaving palm fronds. And of course Daphne's gorgeous piece, *In the Month of Hungry Ghosts*, began a new phase in her writing, didn't it, when she started moving into those novels and longer narratives about the childhood in Malaysia. So the Asian connection between Daphne and Michael, or the one that they shared, was evident in this book, and I think that's something really quite West Coast—

connected with the West Coast geographically and aesthetically. That was a great issue.

Jenny: There are so many precious issues on the shelves of the *TCR* office.

Bill: That was 16/17, one of the best issues that *The Cap Review* ever did. I've used it many times as a text book in literature courses. Sharon got this together. We had asked Michael for some stuff. We wanted to do a special on him. We held a special editorial meeting to meet with him. He showed up, had the scones, said he didn't have anything for us, and left. And I remember this student editor, Jim MacDonald, just about going up the wall. A few months later Sharon reported that she had now got the material for this issue. It's incredibly lovely because what you have is these two people—I'm just paraphrasing Sharon's introduction—you have these two artists going back to their countries of birth.

And I feel very connected to it because the Review was out of money, producing this, and so my son David and I laid it out, and as we were laying it out we were getting directives from Michael. He wanted, for example, the two mangoes, or papayas or whatever they were, he wanted those there as a kind of prelude to the picture of his two parents. The only picture he's ever found of his parents together. Then I got an emergency postcard from Michael in Sri Lanka saying, "No, no, not egg yolk, egg white!" He'd used the wrong part of the egg in describing plaster-making. And then the slide of the cover picture disintegrated, and we didn't have PhotoShop in those days. We tried to patch it together, but we couldn't quite get rid of a little nick in the slide here with the light showing through. I think it was Michael or Sharon who said "Nobody will ever notice it—they'll think it's a palm frond."

Jenny: Then there's Dorothy's term as editor which started with issue #34.

Bill: I think what Dorothy contributed to the magazine more than anything else was a kind of straightening-out of the books and the regularization after it had got into some disarray. She asked me at the time if I thought she could be the editor since she didn't know writers, and I said that my experience had been that you left it to the departmental editors to find the material, and

your work was really that of running the magazine, and I think she did that well.

Jenny: Dorothy's role with the review extended far beyond her three-year term as editor. She was a presence on the masthead from series 1 issue 10 through series 2 issue 32. That's about 70 issues. Her contribution has been immense.

Sharon: This is #31, and Dorothy was involved with this issue—the sound poetry issue.

Jenny: Yes—31 had guest editors—Richard Truhlar and Stephen Smith—and then assistant editors, and Sharon, you were also one of the assistant editors.

Sharon: I was, and at the time I knew the fellow who took the photographs—of bp Nichol and Steve McCaffery—that were in the issue, a French photographer by the name of Denis Ruon. He took many photographs of poets in Vancouver, then came to this reading and photographed McCaffery and bp in a kind of low-key way. They are wonderful photographs. It was snowing out and a couple of the photos show Steve and bp horsing around in the parking lot afterward.

Jenny: So Dorothy did 34 through 49. Ann special-edited the Robson Square issue.

Bill: In Ann's case, I think she felt somewhat diffident to use her own taste as long as she was working with Pierre because she was so conscious of Pierre's strong sense of visual media. I think when Pierre wasn't editor any more, she felt free to experiment with all kinds of stuff, some of it great and some of it not so great. She brought an enormous amount of energy to the Review, and I wish she'd been here to be able to talk about it a little.

Jenny: And then Pierre, you came back on board.

Pierre: Yes, it looked like *The Capilano Review* might go under because there was no one else ready to take it on just then, so I agreed to come back as editor—not something I'd anticipated doing—but I wanted to keep the magazine going. I thought it was important that it continue. One thing we haven't spoken of yet is just how much support the magazine has had from Capilano College, and I think that's something exceptional and rare, especially for relatively small

institutions like this. Obviously we always wanted more support and still could use more, but by and large they have been there for the magazine, and have treated it fairly and well.

Sharon: Admirably hands off and arms length.

Pierre: Yes, they've never interfered with editorial content, ever. However, I knew I couldn't come back and do the magazine if we didn't have a managing editor.

Pierre: The magazine had grown, and obviously no one person could handle it all, both the business side and the editorial side. It would have been too much. I wasn't going to take it back on those terms. So the College did come through and funded the Managing Editor's position, and that made it possible for me to come back. It was also time to redesign the magazine.

Jenny: Talk about the redesign, Pierre.

Pierre: Redesign, as you now know, always produces some anxiety. I called up David Robinson, ex of Talonbooks, to ask him for some help, and consulted a few others, but basically realized I was going to be on my own on this one, given our timelines and budget. But then I realized the design was right under my nose, as it were. We had produced a number of posters to announce issues of the Review, so I took the new cover design from them. The rectangle, the framing line, was a motif in the Review from the beginning, so in the end it was an easy thing to put together. It fell into place. Then the inside of the magazine had to be simplified. The hairline outline on every page had become a restriction and a distraction so it had to go.

I also wanted the magazine to become substantial and I thought a two-year period would get it on a refreshed track, and started with a special issue on what I called West Coast Assemblage, featuring artists who worked with the basic idea of collage in an expanded way, people like Jerry Pethick and Al Neil and Carole Itter. So it was a pleasure to come back and give it another life in the hope some young blood in the department would take it on.

A magazine like this couldn't survive without the kind of institutional support we've had, but neither could it survive without the kind of English Department we have. This Department crawls with talent, and you couldn't

produce this magazine without that depth. So for me it was just a question of keeping it going until the next talent emerged, and the next talent did emerge, in the form of Bob Sherrin.

Bob: I took over from Pierre—I think he was eager to move on, and I think he might have asked me more than once. When I started to work here, Bill was editing. I think at various times I was part of the editorial group and I did some photographic work on different issues. So when I took over, I kind of followed in their footsteps in the sense that I felt I had a fair degree of carte blanche to do what I wanted to do. At that time the Review didn't have a lot of money and funding was going down from the other sources, so we were caught again in a financial bind. The first number of issues I did used black and white imagery, all photography, and because my visual background is essentially photographic, it was ultimately my choice to focus the visual aspect of the magazine on the photographic.

Pierre: I didn't leave you a great financial picture. I was quite extravagant. Both the Roy Kiyooka *Pacific Windows* issue, which took close to a year to develop, and the Robert Keziere photography issue were very expensive to produce.

Bob: That's just the way it was. We had to work with that. We also went through the process at that time—I think Pierre initiated it—of becoming a non-profit society so that we would eventually gain access to casino money.

Pierre: Yes, that was one of the main things that we did, and we didn't get the money until you took over. That was very helpful.

Bob: We weren't lucky in terms of the casinos until maybe the third one. We had a casino in Chinatown which coincided with the PNE and happened on a night when the casino at the PNE had to close because of a fire and everyone rushed down to Chinatown to spend their money! We walked away with a lot of money that night, saved by the fire bell! Once we started to get better revenue, you can see the change in the magazine in terms of colour becoming part of it, and we were able to be a bit more adventurous in that way.

A lot of the stuff I published was by submission. In some cases good writers submitted, writers I didn't know of before, for example Elizabeth Hay

and others, so we got lucky that way. I think that's also when the magazine awards started to become more accessible to small literary magazines. We regularly applied for those and managed to get a couple.

The other thing I liked about the period when I was involved is that we did some special issues. One on Robin Blaser, one on bill bissett—those were tied into public events which again made the Review seem to be more than just a magazine. Those were some of the more invigorating times when you had a sense that you could do those things because you had some revenue that came through the Gaming Commission. I thought we might have been heading into a golden period in terms of having money to do what we wanted to do.

Doing those special issues was a lot of fun, particularly when bill was around. bill bisset was here as writer-in-residence, so he was a presence in the office, and I had the opportunity to get to know these writers better than I had known them before.

I wanted to try to change the look of the cover. I approached the board about renaming it just *TCR*, but they didn't go ahead with that at that time. It was Sharon who re-branded it!

I guess that's the other thing I liked about the Review on looking back at it. It has had the ability, because of the way it's evolved, to change with each editor and to respect those new boundaries and still have about it a sense of historical integrity. I met Ryan at a reading—Sharon was there—the Vancouver International Writers Festival. I think I had just read his poetry because that was a point when Ryan, Wayde Compton and others were submitting poetry to the Review. By chance and good fortune Ryan came to work here. I think it was very soon after he arrived here, maybe a year or two, I asked if Ryan would be interested, and I was delighted when he said he would be. And he took over.

Jenny: I think we're going to have to shuffle the chronology a bit, and put Sharon in now and go back to Ryan.

Sharon: It's a hard act to follow to come into the Review after all these years with so many editors, and when I came on board I thought, "Well, OK, we might as well do something…." I wanted to revamp the whole magazine and do

reviews and change the format and all of that. I was fortunately talked out of that because I could not have known how much work that would have been, to change the whole complexion of the magazine to that extent. Anyway, I took over from Ryan and he had set up a really good system with Carol Hamshaw managing the grant applications and organizing the mail-outs and the office. So we decided to put out a 9/11 issue. We put out a call for submissions and got them from all over the continent. The cover had a bright September blue sky background, with sculptural work by Carole Itter and Al Neil. We also ran an interview that Bob did with Esta Spalding that I still use in my creative writing classes. Then we did a couple of special issues. One featured Phyllis Webb as a painter rather than as a poet. Another was Gerry Shikatani's book *Three Gardens of Andalucia* in which he writes about the Moorish gardens as representations of harmony and friendship among the ideas and aesthetics of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The issue was partly a statement about the current mess and partly a vision of hope. Maybe my focus was a little more topical than Ryan's or Bob's had been.

Issues do tend to form themselves, just through your contacts, coincidences, accidents—people you know—one thing and another—an issue will begin to materialize. An odd thing happens, where it seems not only to materialize but to suggest a theme or an overarching idea.

Jenny: One thing that I think characterizes your term is the practice of hiring writers-in-residence whose interviews would be featured in the Review.

Sharon: Yes, though I must say I lost some sleep over the August Kleinzahler interview. As times have gone by, one's nervousness about issues—the degree to which they are "correct"—the degree to which they reflect a certain type of avant-gardism—the degree to which they may annoy certain schools of thought—is always a problem. I was very nervous about the Kleinzahler interview because it was so bold and provocative. Then I thought "OK, it's provocative."

Ryan: You took off your flak jacket about six months later! Then it was fine.

Sharon: It was and it wasn't. There were a lot of pained glances. People were saying it gave them a bad feeling and so on, and that we couldn't expect certain kinds

of writers to contribute to the magazine after hearing them denounced by Kleinzahler!

Jenny: Another memorable moment in your tenure was the Robin Blaser-Robert Creeley reading at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in September 2004. I think somebody in the audience was heard to say that Capilano College is the centre of literary culture in the city, particularly with respect to poetry, which is kind of interesting given what you were saying about the origin of the Review.

Pierre: I think that's another thing to emphasize about *The Capilano Review*. It has a connection to the "community"—it isn't an ivory tower publication. It isn't disembodied. It feeds from and draws from the community, and also returns energy to it. It shapes things that happen.

Ryan: That's why Jason and I did the double issue about 'zines, because they were the stepping stones that brought me to *The Capilano Review* to begin with. I remember when I was a student reading a lot of those 'zines and recognizing the poetics of *The Cap Review* through those 'zines, but not recognizing it in a lot of the other journals necessarily. There always was that sense even from the outside. You didn't have to be here to see that attachment to the community.

Jenny: Ryan, do you want to talk more about those two special issues—2.33 and 34?

Ryan: We actually started working on those two issues fairly early on, then it got put on the back burner for a while, and I needed help with it. That's why I brought in Jason LeHeup to guest-edit and co-edit for me. It was a lot of work finding the people, getting them to agree to resurrect the issues. The premise was that they would resurrect some of the 'zines they'd done years before and put to bed and to see what they would do now if they were given space to do a new issue. We wanted to be more of a theatre for a number of 'zines to come back for a moment and to say what they have to say about where they've been and what's happened and how things have changed. Jason had been a student at Cap too, and he had been doing a 'zine called *Judy*, which was his take-off on *Jeudi*, which was his take-off on *Thursday*, which was a take-off on *The Liar*

and… So there always was the sense of people picking up and translating and carrying on. He seemed to be the natural fit and he was interested in the idea of trying to figure out how to design multiple magazines inside one. It was our version of homage to the things that brought us to…

You know, *The Cap Review* is an institutional magazine but it never had an institutional feel to it. It somehow ducked that problem. I remember it was very close to that time that *The Vancouver Sun* had put out a very large issue in the Mix supplement about the ten most vaunted, which were the ten up-and-coming fiction writers in town, and they were all UBC MFA students. I remember seeing it and thinking it was a Gap ad! A head-to-toe photo of each with a small little bit of writing underneath. There was this big buzz going on about students coming out of creative writing programs and UBC being the epicenter for that kind of creativity. It was not the place that my friends and I, coming out of SFU, who had studied with Bowering and met George Stanley and others—that wasn't our sense of the world, and we had much more sense of what had happened at *The Cap Review* over the years. We had been reading that as undergraduate students, and saw that as the real energy source in the city. It was far less commercial than the way the UBC program was being presented. I bring this up only because that 'zine issue was, I think, speaking back to those roots that we recognized in *The Cap Review*, that it had always been attached to that kind of do-it-yourself production from the beginning. That's also why we started the Writing Practices program around that time, as a kind of counterpoint to continue more of the traditions of things that had been happening here, which wasn't necessarily as market-driven—commercial fiction and all that kind of stuff. There was a sense of trying to do other things with the forms that we had inherited. I think those things couldn't be separated—the 'zine issue and the writing practices program were born out of a similar spot. They had their pains, definitely.

Pierre: The changes in editorships give different and very personal tangents of connection to the community. So *The Capilano Review* has been able to cover this growing community from different angles and different generations.

Bob: I'm not sure—it might well be true of a lot of literary magazines, but all the editors of the Review are active writers, so therefore each of us has connec-

tions into our part of the community. Those relationships overlap with other editors, but you always find new people through them. That's also what I've enjoyed in looking at the Review—you discover the people whom a particular editor is aware of. It has that very personal quality.

Ryan: I only edited two years because my eyes were shifting at the time and by the end I couldn't deal with the slush pile any more. I was really relying on commissioning work as a survival strategy. I remember now looking back at the issues that they operate the same way as an O'Hara Lunch Poem. You can take a Lunch Poem and just go and do it. It's his autobiographical moment. When I looked back I always felt embarrassed that I didn't have a focus, but the focus was that it was just a manic autobiographical account of who I came across by having taken over that position and having to go and find work. People referred me to other people. That's how I met Lorna Brown at Artspeak, who curated a section for me for the visual arts. I met her through Michael Turner, who introduced me to Clint Burnham and all these other writers. There really is a kind of snake eating its tail when you're editing that way.

Bill: Sharon has to go. What's your last word?

Sharon: We could sit around all afternoon talking about readership alone, the way a readership is in a way invented and how you think people are reading but they're not—the philosophy of editing, the degree of control, to what degree do you nurture a piece as opposed to simply publishing it as is. Both Jenny and I, and I dread to think of the gender implications, tend to be nurturing editors. We work on pieces with the writer. Bill would say, "If it's not ready, it's not ready. It comes ready to be published or it doesn't."

Pierre: Bill also nurtured!

Sharon: The conversation with other magazines… the way it becomes territorial. There's *West Coast Line*, there's us, there's *Raddle Moon*. To what degree are the poetics we represent mine personally? What are we trying to prove? Literally, a magazine as an instance of proof about some aesthetic matter of the day. There's just so much. This is really a lovely conversation about the

history of the Review seen through its various editors. But there are other interesting things to talk about when you're talking about editing a magazine. Another time! I have to go! [Sharon leaves]

Pierre: Jenny, what interested you in taking over *The Capilano Review* as editor?

Jenny: It's a very appealing project. My background is not as a writer of fiction or poetry, despite the fact that I won the poetry contest a number of years ago! I come to it as a textual scholar—another species of editor—typically a very dry academic area, but I had the good fortune to have been drawn to a lively corner of American poetry and scholarship. Through my academic editing, I've made a lot of connections with writers and I was keen to be able to draw on those. A lot of my connections are American. I would love to do a special issue on the American-Canadian connection 40 years on.

Pierre: When Sharon took over as editor she wanted to focus more on public discourse. She wanted the magazine to become more thematically coherent, that each issue would take up some issue or idea. She brought a new energy to the magazine, and you're bringing that as well. You're working hard to redesign, to reshape, and to take the magazine in new directions.

Jenny: There were a number of poetry submissions around the time I took over that had very long lines, so redesign seemed to be a real priority. Colin Browne's 4-line stanzas had to be modified to 4 ½ lines of reduced size font! Colin was very intrigued by the results, very gracious about the altered poem! As for the cover redesign, a lot of credit goes to Pierre and Jan Westendorp for the successful new look. A key feature of *TCR* redesign is the new website. We were fortunate to secure the help of a student in the IDEA program at the college. James Thomson took on the website as his graduating project. We now have an archive of all the tables of contents of past issues, we have online subscription purchases, and a very appealing showcase for our new and upcoming issues. The Art & Technology issue that Andrew Klobucar has guest-edited has a parallel web existence in the form of an RSS feed.

As for ideas for issues, much as Sharon was saying, new ideas are constantly suggesting themselves. We have the upcoming Cap College issue that seemed the natural thing to do at the start of the third series: a celebration

of the writers and artists that the College and *TCR* have nurtured over the years. There'll be a collaborations issue, Tom Cone's idea. Tom is the *TCR* Writer-in-Residence in Feb-March 2007. There'll be a North Shore issue in collaboration with Presentation House.

When I took over from Sharon, I thought a few years in the position would be great, but already those few years are over, and I still have issues I'd like to see into print.

Time's running out on us here today.

Pierre: Perhaps in the next go around we should talk less about the history of *The Capilano Review* and more about the critical issues a magazine like this faces.

Jenny: We'll reconvene for the start of the fourth series…

Capilano College, December 9, 2006.

bill bissett / four poems

a hous is a landfill

a troubuld time with
  th stars

a hous is a handfill

i thot uv thees lines whn nite
b4 last i xperiensd such a zanee
nite uv xtreem doubt th stars
wer unkonvinsing 2 me

can yu handul that in me its sew
cornball yu know i havint felt
ths way b4

i know i may not b what yu need

ar we still on 4 wednesday yes

thers sumthing sew familyar abt life

mor thn i evr realizd at first breth had i
bin heer b4 that was my qwestyuning
feeling

as i made my way tord my
destinee alwayze bcumming
i was alredee in th pickshurs
was that it

looking 4 a love 2 hold on 2 was it onlee
inside me th pay off sew veree
familyar
it all was as if i alredee
belongd

what wud reelee help

is if president bush n his entire

kabinet wer impeechd

4 war crimes konviktid n all
givn life sentences

without chance uv parole

thats what wud reelee help

love

is gingr
is data base
is trembling
cellulose
is th big
bang bang
yr alive

mark i came upon thees lines
ystrday n i thot yu mite like
them i definitlee thot uv yu
yu know iul b home munday

cant wait 2 grab yu my independent
spirit n 2 sleep with yu spend th nite
with yu all th brte darkness roll

ovr us dew yu want 2

Clint Burnham / Phedra Is a Cougar

1

Phedra is a cougar, with a Luger
goes for a guy with rocks like Jamie Foxx
son of Redd Foxx, of *Sanford and Son*
sipping some rum
wearing Wallabies, you can email me

2

I'm in love with my son-in-law
he's such a pussy
don't you agree with me?
I mean I asked him, are you stalking me?
I hope so cuz that would be super
guess I, scared off my little trooper
so...
if I can't have him
he can't live

3

My role has to be played by a man in drag
or a woman playing a man in drag
like an anarchist who hates people
or the fag hag of notre dame
or a socialist democratic misanthrope
or a woman-hating suffragette

4

I'm a feminist misogynist
he's got such a negative dialect
a tic
when he talks like a Newfie
he sounds like my mother
it's like John watching *Hawaii Five-O*

5

She's, she's she's nobody's bitch
just got the seventy year itch
what's wrong with loving a young guy
giving him the eye
my son-in-law so what?
so don't be a bot
don't blot your eye makeup yet

6

Now the son-in-law, thinks he's an outlaw
He likes girls with their thong up high
he don't swear when there's kids near by
He doesn't know what I do
the doors of death are open for him
today he's looking at his last sun
he's going for his last swim

7

he took some blotter
thinks Chloë Sevigny looks hotter
(straight up)
with a high necked dress
we'll start with some titillation
end up with some castration
not going to do this
just chew the fat
did I say I love him?
I didn't say that
you said his name

8

like sixties tv
greek tragedy
was too greedy
for more than one plot
you see Racine supersized it
had the son-in-law
in love with a doomed chick
me, I just want to find a young man
like Jackie Burroughs did in *A Winter Tan*
he could be a Foreigner, a Trooper, a Pink Floyd, a Toto

9

& when I die?
my gun will be empty
a note by myself
La Cage aux Folles
had plenty of balls
So don't piss in your own backyard
don't act like a retard

10

& for you sassy classicists,
(remember *Sassy*, that magazine for the lasses not the masses?)
yeah for you classy classicists,
when Rakim says musical forms are kickin' like Kato
he isn't referring to that Roman who read Plato
but Bruce Lee's character on TV
the *Green Hornet*'s sidekick
but no one remembers the *Green Hornet*, do they?

11

& the name Phedra will live on always
for all days, but her son-in-law?
that scofflaw? who once tried on her bra?
I don't try to sound younger than I am
don't say "rad" 'less I'm talking about my Trans-Am
as for Euripides, all I can say
is take that play try an' sell it on eBay

Penny Connell / Old Age Comes to the Island

As Sheba stepped off the boat, the donkey men hefted sacks of cement onto their animals. The bank manager threw open the shutters, young gulls mewed from the pottery rooftops. Cats lugged their bellies into crevasses, and gave birth.

In the cafeneions, the ex-pats lounged over metrios and nescafes, hobbled like Circe's sailors, contented pigs. Island life was life suspended.

Sheba liked to return in spring when the Greek shopkeepers were still patient with tourists. She headed for Yanni's shop and the keys to the pensione she'd rented. Had Kent arrived, she wondered. The shop was closed. Sheba dumped herself at Antonio's cafeneion, which offered a view of everybody's business. A terrier raised one doggy eyebrow, then the other.

Under cover of awful tea she updated herself on the island's social life. There was Pan answering his cell phone, its ring the pleasant sound of falling water. Vigorous of course, but weathered. There were Klaus and Ingrid, "the German invasion." They'd aged! No-one greeted her, but Sheba didn't take that amiss: newly disembarked, she was in the amnesty zone granted arrivals.

Eleven o'clock and the first tour boat of the day came round the point, disgorging gawkers. The shops opened like carnivorous blossoms. Yanni materialized to swing open shutters hung with jewellery, and Sheba got her keys.

The big news next morning was a murder. A couple of local fishermen had tied up on nearby Sithas to avoid a sudden wind, and found the body. Victor leaned forward, eager to impart details to his crony Stuart. "We were here for coffee when they arrived."

"With the body?" said Sheba.

Victor leaned back, satisfied. Her horror was a treat. "Rumours abound!"

"Heavens! Where's the body?"

Victor popped a chocolate biscuit into his mouth. "Brian will know."

Close by, four Greeks shouted in conversation. "A local?" Stuart asked.

"A foreigner," Victor translated. "At least, a stranger." He listened further. But the Greeks were all speaking at once.

In came Brian. "I just saw Nanette," he said. "Hello, Sheba."

"What does Nanette have to say?"

"Don't know." And Brian shrugged his shoulders so expressively that everyone followed suit.

In the next few days, reintroduced to the glories of wisteria and lemon blossom, Sheba made up her mind to buy a house. In the supermarket, she hoped to see someone who knew Kevin's phone number. Kevin, a Brit, had made a niche for himself showing houses to prospective buyers. He lived in Piraeus and arrived when he smelled business. A California drawl beyond the cheese had to be Trevor. He would do.

"Supermarket" was not the word for the island's grocery shops. This one was narrow, with a tall shelf down the centre. The aisles swelled with dangerously stacked boxes. So Sheba called across, "Trevor, is that you?"

"Yes, m'am," came back his voice. "Who are you?"

"That's Sheba!" said another voice. "Now, who was looking for you?"

"I'm looking for Kevin," said Sheba. "Yasoo, Maria."

"I know," said Maria. "Jorge."

"Thanks," said Sheba. "I'll lay eyes on you one of these days."

"Come for coffee," said Trevor. "Bratsera's."

As Sheba left the shop, she heard music. In the centre of a semi-circle of foreigners, two scarecrows were conducting a puppet show. One sat on a trunk, a one-man band of cymbal and tambourine, fiddle and harmonica. The companion jiggled the puppet, a plump fellow with brocade pantaloons and the commedia features of Il Capitano. Sheba paused, inadvertently bumping a geriatric couple going the other way.

"Excuse me," she said in Greek, glancing up and then back at the show.

"I should think not!" said the man. "You know my voice but not my face?"

"Good grief!" said Sheba. "Trevor—and Maria!" She looked from one to the other in amazement. How had they gotten so old?

Jorge hunted antiques in Monasteraki, the flea market in Athens, and refinished them for sale in his shop. He had no time for the ex-pats, their gossip and indolence. "Life cannot be empty," he had said once. "So with what do they fill? How they bear to sitting and talk?" Jorge was orchestrating a start-of-season renovation, moving with a director's ease around arriving boxes and a brace of svelte employees. To Sheba's relief his hair was black. "And you? Your father? You make necklaces for me?"

"Your English is getting good," said Sheba. "And your mother?"

Jorge's eyes shadowed. "Two years ago," he said. "Today I know bad news. The Countess Margaretta. Her son took her to the home for old."

"The old folks' home here? But she's Hungarian."

"Her fourth husband was Greek. So she is there."

Sheba remembered a splendid giantess, an emanation from the Montmartre of the twenties. "That's terrible," she said. "For how long?"

"One week, two. I no know. Countess Margaretta." Clearly it shook him. "And for you also, news. Joseph is here. He dreams of you." Jorge turned his wise, sharp eyes on her reaction.

Oh God.

Ten minutes later, hurrying to take cover in her pensione, she realized she'd forgotten to ask Jorge about the property agent. Well—it could wait. In the meantime she was brought to earth, terrified of encountering Joseph. Seventeen years since their parting scene. Why had no-one warned her? The murder had distracted them.

The tower bell chimed. She avoided a clutter of Brits at a postcard rack. Joseph must know she was there. He would troll the port, even though he loathed milling crowds and ex-patriate meet-and-greet. Awareness of his proximity made her memory sharp. His voice calling across the moonlight in Kamini—"Sheba! Sheba!"—bawling out her name in an agony of abandonment. His love was a sickness. The whole town had heard him, night upon night. He became a community crisis. Some Greeks had begun to treat her with contempt and hostility, others were businesslike. What did she mean to do about it?

What could she do? She packed, in secrecy she bought a ticket. And there he had been at the dock, raving. They tore her from his grip and heaved her onto the boat as it pulled away, men rising from the tables around to help her friends hold him back. Later she heard he'd roamed like a savage, moaning, roaring, until finally the police took charge. The police in those days, some of them trained in the time of the Generals, were much feared. But Joseph had braved them. Or rather, he'd simply ignored them. Which made it easy, in the end, to push him onto a boat.

No friend in view to intercede if he appeared. They must all be at lunch. She reached the street door and locked it behind her, crossed the garden to the tiled patio, with its views north to the Peloponnesus and south up the mountainside to the monastery, a glow of white buildings. She let herself into the hallway, locking that door too. She peeked into her room before she entered. No one. She locked the door. Safe.

But when she bought a house? She stopped short. How could she move here, in view of Joseph?

In the morning she put on a loose dress and a mismatched blouse over top, the closest she could come to camouflage. It looked horrible. From the patio she could only glimpse passers-by as they crossed the street entrance; a broader view was impossible. At a nearby tourist shop, she bought a straw hat to shadow her face. She jumped when Brian put his hand on her shoulder.

"Brian, for god's sake, you didn't tell me Joseph is here!"

"Joseph? He's not. He left before you arrived. I would have told you."

"Jorge told me."

"Jorge works too much. He needs to get a life. Guess what. They found the murderer."

"Great—I can ditch the hat. I'll make it a souvenir for my sister."

"How did they get him?" said Sheba, stuffing the blouse into her bag.

"He turned himself in. There's Stuart and Marthe—come on."

"Well," said Stuart, "the murderer is in custody. He took the police to the body. Pick up your hat, Sheba—a cat will pee on it. Did you hear about the countess?"

"I heard Joseph was here."

"Who told you that? We had a pact not to say. You'd obsess. So boring."

"Jorge told her."

"Someone should prescribe him sedatives."

"This is Sheba's disguise," said Brian, and they laughed at her.

"He wouldn't know you anyway," said Marthe.

"Why not?" But she knew. In Athens, Sheba had told her friend, "Funny—men don't bother me any more," and Helen had answered, "Because your skin is slack!"

"And you wouldn't know him," Marthe continued. "He's got a stoop. And a beard. And it's grey. We don't look like we used to."

A stoop. And grey. What if he'd appeared and she hadn't recognised him? Incredible thought. Victor came up. "They got the murderer, but"—cutting off the general groan—"a woman was attacked right here on the island on the weekend. No information yet." Marthe said, "It's disgusting. You know all about some murder, and nothing about a rape. Didn't even know it had happened until four days later."

"And really, someone should have mentioned Joseph. I had a terrible night's sleep."

"Joseph's no threat, really," Marthe said. "It was so many years ago. He's seldom here. His life is Thailand now. I think he does exports."

She sat, that evening, trying to picture Joseph. She could see his stubby fingers, but of his face, only the fact of a scar. Like a cowboy, he always wore a bandanna. "You can do anything with this," he'd said. "It's a rope. You can make a bag of it, or a strainer. It makes a signal flag. Oh—a thousand things." He had pure sinew for legs and a bit of bone where the knees stuck through. What could age do to a body like his—it was all structure. It had been more like loving sculpture than flesh. She had not loved it long.

"The worst," she said next morning, huffing up the mountain after Marthe, "was that he scared off other guys."

"Really?" said Marthe. Despite her friendship with Sheba, she'd exchanged many a catty remark about that old relationship. "Listen. Funeral bells." Far below, at the monastery on the port, the clock tower bells were tolling. Two deep, slow rings, then two at a higher pitch, two more at yet another pitch. The wind moved them close, then far, a cosmic door swinging between the women and the port below.

"By the way, when's Kent arriving?"

Marthe ignored the question. "Lots of cancer lately. Have you seen the posters?"

The Greeks put up death notices when people died. She remembered seeing the candle maker's face on a notice one day. He had been young to die, a big man who rode his pitiable donkey side-saddle, his feet scraping the ground. Those notices stayed for forty days, until the person's spirit left for the next world, only to return for Lent, when the oleander and eucalyptus hung heavy with ghosts.

The uphill track was rock and spiny shrubs. Ahead was the pine forest, the only stand of shadow on the island. Marthe sought mushrooms (which Sheba hoped they wouldn't find), asparagus, orchids. She looked into the trees while Marthe foraged. Was that movement?

"Anyone live up here?" she asked.

"Hunters come here. You find the shell casings."

"But a house?"

"Albanians, maybe. But lately there's so much construction work, they all have money and jobs and live in houses, and their children go to school."

"What else is up here?"

"Big snakes. That's why the snake's on Nalios' flag." Marthe knew her terror of snakes.

They entered the forest. It was cooler, but the ground was just as rough. There was a muffled commotion off to one side of the track. "What's that?" said Sheba, stopping. They looked. Several pigeons were flapping in the trees above.

"Must be Joseph," Marthe quipped. She had found asparagus and was happy. "Let's have our picnic." There was a sound of sheep's bells.

"I used to come here with him," Sheba said.

"You're more obsessed with him than he ever was with you."

"Only because Jorge—"

"Look," said Marthe, "Let it go. You know the island collects warped people. Don't be warped by Joseph. It's been too many years—years when you never gave a shit about him. Why care now?"

This was too good a question to ignore, so Sheba shelved it for a late night reverie. "Why are you here, then, Marthe? What's your problem?"

"Botanists don't have problems. It's social scientists who have problems. Anyway, there's a worse threat. Jorge will trap you into working for him. He's put everyone off because he so obviously thinks we're all lazy."

"Let's face it—the ex-pats of Nalios would make a rest home look like a beehive. I could never stay here all year round."

"So how come you want a house?" She paused at the sound of falling rock close by. "What's that?" she said. "Sheep?" There was a crunch of gravel and trickles of displaced stone, then silence, though birds flicked nervously from twig to twig.

"Someone's there," Sheba said. They stood, waiting. No movement, no sound. The air had thickened with the heat—that combination of heat and shadow that Sheba had always found oppressive. Then a blast of hot wind roller-coasted over the dry ground. Sirocco, Meltemme, she could never remember. They said the red dust it carried came from the Sahara. Sheba reflected that the rock of Nalios was red too—red, ochre, and a strange clay green. The wind lifted quickly, and light prowled the landscape, toyed with it in a painterly way, so that features stood out, throbbed, disappeared. That emanating light.

"Here will do," said Marthe. She spread a towel on a convenient pile of rock and sat. Sheba considered its chinks and fissures. What might emerge at her foot? She seated herself gingerly. Right at her feet there was a coil of scales. "It's just skin,"

Marthe scoffed, bending to disperse it. She opened her pack and handed Sheba an orange.

The town was laid out below, pottery and white, houses crowded onto each other. "Look," Marthe said, "the Pappadopolous mansion. It's been opened as a museum."

They watched miniscule boats cross to the mainland, a funeral procession, a far-off polka-dot of sheep among stones. Above the occasional toll of bells was a faint rushing sound. But the calm was so profound that Sheba felt easy. They were high enough that birds floated below them. They watched a hawk, its wings still, unharried by the few small birds dive-bombing it. When one of them got close, the hawk suddenly flipped, its talons extending. "Good god," said Sheba, "it nearly got that bird." Again the hawk circled, again the smaller birds attacked, it flipped and the little ones angled away.

"You know, I think we should start back down," Marthe said unexpectedly. Sheba followed her gaze. The pine forest was just below the mountain ridge. And over the top, brackish cloud suddenly flowed.

"Because of that?"

Marthe began collecting their food. "The birds have gone quiet," she said. Sheba listened. The bells clanged again faintly, but their remoteness only revealed the lack of any other sound. Through the cloud a darkness was rushing. A detonation lighted the mountainside. Before Sheba could draw breath, they were in a deluge.

"Let's get into the trees. We're exposed." A new explosion of light and the accompanying blast. "The gods are taking photographs," Marthe gasped through the streaming rain.

"Tourist gods or journalist gods?" They scrabbled to the indifferent shelter of the trees, their shorts and t-shirts drenched. Sheba gave a short scream. A donkey was also taking shelter. Its eyes rolled nervously, its great pot belly quivered and rippled.

But five minutes later, the rain ceased. And the three of them, women and donkey, started down the mountain. "What an unpredictable place," Sheba grumped. Maybe—the thought crossed her mind—maybe she hated Nalios.

Marthe, however, was disappointed. She had a few stalks of asparagus for her pains, no more. "Bad luck we chose today," she said. "It's not mushroom season anyway. But—" and abruptly stopped both walking and talking. The donkey had suddenly veered off, to Sheba's relief; she had feared it would run them down. Marthe put her arm out to stop Sheba. Motionless on the ground before them was a dulled-

green and yellow snake. “Don’t make stupid noises,” she said conversationally. “This is a viper.”

“Oh Jesus.”

“Will you look at that,” Marthe murmured, the scientist in her taking over. “You never see them. They’re really rare. Just back off slowly.”

The viper began to undulate. Its body seemed to shorten beside a few small stones where the ground was dry. And then it had dematerialized. “Just follow me exactly,” said Marthe, giving the stones a wide berth. Sheba’s legs felt like springs. At every step, her feet tingled and ached, as if she were stepping on pins. She focused her whole existence on staying one step behind Marthe, looked neither right nor left. In suspended animation, she simply kept lifting her feet, one, then the other, placing them on dirt, on stone, on gravel, without any sense of moving in any direction. An interminable time passed. “We’re fine now,” Marthe said. They were on the upper road between the uninhabited scrub and the top-most houses. Sheba began to shake.

“Well!” said Marthe cheerily, “that was an experience! Now, where shall we finish our picnic? Would you look at that—the sky is clear blue!”

“Forget the picnic. I’ve had it.”

Marthe didn’t argue. Ahead was the old folks’ home, where there were eucalyptus trees and a shaded bench. There was never a soul on it. Everyone knew the door was locked; even if they wanted to, the old ones couldn’t get out. Sheba would refuse to stop, Marthe knew. So as they approached, she gave a theatrical groan.

“Damn! My ankle.” She put her towel on the bench and plunked herself down.

“I’ll just wait.”

“Don’t be silly. There’s nowhere for a snake to hide.”

“In the wall.”

“The wall is solid,” Marthe said, rummaging for bread.

“There’s a big chink in it—look.”

Marthe turned. “That’s pretty strange—the Greeks make good walls.” Behind them at shoulder level, a triangular wedge of stone had come out, leaving a space slightly smaller than a child’s face. They were so unlikely to find a snake in such a gap that she didn’t even bother to say it. But she had often wondered about the other side of the wall. “Can’t see much,” she commented, and got an unexpected result. The space was filled by a woman’s countenance.

“Margaretta!”

"Open the door," said Margaretta.

"I can't, Countess, I don't have the key. Are you okay? Look—Sheba's here. Sheba—come and say hi."

Sheba stepped up beside Marthe. "Hello," she said. "Do you remember me?"

"No. Where is my dog? Get me out." She turned her head slightly, checking behind her, and Sheba glimpsed thick grey hair.

"Your dog is fine," said Sheba. She raised questioning eyebrows to Marthe. "Have you heard about Margaretta's dog?"

Marthe had heard. The dog was scouring the port for Margaretta. The countess' neighbour, Angeline, was so upset to see it that she'd gone to the mayor, begging a dispensation for it to be allowed to live in the home. She was refused.

"Angeline is looking after her for you," she said, her cheek by Sheba's at the chink.

"She hates Angeline. Take me home. They won't let me go!"

"Are they mean to you?"

"It's cold," said the countess, "cold."

On their side of the wall Sheba and Marthe glanced at each other. The rumour was of no heat in the winter, of neglect, old people locked in their rooms.

"That's terrible," said Marthe. "I'm going straight to the mayor. What do you have to eat?"

"It's the war again," said Margaretta.

"You'll be home soon," said Marthe. "Just endure for now." She put her hand through the opening. On the other side, Margaretta rested her cheek on Marthe's palm; then Marthe felt something in her hand. She closed her fingers. It was a shard of stone.

"Take it away," said the countess. "Is there more at your feet?"

They looked down. Yes—several fragments were tumbled there.

"Take it—scatter it," she said. In mild panic the two women scattered the stone.

"Be patient, Margaretta," Marthe said. "We'll be back!" As she picked up her backpack, a man came along the path. He averted his face. No Greek would do that. The countess moved back from the wall.

"Did you think he saw us?"

"Rapist for sure," Marthe said. "Or Joseph."

Now the sun irradiated the town. Canvas taut over open doors, lace on shuttered windows. The paths became street and the occasional cat slept on paved shadow,

refusing disturbance. Marthe swung along with ease, but for Sheba it was hard. Every step was a different height, width, depth; some were slick marble, others painted thick white or sea-green. They heard the bells: one, two… five. Sheba clutched Margaretta's shard of stone.

Far below was the port. A toy Flying Dolphin streaked towards the Peloponnesus, and off to the west they could see a catamaran. It was passing the island where the murdered man had been found. Tiny Sithas's chapel sparkled like a speck of confetti.

"What can we do for the countess?" Sheba said.

"Nothing. I'll visit tomorrow. Her son put her there, can you imagine."

"Why not Athens, where he lives?"

"Who would she know in Athens? At least this way she gets visitors."

"For now she gets visitors. When she's been there six months, will anyone remember?"

"Oh, they'll all remember. But who will go? Nobody wants to see old age." Marthe glanced at her friend. "And you want to live here, as if it's the eighties. You don't know anyone who still goes dancing every night. Kent arrives. Or not. Kent goes. Are you going to compete with his women?"

Kent's women? "It's still beautiful," said Sheba.

"With the beauty of survivors," said Marthe. "And they aren't people. They're rock, stone. They're water."

"They're snakes and rapists," said Sheba, trying for an ironical tone. "They're gossips and lay-abouts." Her voice hardened. A pinch at her heart told her she was angry.

The steps had narrowed. They came to a three-pronged fork of road, each tine twisting behind houses. A man appeared—Victor, holding something close to his chest.

"Look—my precious burden," he said. "I found it in a construction hole." He opened his jacket carefully. It was a kitten, its eyes too gummed to open, its coat so sticky that they could see the fleas running in it. Victor was holding it in a twist of newspaper, as if it were souvlaki from a roadside stand.

"Good grief. Did it fall in?"

"I doubt it," said Victor, "You know how I got Zeta? Some kids had her by the tail. The last thing I need is another. What will Zeta say? She's ruled the roost for seven years."

The kitten moved its head at the sound of their voices. “I won’t show you its bum,” said Victor. “But it’s lucky. I just happened to see it move. It was standing in rainwater.”

“We saw a viper,” said Sheba.

“That’s what I like about this place,” said Victor. “You see life whole.”

“And the countess.”

Victor winced. “That poor woman. I can’t think of her. Well, if you’ll excuse me,” he said. “I’ve got to get this one into a bowl of warm water.”

“He’s a good guy,” said Sheba, as they continued down the steps. “You can see it in his eyes.”

“Did you actually look at his eyes?” said Marthe. “He’s getting old.”

John Dixon / Saving the Songs of Innocence

When I was a little boy, we called them Blackfish. My father and I would sometimes see them when we strip-cast for coho at the mouth of the Big Qualicum river. We never got very close to them in that shallow bay, and I don't remember much more than the big dorsal fins coming up and going down in the distance—except that the fishing always seemed to go off then. Dad said that it was because the salmon hugged the bottom, dodging the hunting sonar of the Killer Whale pack. I still don't know if that's true.

Many summers later, with my own seven-year-old son, it was different. We were spinning for Cutthroat at the mouth of a stream that flows into Pryce Channel, in the Desolation Sound area of B.C. It was hot, the deer flies were getting very tough, and we were starting to think more fondly of swimming than catching big trout.

"Puuuff." It sounded far away. But loud enough that we stood still in our little aluminum boat, watching in the direction of the Brem River.

In less than a minute, the black fin of a Killer slowly appeared about a quarter of a mile away. Edge on, it looked for all the world like a dock piling slowly wavering out of the water and then falling back in, except that pilings don't spout steamy breath. He was moving along the shore, coming out of Toba Inlet on a course that would bring him right up to us. His dorsal was so tall that its tip drooped over in the way that (we say) means it's a big bull. Excitement! I started our old Evinrude and began idling along the shore waiting for him to catch up.

The next time he surfaced he was beside us, about thirty feet away on the open water side. I speeded up a bit to match his pace, and we held our course, staying about fifty feet off the steep shore. With not a ripple of wind on the water, we could see all of him as he angled into us a bit, coming up ten feet closer after his next short dive.

To say what is seen then is easier than to say what is felt or known. He looked like a huge rubbery thing that had been molded out of six or seven elephants. And I say "thing" because on one level he didn't appear, deliberately swimming at such profound ease, to be alive. Beside the obvious matter of the scale being all wrong, there was none of the fuss or busyness we associate with life, even when it is quietly on the move. But on another level, you didn't have to know that he ate seals like buttered

popcorn in order to feel the near world humming with his predatory purpose. And we were alone with him—primates on a tin half-shell.

He went down again, shallow, and angled in another ten feet. When he came up we saw his eye, and Matthew said, simply and emphatically: "I'm scared now." "Smart," I said to myself: "You are being regarded by one who prefers dining as high up the food chain as possible." But out loud I did my father stuff: "We're okay. Let's just go along like this."

The tip of his dorsal slowly slid under again, and I watched it closely for any change of course. "Look!" Matthew yelled: "Look at the herring!" Under the boat I saw two things at once. We had shallowed up so much that I could see the bottom about twenty feet down, and the boat was over a big school of herring packed against the shore. And then there was a different "puuuuFF!" as the Killer surged up and dove, turning directly under the boat into the feed. I saw white and black under us and hit the gas. We squirted away, and turned around to look just as about 25 yards behind us, the whale erupted out of our wake.

He came out completely, but so slowly that it was hard to believe, from about the point he was halfway, that he could possibly go any further. And when he fell back into the light smoke of our exhaust, it seemed to take as long as the collapse of a dynamited skyscraper.

God knew what he was doing when he reminded a pushy Job that He was the creator of such as the whale. "And canst thou draw out his mouth with an hook?" After that, whether or not Job was satisfied with the Almighty's account of his afflictions, the not-nearly-so-mighty got them into perspective.

I tend to think of Job whenever I'm whacked over the head with a strong experience of nature. The story of his peek into God's wild portfolio, and his subsequent attitude adjustment, reminds us of one of the rudiments of human wisdom: we are out of our depth in this world. In this respect, nothing has changed.

What *has* changed, sadly and urgently, is the gap between our relatively unimproved powers of understanding and the monstrous development of our capacity to despoil. I cannot really know the oceans that Homer called "the whale road," but I can effortlessly reach their deepest regions with a neoprene gumboot which has a half-life of about a million years.

But looking the whale in the eye with Matthew has produced at least one point of clarity in me. I don't know how I made my children, but I know that—in a way

that has nothing to do with possession—they are mine and I must try to find the strength and wisdom to care for them. Now we know that we have mixed ourselves so completely with the world that not even the mercury and cadmium-laced flesh of the whales has been spared our touch. We have made ourselves so thoroughly immanent in the world that we have taken it away from nature and hence made it—if only through default—our own.

As is the case with God, when the wilderness no longer exists, it cannot be invented no matter how appealing the idea or powerful the human will to realize it. Because an invented God or an invented wilderness lacks the autonomous power that is at the core of its reality. Once innocence is lost, its songs can still be sung, but it can never be genuinely restored.

This means that the pious path of Job, leaving the running of the world to some separate and autonomous competence such as Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura*… God or Nature, is now forever closed to us. We never understood the significance of that path (the next best thing to not getting kicked out of the Garden of Eden in the first place) until it was too late, and now must search out a future of which the only thing certainly known is that it will require inestimably more from us than patient restraint. We face responsibilities, and obstacles in the way of their being met, of unfathomable profundity.

The good news—and it didn't have to work out this way—is that this wonderful world, as it reveals itself in Desolation Sound, continues to be as easily evocative of love as are our children.

Roger Farr / from I K M & Q

Trafficking

I received a letter from K two days after K received a package. In the letter, K explained what Q had heard from M, that I had sent K the package. It was two days after I received the letter from K that K took the package to M to open. Q heard from M what K had told M two days before, that I had received a letter from K. K thought I sent the package because of the return address M used on the box. K received a package containing drugs. K thought I had sent the package because K saw the address M used on it. K showed M what I had not sent two days before. M claimed to not recognize the address. But I knew that Q also had a letter from M using the return address I used. Q admitted that the drugs were sent in a package by M to K. M put the return address I used on the box for K to see and then told K to take the package to Q. Two days after the package was received by K was the day I received the letter. So the fact that K received a package with same address I used does not prove that I was the smuggler.

Title

K had property. I was looking for property. Q and M were agents. K told Q the property was for sale. Q went to meet K to assess the property. Q told K the asking price should be $258,000. K had paid $150,000 five years ago, and told Q that was great. Q took photographs of the property for everyone to see. I saw the photographs and phoned M. M confirmed that the property was available and that I could view it. M contacted Q to arrange a showing. Q did not respond. M called Q three times and thought that Q was trying to create a buzz. I told M that was a problem. So M phoned K directly. Then K phoned Q. Q was not happy about M and K being in direct contact. M received a call from Q immediately. Q said that M had broken protocol by contacting K. M and I didn't care so long as I was the first to view the property. So M, Q and I met at the property without K. The property was just like the photographs. I told M that I would pay $250,000. M wrote an offer and gave it to Q. Q gave the offer to K and K accepted. But that was not the end. There were subjects that both K and I had to have removed. K wanted a deposit of $6000 but I didn't have the money. I had to get financing. I also had to arrange to have the property inspected and surveyed. In the meantime, I wanted K to pump out the crap in the septic, but K needed to sell the property first. Q was keyed up, M was cautiously optimistic, K was distrustful, and I was tense. Then the subjects were removed. In the end, K took the money, Q and M took a commission, and I took the title.

Stories

M brought slabs, Q brought blocks, K brought pillars, and I brought beams. The rules were unchangeable and were agreed to prior to construction: blocks + pillars + beams + slab / blocks + pillars + beams + slab / etc. Q was the first to arrange the blocks. I thought the initial blocks were the most important part and told Q to be sure to square the corners. Then K attached one pillar to each block. M told K that the pillars were too tall, but K told M to wait. I brought the beams and M helped. The beams were attached to the pillars to make a frame. M put a slab on top of the pillars and told K to try the blocks. This time K arranged the blocks in a diamond shape on top of the slab. I told Q to follow the lead. Q attached pillars to the four corners of the first slab and pointed at M. M nodded and attached the beams to the pillars to make an X. An X was different. I attached a slab to the top of the pillars and stepped back. One more story and the structure would be complete. I decided that this time the blocks should be placed in the middle of the slab, to form a cross. Q attached a pillar to each of the blocks and looked at K. I told Q the structure would be unstable but Q told K to bring the beams. M balanced the beams on top of the pillars in eccentric directions. K put the slab on top of the beams and looked at Q. Q looked at M. M surveyed the perimeter and nodded, but I knew it was only a matter of time before the structure would collapse.

A Little Lesson

Q drew a horizontal red line across the board and told K to solve the problem. K went to the board and used the line Q had drawn as the base of a triangle. That was wrong. Q told K to sit down. I was called to correct the error K had made. I looked at K. K looked at M. Q turned to the board and drew a vertical green line underneath the red triangle. Q pointed at the green line. I went to the board and drew a circle around the line Q had drawn. Q pointed at the green circle and looked at K. I sat down. Q used a ruler to measure the line through the green circle. The line was 11 inches long. Q asked M if the base of the red triangle K had drawn was equal to the diameter of the green circle I drew. M went to the board and used the ruler to measure the base of the red triangle. The base was 8.5 inches wide. M told Q that the lines were not equal. Q told M to sit down and looked at K. The lesson was over. Later, K told M that I had solved the problem, but I knew it was Q.

How To

I watched as K closed the distance between M and Q. First, K rotated around the knob, tightening after each revolution. M flanked while Q reamed the burr. Q took care not to damage K. Then K covered M with tape. Q worked at the low end as I continued to watch. M drained Q completely. Once the fluid had drained out, K stuffed something white in. K told M to polish the last inch down to the shoulder. Q applied some flux around the pip. I felt the heat from the bottom as M passed back and forth, distributing everything evenly. I was told to take care, not to get too hot, and not to stick. I wanted to touch the joint occasionally, to avoid overheating. But M knew that I wasn't ready. M moved to the edge and pulled Q in with capillary action. K told M to be certain there were no gaps. It was some time later that Q wiped off the excess flux with a damp rag, leaving small traces in each of the crevices. I couldn't say when because I had passed out.

Soup

K put oil in a heavy-bottomed pan over medium heat. When the oil was hot, M added the onions, the carrots, and the celery. I seasoned with salt and pepper. Q sautéd for 2 minutes. M added the tomato and garlic. 2 minutes later, K added the white beans. I stirred in the water while M added the rosemary and seasoned with more salt and pepper. The liquid was brought to a boil. M reduced the heat to medium-low and continued to cook until the beans were tender, about 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 1/2 hours. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, the remaining olive oil, rosemary and garlic were combined by K. K brought the mixture to a simmer and cooked until the garlic was golden, about 10 to 12 minutes. I removed the saucepan from the heat and strained, discarding the rosemary and garlic. Using a hand-held blender, Q pureed half of the soup. I added more salt and pepper. Then K stirred in the cooked pasta and continued to simmer for 15 minutes. Q removed the soup from the heat and ladled into individual bowls. I served the remaining oil and bread on the side. This recipe yielded 4 servings.

Dwight Gardiner / Midnight Cowboy

For my son Mark, who also heard coughing
in the other room & stories of Pete Knight.
Written in the early 80s.

When Pete got up and
named his horse Midnight
I wonder if he knew it
rhymed with his last name?

In fact, it was a
homonym. Nobody ever
named a horse homonym.

•

The big sky was the
same, grain elevators standing
proud against a big sky. This was Homonym,
Alberta.

•

When you rhyme you
rhyme, the horse said,

Mr. Ed, a talking
horse show, ride off into
the sunset kind of
story, with a bam
ending.

A story in which you
have to get shot in
the last chapter,

or it becomes a kind of Moby
Dick.

•

There were always a
lot of Indians around.

They seemed to belong
here. Even when they
shopped for onions they
seemed to understand
what they were doing.

Their bodies were the
same broken constructions
of human beings, and
they put themselves in
big trucks and
drove away, speaking
sounds nobody understood
and nobody knew where they
went.

•

As children we had sing
songs and played ping-pong
but we never really knew
what to do other than get
up off the floor.

Later we had chuckwagon races,
and I always won. I
was the only one
whose father had turned a red wagon
into a chuckwagon.

You have to put a lot of
things in a chuckwagon.
It shows that when you
get chased by Indians
you won't starve or
wonder where the poker
chips are.

•

When I rode in the
Calgary Stampede parade it
was hot in the chuckwagon,

and I spent a lot of time
waving and wondering where
the Indians were.

They were all out there at
Stoney, having
contests that their bones break just
like a whiteman's.

•

So Pete was a little different
from us kids in Homonym, or
Sarcee or Alberta, when
he got up. His bones were
busted just like the rest
of us but he wanted more.

•

After his body broke for
the last time, Jake
drove across the
prairies selling
surgical gloves to
Nanton nurses. The
prairies were easy to
drive, not that sad old
bronc of the past.

In Okotoks, it seemed
easy. Cowboys
like challenges,

big boxes with horns that shake
and groan against
a big dirt sky.

In Okotoks, big rock, the
Indians spoke Indian
and the sky still looked
the same.

Jake found it easy to
get up with his broken
bones. Later they would sell
tickets to drive across
the wheat to see the big
rock. The horse said

"One man's junk is another
man's treasure.
One man's trash is another
man's pleasure."

•

With a tromboid hemorrhoid
he spoke
with a tromboid hemorrhoid.

Even the elevators looked
pained against the sky
of caged gold.

The Indians do not dream
of Nanton water until
they turn 80.

•

"Have you noticed that the
birds are no longer here?
They left last October and they
never came back.

I think it's the seed. You
remember the chickadees? They
ate treated seed and
never came back. You

look out tomorrow and
you'll see no birds." Nothing

but crows by the medicine tree.

•

There are big black buzzards
on the outskirts of Calgary.

Maybe it's my imagination.
Maybe it's the zoo.

Bigger than a condor in heat
I have noticed the absence of
birds in High River.

The death rate is unusual.
There is always coughing

in the other room, perhaps

a tweet, a magpie, an
auctioneer, on the outskirts
of Calgary, I saw a buzzard.

•

On the range, they put
up tentpoles, one word,
and then put them in
chuckwagons. Dolly

a full-blooded Blood. Nobody
talks about the horses, horses

from Sarcee, horses from heaven.
Where did the birds go?

•

Bad seed from farmers' sons,
treated seed.

“You don’t have to be from
Haiti to die,” the horse said.

The horse never slept again.

•

The Hudderites came into town
in purple checkered scarves smelling
like fresh baked bread and
nobody noticed.

The farmers were standing around
watching the Indians get
into a big truck that drove
away leaving more mud than
a chuckwagon race.

The farmers were always standing
around watching the Indians buy
onions and their crops die.

Then the sky came out and
everybody forgot the grasshoppers

and why they were there.

Reid Gilbert / Performing The Capilano Review

TCR has always presented a high ratio of image to text, arranged in a particular visual aesthetic created by its founding editor, Pierre Coupey, and followed exactly by some subsequent editors and somewhat more loosely by others. The second series, beginning in 1989, continued to reflect Coupey's dual interest as a painter and a poet. Typically, an issue publishes 80 pages of text and eight images. During Coupey's editorship, the images were interspersed among the text; in more recent issues, colour images have most often been printed on coated stock in a signature in the centre, but black and white images can appear through the magazine and, in fact, some recent issues have contained more than one section of four-colour images.

To me, this interrelationship of text and image has always seemed more than the simple accident of selection, and I have long suspected it contributes to the magazine's success. Like many of the published texts, the illustrations often stretch genre boundaries. Perhaps I notice the linkage of image to text in each issue and the elasticity of genre because these interplays among signs gesture toward a fundamental characteristic of theatre—the genre that most interests me and has been least represented in the Review. While the position of Drama Editor, which I held from 1982 to 1988, disappeared in 1989,[1] and very few plays have ever been published by *The Capilano Review*, I suggest there is something essentially theatrical in the very process of reading the magazine.

To me, the Review—and here I mean the actual little magazine, the artifact—is a kind of concretization of the process of theatrical reception. (It was for this reason that I designed issue #35, which I guest edited in 1985, to be a rehearsal journal and a visualization of the process of building a play.) Like a play, the magazine *performs itself* as a vehicle for interpretation, a physical entity to be "read onto" by the readers who are, simultaneously, "reading out" the content of various literary and visual texts. Readers are not asked merely to absorb the works, images, and ideas of the texts and to react to each, but are invited to link the visual with the verbal (and to do so in a manner learned from previous "attendance" at this magazine) in a kind of unfolding aesthetic performance.

Of course, reading any text or viewing any image demands an involvement by the reader's imagination—that is axiomatic to the process of reading. What I find

provocative here, however, is the possibility that each magazine, which may appear on the surface simply to be a collection of closed texts, actually encourages the reader to enter or leave at various points (rather than only to read from cover to cover) because of the exchanges among written and visual media. I suspect most readers flip forward and back so that each reader links different texts in tandem or superimposes one text already read onto another, or onto an image seen or to be seen, so that different "writings" emerge. While a reader may move about in any anthology, the editorial strategy of *TCR* appears to urge such movement: the act of reading the magazine is presented, then, as a species of performative, an "acting-forth" that creates meaning in its genesis and is brought into being by the readers as they combine and respond, remember and anticipate, superimpose image onto text, and build a singular metatext during the period of each engagement.

By this process, the Review—which exists as a completed and printed record—curiously takes on an essential characteristic of theatrical performance. Peggy Phelan has observed that "Theatre continually marks the perpetual disappearance of its own enactment" (115), continuing Derrida's comment in *Writing and Difference* that "The theatre is born of its own disappearance…" (233; see also Phelan 115). In creating itself in the instant of its own demise, theatrical writing differs from the writing of a story or poem that is already formed, as Atwood once imagined it, on a page that "waits, pretending to be blank" ("The Page," sec.1) and exists before and after the moment of reading. Something lurks inside the page—a conscious comment by the author or, as Atwood posits, "everything that has ever happened" (sec. 5), or, as I might claim, a Derridean "trace"—and most readers, she suggests, passively submerge themselves in it, some of them, indeed, "without deciding, without meaning to" (sec. 4).

They also, however, only turn the pages front to back. Atwood urges another entry to the page, an approach that resembles the reception of drama and differs from a typical reading strategy. She notices there is not only writing on the front and back of the page, but also writing "*beneath*" it (sec.5; original emphasis). Apparently empty, but dangerously full, this "underneath-ness" waits in the depths of the blank page for its reader to find it just as it waits at the core of drama for its auditor to "write" it.

By suggesting such an avenue to the page's core, Atwood opens out the process of reading fiction and poetry, but she also makes clear that most readers do not follow this path; instead they take other routes that are equally possible and are also useful in reading the page. By contrast, there are no other routes to follow in viewing a play.

Only theatre fills the void at its centre exclusively by the act of reception. Theatre is a creation not of its playwright or director, but of its spectators, who write the story onto the bodies of the actors and onto an auditory and visual semiosis, forging a mise-en-scene arising from an ancient *mise-en-abyme*, that exists outside, but lends itself to, the spectator's desire for presence—including her psychological need to locate her own presence in space-time.[2]

Such a birthing into dramatic language (which is a marriage of the semantic and the physical) depends upon repetition: the repetition of theatrical conventions, of bodily movements and of received literary devices. Indeed, Butler's observation about gender, which she considers to be simply "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (33), can be applied equally powerfully to theatre, where "repeated stylization[s]" create the "body" of the play. Taken all together, the history of the Review (which can also be viewed as a "body of work," of course) has evolved a kind of theatrical "body" by a similarly "repeated stylization" extending from its first issue.

Subscribers pick up each issue knowing the general appearance of this "body," but are astonished by the costumes it—this time—wears; the postures it—this time—assumes; the set upon which it—this time—dances; and the pictures that—this time—dress that set. The act of reading the issue—especially for subscribers, as for habitual theatregoers—is the moment of unfolding of the drama and, as in a play, that moment fades as each page is turned. Like drama, the Review recedes, drawing the reader toward the lack at its core, asking for a partner in inscription and revealing itself only by the mutual act of naming.[3]

To use Austin's terms, *TCR*—in its entirety, in the history this issue celebrates—is not, then, a constative utterance, but is, rather, a performative utterance.[4] Because they hold a printed magazine, readers may approach any text a second time (and, in doing so, seem to deny the link with performance), but approached in a different order, the second reading simply becomes another performative act. The issue opens itself again for viewing and, in this genus of speech act, the issue waits again to be "read onto."

I have always regretted that so few plays have appeared in the Review. Perhaps, instead, this absence should be read as a mark of "the immanence of its own process of enunciation" (Zizek 99), a placeholder to be "written onto" by the readers. Drama

exists in the Review not in kind, but in process. Indeed, it is the very immateriality of its performing "body" that links reading *TCR* to the disappearance of the drama, and makes reading the magazine an act of theatrical reception.

NOTES

[1] As did the separate positions of poetry and fiction editor, it should be noted.

[2] For a much fuller discussion of this notion, see my series of articles on Panych and Gorling's *Overcoat*, especially "Panych and Gorling: 'Sheer' Texts 'Written' in(to) Perception." In this small comment I am assuming definitions and employing an approach based in what I have elsewhere attempted to define and to theorize in depth as the theatrical "sheer."

[3] This notion of a self constituted in loss and interpellated through performative acts is essentially Lacanian. Cf. Lacan's notion of the formulation of the self in the mirror stage in *Ecrits*, and his later insistence that the subject is read backwards from the Other, discussed at length by Slavoj Zizek (102-06, *et passim*).

[4] See Sandy Petrey for a particularly helpful overview of Austin's notions of utterance and speech act.

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Will Goede / Learning Chinese

At dawn a scratched recording of the national anthem broke from hundreds of speakers and the masses rose and praised the holiness of grain quotas and the sanctity of a new fleet of container ships prowling the harbors of the world, and then a string of stirring Red Army songs called ten thousand students and workers of the institute out to the September sidewalks and courtyards for an hour of tai qi rites.

But Ritter was having a bad dream. He was late, his legs were leaden, he couldn't find his classroom anywhere. Yeee! Errr! Yeee! Errrr! erupted from below his windows in the *Zhuanjialou*. He jumped from his bed and crossed the cold concrete floor leading to the toilet and wheeled the massive taps that distended from configurations of iron plumbing knowing hot water came only while at breakfast or dinner. He'd been in China only two weeks but had already mastered the art of filling the tub with scalding brown water and then sprinting off to breakfast. The water would be lukewarm when he returned.

"Aren't you coming?" he said to the lump in the bed. Sometimes Laurie just pulled the pink silk brocaded coverlets tight in hopes the day would go away. "Don't forget," he said at the door, "the *waiban* is taking us on a tour of Carpet Factory Number One this afternoon!"

Eggs smelling like fish. Tea-like coffee. Dough bread. Only a few of the new foreign teachers came down to breakfast anymore, preferring instead to stay in their rooms and boil up real coffee fetched "inside" from Hong Kong and heat a plate of *youtiao*—a flatbread with brown sugar baked over it—which they bought on the street outside the college gate. Ritter sat alone at his table. He was Number Thirteen. He tried eating the eggs without tasting them while nodding politely to the four cooks watching him from the doorway of the scullery. This was the one thing he hadn't got used to. You couldn't move a finger without drawing a crowd. It got to you after a while. At the Ming Tombs Laurie had turned and stared back. Another time she had made faces. Nothing bothered them. They didn't know they were staring. They'd never had anything to stare at, except perhaps a good book burning or an all-day parade of Little Red Books, but now that the country was opening up, here were all these things to see.

You had to think like a rock star and enjoy the status.

On his way back he greeted the girls who cleaned the apartment. "*Ni zao*, *Xiao Ni*, *Xiao Du*!" They were on edge whenever he spoke Mandarin. Still, he felt it his duty to let them know he was right at home in the Motherland. "*Chi fan le ma? Jiantian yao gan shenma*?" They gazed on helplessly and then rushed off with a stack of air-dried sheets and towels, casting glances back and giggling. He shouted after them: "*Wo de gan huo qu le!*"

Nobody in Number One Department, where Ritter was going to teach English, seemed to know what to do with him either.

This one, they said, wouldn't sit quietly in his apartment at the *Zhuanjialou* like the other new foreigners, and he could speak more than the usual ni hao Chinese. He had even got some of his students to take him to down to Number One Department Store to help him purchase a complete Mao suit of blue, including the soft cap. They had discovered, too, that they could not escape him. He followed them around asking questions, and expecting answers! He complained the textbook for his English classes was useless. "It was published in 1949, for God's sake!" he said. "That's over thirty years ago." They put restlessness down as yet one more affliction that possessed foreigners. He was always asking how things worked and why they worked that way, and wouldn't it be better if you did it this way. As if it *could* be done this way.

One day this *zhuanjia* from Canada had taken into his head to knock at the one door in the department always closed and locked. How did he know what lay behind it? And he kept on knocking too until finally the door was opened, and the man appeared in it and confessed that, Yes, he was Lao Ni, and, Yes, he was the department secretary, and, Indeed, he was in charge of just about everything and everybody. They heard the foreigner ask Lao Ni if he could come in and discuss the English textbook and were amazed then to see the two men disappear into the office.

Ritter found the small room hot and dark and stuffy as a coffin. Secretary Ni sat and drew his pant legs up so Ritter could see the comic pink long johns and his pale ankles. He offered a cigarette, which was refused, and then the tall thin man lit one himself. "All foreign friends use *L.G. Alexander Reader* many, many years now," he said, in an off-brand BBC English. "Everybody like it. This *very* good book."

Surely an exaggeration since Ritter was only the third foreign teacher since China opened its doors in 1980. He tried to keep the revulsion out of his voice when he said,

"I don't know why anyone would want to learn how to ride an elephant in a circus parade or bake an angel food cake or get to church on time… order special cuts of beef at a butcher shop or engage the preacher in polite postprandial conversation. Our students don't live in a small British village, they're going to be air traffic controllers in Shanghai and Beijing."

Lao Ni tried again: "This our only English reader."

"Out with the Four Olds, sir!" Ritter said. "You can't serve the people with this book." The Secretary laughed hard because the foreigner had spoken the magic words of 1982, but it was the laughter of dismissal. "Perhaps I will write my own text then… where can I find a typewriter?"

"Oh, you see we have no English typewriter."

"Okay," said Ritter resourcefully, pulling from his satchel one of the textbooks he had brought from Vancouver, "I'll just run off some copies of this book on your xerox machine. You *do* have a xerox machine?"

"Yes, we have… duplicating machine." Lao Ni took a giant key from his desk, climbed to his feet, crossed the room and unlocked a small closet. "Come in with me." He pulled a string to a tiny ceiling light bulb and pointed to a large black machine. It had the look and smell of a tank that somehow had survived the War against the Japanese.

"No peoples want use this machine now." The old man laughed heartily and showed his two front teeth. "Ink go on floor but not on paper." Ritter walked over and studied it. "Teacher Ritter, you know, maybe we find a man repair this machine for you."

"No, I'll just… use the blackboards. You *do* have blackboards?"

Lao Ni nodded and said, "I give you, my foreign friend, the best blackboards in China!"

In the late 1970s The Beijing Technical Institute was created out of the backlots of The Red Star Film Studios, which had produced such runaway hits as "Our Valiant Soldiers Save The Motherland from the Japanese Monsters" and "The Immortal Dr. Bethune" and "Chairman Mao is the Reddest Sun in the Sky."

Ritter stopped to study the Hollywood-like archway over the front gate, festooned now with red flags with bold yellow characters welcoming new students and proudly proclaiming the school's name in both Chinese and English. He walked past the

bubbling rock fountain and the small pagoda and the real grass lawns workmen were busy trimming with hair clippers. He saw the grey sandstone structures of the old movie studios, massive proletarian boxes broken only here and there by secretive windows. And the two large windowless barns, now cold and dark, that had been sound stages where the Eighth Route Army vanquished the Japanese imperialists, and the patriotic Communist generals plotted the overthrow of the comprador Guomindang landlords.

He strolled past the new classroom building facing the side gate and followed a road of lacy plum trees and pools cloudy with tiny white and gold fish to Building Number Ten, the teachers' building. It had once been a labyrinth of preview theatres, editing rooms, and projection booths with foot-thick steel doors and small windows up high at the roof line. He noted hundreds of students facing the walls of the building and reciting aloud their morning lessons, and, as he passed, some turned to study him. "Good morning, Mr. Professor!" one fellow giggled and quickly turned away hoping nobody heard him.

His office was on the second floor. It had been one of the projection booths—a cave already hot and airless. He knew opening the window admitted a fine hot grit blowing straight down from Mongolia. He sat and worked at his lesson plans. He had no textbook. Every class was made up on the spot. On the floor sat a black iron fan that reminded him of the one his mother had bought when he was a boy. He turned it on, and it filled the room with the odour of electricity and made the heat even more oppressive.

There was a knock at his door. A tall thin man in a white short-sleeved shirt and blue pants held together by a thick leather belt snaked twice around him stepped into the room.

"My name is Feng Zhouli," he announced. "May I please come in?" He had a chinless face, a long neck and a sharp Adam's apple, and his round thick glasses made his small eyes look like pimples. "They're all afraid of you, the young teachers," he said, "so I appointed myself to come and talk to you… but now I think maybe I am frightened too."

"Frightened, Professor Fang?"

"Oh, not 'Fang'! I look like a snake but I don't bite. My name is 'Feng' and it rhymes with 'fun'. You can practice it at home." He looked around the room as if

studying a work of art, and the eyes finally rolled back again around to the foreigner. "You are our number three foreign…" He giggled. "I almost say 'foreign devil.' The expert before you, she went home a month after she came because of the food."

"Not the heat?"

"And the heat of course." He glanced down at the oscillating fan. "You see, my job is simple. I must keep an eye on you. We can't have you walking around without someone keeping an eye on you, can we?"

"No, I suppose not."

Feng leaned down over the fan and tinkered with it knowingly. After a moment or so he turned it back on, and it whirred quietly.

"I wouldn't worry about me," he said, pointing to his thick lenses. "One must be able to *see* if one wants to keep an eye on people, don't you think?" Ritter felt the fan blowing warm wind. "Also I have got a very bad… may I say 'track record'? Yes, that's the proper idiom. You see, I was put in charge of the first expert, the one before the one who came before you. She was from Montreal. She fell in love with one of her students but before I could report it to the morality squad, she went and met his parents and talked about getting married, and so they sent her back to Canada and the boy out to the countryside."

Ritter said, "Will you have a cup of tea?" Feng nodded and sat on one of the hard chairs along the wall while Ritter took up the *ping* with the boiled water in it and dropped a few dry leaves of Hangzhou Tiger tea into each cup. "Teacher Feng," he began, "I might as well tell you that I'm not like the ones before me. I came to China for a purpose. I spent most of my life getting here. I plan to spend what's left of it here in Beijing, and I'll be wanting to know everything."

"But I don't know anything, and I don't know anyone who does. Even if they do, they won't admit it. Remember we are Chinese. We are inscrutable." Together they laughed heartily, and Feng got to his feet. "All right, let us get started. May I ask if you are married?" Ritter nodded. "Good, I can scratch this off my list. And your wife is with you?"

"But you already know all this."

"And I suppose you both will need a teacher of Chinese?"

"I know a little, my wife knows nothing. We will depend on you."

"Don't worry then, the blind will lead the blind."

Through Feng's thick lenses, over the next months Ritter and Laurie saw The Forbidden City, *Beihai*, *Tiantan*—where Feng and he played games at the whisper wall and perhaps for the first time provoked the suspicions of the college's Party leaders who watched from a safe distance—*Yonghegong* , the Great Hall of the People, the Revolutionary Museum, *Tian'anmen*. Wherever the Party leaders took them, Feng was there to interpret the scene. They visited the rural communes and production brigades, the rug factories and prisons, the porcelain and jade workshops, and he was always at their side insinuating the real story, the Cathay that lay behind the facade.

And at banquets to celebrate the long and glorious friendship between China and Canada, college leaders lifted snifters of maotai to Dr. Norman Bethune and to their new comrades who had just come from China's favourite foreign country.

Though nothing was said about any Gold Mountain.

Then one day Feng did not come to the department.

A week went by. Ritter went to look for him. Teacher Chen sat at her desk and informed him she hadn't seen Feng at all recently but she wouldn't speculate on his whereabouts, said, "*Bu zhidao, bu zhidao*." He knew it was code. *I know nothing, it's none of my business, you'll get in trouble if you keep asking.* The other teachers bu zhidaoed too. He knocked on the door of the Omnipotent but it seemed Lao Ni was out.

When he returned to his room, he found a young girl waiting for him. "Ni Zao, Ritter laoshi," she said, her voice a small cracked bell. "My name Teacher Mei and I new English teacher to you."

She taught him Chinese as if it were baby talk and hurried through the lesson because she wanted to talk about the paperback she pulled from her black bag—a well-thumbed copy of *The Godfather*. She thought it a true picture of America and seemed a little deflated when Ritter told her that where he lived, most people don't go about packing revolvers and shooting each other in barber stools.

He hid what he really knew. Two could play the same game.

After the lesson he hurried over to the *waiban* office. The room was thick with cigarette smoke. The officials welcomed him and laughed and laughed, and he was given tea and made to sit and talk at length about the good life in Canada, and when it was their turn, they politely informed him that Teacher Feng had asked to be relieved of his duties because he was carrying a difficult teaching workload.

It was a blow to his dream. He thought of walking out on them. Maybe Laurie was right. Maybe this wasn't going to work. Many foreign teachers had early on become sick or disillusioned and had gone home. Maybe he should go home too. It would make Laurie happy! Or maybe just tough out for a year and then go home. But still, looking around at the kindly old men and laughing and practicing his Chinese, he knew in his heart he was where he wanted to be. This was the way things worked here. Before he left, he would tell them he expected Teacher Feng back as soon as possible.

Because he planned to stay.

It's what Norman Bethune had done.

G. Maria Hindmarch / from Swimming with Cancer

17 May 1999: Breast Core Needle Biopsy

Monday morning, I call my dentist's office to ask the receptionist the name of the freezing Dr. Hupfau no longer uses on me.

"It's on the front of the folder," I say. "It says use something, and in red it says no to something else."

Dr. Hupfau comes on the line. "Tell them to use Isocaine," he says. "No epinephrine, say 'No adrenalin.'" He explains, "Most locals have adrenalin in them."

Penny Connell and I enter the Cancer Agency on the second floor and take the elevator to the third. This seems odd to us. We usually walk up three or four flights at the college where the elevators are slow and the stairs visible to encourage walking. The last time I was here, I looked at the emergency map, and was surprised that the staircases are hidden away from the central core. I don't see doors or signs anywhere indicating a stairwell.

After we check in at reception, we follow the blue lines to the sonogram and mammogram waiting area, and I put my card in the plexiglass container. We discuss how different this May journey is than our May journey to Greece years ago. We talk about where we'll go for lunch: Italian, Japanese, Lebanese, or a soup and sandwich spot called Beetnix. It's only 11:00, but I'm hungry.

The technician comes, shows me to the booth closest to her machine, and I change.

"Can my friend come in to watch?" I ask her.

"No," she says, "There isn't enough room. We have an extra doctor today."

I give Penny my purse, and the technician brings me into the same small room I was in for the organ scans where I climb onto the table. She quickly positions me and locates on the sonogram the same area in my left breast she found the other day. This time, I can look up at an angle and see the screen. That's me. That wiggly black area is cancer.

When I meet the doctors, I don't catch their names.

"Could you not use adrenalin?" I ask. "My dentist uses Isocaine."

"Why?"

"I've had extensive dental work. Something he called epinephrine took longer and longer to thaw each time. Four days the last time."

The doctor looks a little flustered.

"I don't mind taking the extra shots."

"Did you have a rapid heart beat?"

"No—I just couldn't get rid of the freezing. I couldn't think."

She accepts this and gets something else.

I close my eyes so I don't have to see the size of the hypodermic, but the injection is soon over and doesn't hurt at all.

Once she's certain the anaesthetic is sufficient, she makes a quick, small incision and sticks in a core biopsy needle. A white point with a thin tail floats onto the screen. Everything is moving—the depths shift, the horizon isn't fixed. The doctor starts to fish with the needle for the exact level, and the cancer bobs away from her. The point disappears from the screen.

"Dorsal," says the tech. She adjusts the image so the black appears again a little higher up on the screen.

"There it is," I say, referring to the white point of light, "below on the left—gone now."

Both the technician and I have a clearer view than the doctor does.

The white emerges further to the right.

She moves the needle in trying to get close to the floating black nest which is somewhat like a jelly fish, the edges undefined, the body not solid.

"There," says the doctor.

"Got a purchase?" I ask.

"You are going to hear a shot."

I wait. I can see the white arc—like a tiny harpoon. My eyes close as I feel and hear the shot. It's like a single bang from a nail gun. When I open my eyes, the black island has disappeared.

The doctor takes her instrument to a container and empties it into a tube of liquid. The two doctors mutter something about it.

The doctor tries again. The cancer moves, slips to the right, and the technician brings it back almost to the center of the screen.

"There it is—at nine o'clock."

The white point lowers to about eight.

She shoots again. This time I concentrate on keeping my eyes open, but again they shut. She removes the second core. I have the sense that the aim was too high.

She tries again. Closer. I feel this time she will hit it dead center.

"Good," says the technician while the doctor empties the core into a container.

"Fishtailed," says the other doctor when the sample floats the wrong way.

"Can I do another one?" she asks, "Just to make certain?"

"Yes," I say.

I can see the needle or light point as quickly as the tech.

"Bottom left."

"Over there. There. Forty-five degrees right."

The doctor can't. It's ridiculous that they don't have a second screen facing the doctor at the correct angle so she doesn't have to turn her body at the same time she explores and tries to locate the correct layer inside my breast.

"I'm going to try to center it. Just keep the needle steady."

The black blob slips down to the center of the screen as if the technician scrolled upwards and then brought it closer to the surface.

The doctor tries again. Again. Five needle core biopsies in all. By the time she is finished, almost two hours have passed.

"You were brilliant," says the tech.

"Yes," says the doctor as she bandages me, "Fast."

The tech gives me a bag of ice plus a white wash cloth to stuff into my bra to apply pressure. By the time I dress myself, I don't care where Penny and I eat: I just want something warm and comforting.

Weeks later, I read that the needle shoots at a speed of 78 miles per hour.

16 June 1999: Who's there?

3:00 a.m.

I get up to pee and for a second or so I don't recognize who's there in the mirror: ridged bald head, high cheekbones, distinct yet balanced face, neither male nor female, a little scar on the right side.

6:00 a.m.

Grey west-coast morning. I go down to make my coffee and pick up *The Vancouver Sun* from my front porch. I come back to bed holding orange juice, coffee, thermos and paper. Then I snuggle under my floral duvet and read the first page. When I turn it, I see something move on top of Gordon Payne's painting of Ford Creek on Hornby Island. Totally startled, I shake my head and then see my black glass frames and my skull moving in the upper corner. The sandstone is so alive and has so many shapes. I love how simple yet intricate Gordon's landscapes are.

4:00 p.m.: Doctor Cancels

My GP, not his nurse, calls me. I am supposed to be seeing him for his last appointment today at 6:00 p.m. in order to talk. Then I'll go to my Healing Circle.

"I have shingles. I've had to have other doctors take over my births. It would be safer for you to rebook."

"Okay."

June 17: Want to Swim

I want to swim. I haven't for a whole month. My muscles miss their toning. My heart and lungs miss their workout. My bones and joints miss the utter ease of being surrounded by water. I especially love the stretches, the extensions of arms and legs that only come after thirty-five lengths when my reach seems to increase almost an inch. I usually swim a mile, sixty-four lengths: three lengths of crawl, one length of breast up until fifty, then crawl and breast lengths alternating. Today, I'll be happy if I can do half of that.

I call Rae Nickolichuk, a young Capilano College English instructor who used to be a lifeguard, because I want her to be with me in case anything should happen. Bad news for today—she has to mark English Placement Tests for someone else. We arrange to meet tomorrow at Ron Andrews Pool.

But ten minutes later, I want to go right now. Stop behaving like a six year old, I tell myself. Go to Templeton Pool. Tell the lifeguard. But take the car just in case you can't walk back.

When I get there, I hesitate about wearing my bathing cap. Certainly don't need one. I pull it on anyway, so I won't have to put up with stares.

"I'm in week one of a chemo cycle," I tell the young, blonde lifeguard. "Can you watch over me?"

"Certainly." He gives me a big smile, and I'm off.

I decide I'm going to do forty, a kilometer, no more. The first six are easy and feel good—just like they usually do. I love water. My arms stretch out; belly, back, and bottom float higher than almost all men's do. It's as if I plane just inches under the water's surface. After ten lengths, I wave over at the guard indicating I'm okay. After twenty, I'm into the faster swim. At thirty, I start alternating breast and crawl lengths—the cool down. Afterwards, I feel great, myself again.

18 June: Another Swim

Rae Nickolichuk and I swim at Ron Andrews. I don't wear a swim-cap this time because I've no hair to keep from the pool, and the cap's protecting nothing but my scalp. We each have a lane to ourselves: my idea of heaven. Every so often, I look over at Rae who glides along much faster than I do. I swim 64 lengths, no problem, feels good. My finger tips and toes vibrate.

20 June: Another Swim

Swim again with Rae. 64 lengths.

21 June : Damn Blister

"I have a blister from my nose to my lip," I say to Jennifer, Dr B's receptionist at the Cancer Agency.

"Dr B is on duty this afternoon," she says. "I'll speak with her and call you back."

An hour later, during my normal nap time, I am in a waiting room and almost falling asleep on the only hot day we've had all June. Opposite me, a Japanese-

Canadian in his early twenties falls asleep sitting up. Another patient and I get up and lift the young man's legs onto his bench so that he can be more comfortable.

When I see Dr B, she gives me a prescription. "Without nostril hairs, you can expect your nose to run."

June 23: My GP

When I do get to see Dr M, we're both uneasy. I don't say anything about the letter I wrote to him and all my doctors, but neither does he. We hesitate.

"How are the treatments going?" he asks.

"Fine, so far. I've lost my taste-buds this time, my sense of touch last time, my hair the first time—chemo is powerful. Look at this cordy vein." I stick my right arm out at him. "I also get lights inside my head from one of the drugs."

"You have to have surgery?"

"Yes—a total mastectomy."

Pause.

"Have you a surgeon?"

"Yes—but I haven't seen her yet."

"You never know," he says. "Nowadays with reconstruction and with doctors who want to conserve, you might not need a mastectomy."

Pause. This is awkward.

"Do you use the Internet?" he asks. "There's all sorts of information there that you might read—there are even cancer chatrooms."

"No, not yet—but I do have access through the college."

"Do you visualize?"

"I'm not tranquil enough."

"It works well for children."

"I just run around saying, 'Zap it, kill, kill, kill, kill!'" I'm startled by the power of my voice.

He laughs lightly. Is he scared?

"Why did it take you from Monday till Friday to give me my diagnosis?"

"My wife was mad at me about that too," he says.

"Why? You knew it wasn't going to go away by itself."

"I wanted to have an appointment for you at the Cancer Agency."

"So you could pass me on." Too bad he didn't do that in February.

"Little micro-cells," I say to myself on the way home, "I want to kill you. Go. Fly away. Drop away. Starve. Burn out. Disappear, you tiny shit-heads."

I also identify *with* the cancer: those cells want to live just as much as I do.

Crystal Hurdle / from The Eternal Lolita: signposts and tombstones

For Poets Who Dream of *For Men Who Dream of Lolita*

Take solace:
Shadows of the young girl
and the man who ruined her
will not ruin you

The book's beauty will make you weep
raw metaphors
silence before page turnings
then, a soft rustle
as if an errant girl
were making good her escape
You look up
and no one is there
The leaves of the ficus sway

You will wish you had written it
but soldier on
in nightmare wakefulness
in your dreamy daze
Lo beckons all with saving grace

Safely Solipsized: Lolita on the Silver Screen

The Rejected Screenwriters

One might worry that
the script will be too Mametian
or too Pinteresque

say that five times in a row
for a tongue twister
to do a twelve year old proud

but how could the 1962 one be
too Nabokovian?

The Aspiring Politician

Just say No to drugs
Just say No to
the distribution of Lolita

I want no blood
no semen
on my hands

Just say No
I have your best interests at heart
You can trust me

The First Child Actress

I plummeted in a lithium haze
could never get it right
with men, with roles
Everything was too old or not old enough

The exposure was too great
Not just a film, but an X-ray
Even my glowing bones were nubile
Radiation eats at me

The Second Child Actress

plucked from over two thousand
at the audition
fresh bud
with her own face on
clearly the one to be Lolita in 1997
stunning in her own right
one of a family of nymphets and one faunlet

continues her acting career
studies at university
likes Creative Writing
lives with her sister
is writing her own happier life

Curb Your Enthusiasm

marathon of episodes
Larry David delightful prick
court jester, minion
edgier than Woody Allen
white lies, liar

argues with ex-girlfriend
molestation by her stepfather
not really incest

"step" does count
says support group leader
Larry momentarily chastened

bad taste
humour from abuse
I bear down on choking chortles
can't believe he said that
Death of irony after 9/11?
Laughter really the best medicine?
I momentarily subdued

He'd see Lolita as raw material
Stand-up comic:
What venereal disease is Humbert
afraid of catching?
[beat] Diaper rash.
Why does Lolita really
have scabs on her knees?
[beat] And what healing ointment
does Humbert Daddy apply?

sound bite
one-liners
raucous laughter swells
on its own beating
S.O.B.ing plays well
not sobbing in the night
no sobbing in the night
no sympathy either

Lolita's Apple Speaks

I am tired of my signification
Why is it always temptation
the Garden of Eden
Eve and phallic symbols
serpent like a Thanksgiving
pig but with me in its fangs?
Crackling flesh fearsome

I want nothing lewd
no cloying flesh

I don't want to be Delicious

Chess Moves

Hotel Room
The Madman,
I go up
filled with terror and delight
Mate in three moves
Mate in two
White retracts its last move
and mates in one

I still keep mute
and in the hush grow strong

Specimen

You draw me
like the city limits
of the town no Rita
was to return to

I'm a filing in your magnetic field
It could be the plot
of one of your comic books
good versus evil
a cliffhanger
the inevitable ending

I'm a pin
I'm pinned
struggling in my double-breasted
full worsted suit
while your Eckleberg eye grows
in the magnifying glass
that channels the sun's rays

and you leaf through
the specimen book
looking for your new find

NOTES

Quotations are from Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, Vintage, 1989, c 1955.

The subtitle of the poem, "signposts and tombstones," comes from p. 3 of *Lolita*.

The first part of the title "Safely Solipsized: Lolita on the Silver Screen" comes from p. 60 of *Lolita*. The terms "faunlet" and "nymphet" are Nabokov's.

For Men who Dream of Lolita is a book of poems by Kim Morrisey.

"Chess Moves" is mostly a found poem from Nabokov's *Poems and Problems*.

Dorothy Jantzen / Introduction to Takayuki Kawabata's poems

In 2000, *The Capilano Review* planned a special issue on contemporary Japanese poetry. As part of Capilano College's faculty exchange program with Aichi Gakusen College in Okazaki, I visited Japan to meet a group of experimental Tokyo poets whose work we planned to publish both in the original Japanese and in English translation.

Translation itself immediately became the focus of our editorial discussions—its creative potential, its power to connect, its revelations about cultural expectations. Kawabata's poems directly address the issues raised by translation and propose a provocative resolution of those issues, although perhaps not the one *The Capilano Review* had envisioned.

This celebratory issue of *TCR* provides an opportunity to bring a small part of that translation project to publication and perhaps also to an editorial resolution.

Takayuki Kawabata / Statement

From my first collection of poems I have actively collaborated with artists, musicians, writers and theatrical persons.

Especially these last years my work has been translated into English by Ms. Kumi Kondo (cellist/translator living in the Netherlands, also translator of these poems), and remixed by other poets (Japanese and American).

I feel that in translations and remixes there is the exact same, or even more creativity than in the creation of the original poems.

For example, in my original poems I have purposely used expressions unique to the Japanese language, archaic words or folklore that are difficult to translate. When the translator must translate the untranslatable, he or she is then required a creativity that is more than that of the original poem. The translator will then transcend the original poet.

In the Japanese classical literature, especially in Waka (a 31 syllable Japanese poem), it was considered a virtue to appropriate an earlier work into your own, and make an adaptation. If you were able to make a good sampling, remix, this was praised. Of course also when you were able to create such a work that was attractive enough that others would want to make samplings or remixes from it. It is only after the printing techniques advanced and books became products, that samplings and remixes were considered a vice.

I feel pleasure when my poems are changed through translations or remixes. I also feel pleasure when my plays are changed through directors or actors. However, these feelings I have seem to be very unique in modern Japan.

As for my poems, because of the amount, please choose only the good ones. Furthermore, it is not a matter of importance to me if you choose to run my Japanese poems in your article or not. Also if my Statement and Contributor's note is too long, please feel free to edit it.

Ocean People

freshwater fish
are safe?
don't cause toothaches
although young !
on mondays
puts salt on its teeth
forgets to dive into the sea
wrapped in seaweed
DNA lies on three layers
DDT PCB Hg.

not to bequeath genes
carved with a cadmium knife
on the back of our breasts
we are a dying people.

Market

a chicken grows on a tree
from the restaurant floor.
his heart goes ~~bankrupt~~ broke,
so he mends it with a sewing
machine, but the needle gets
stuck. he hands from the ~~short~~
~~selling~~ branch, slowly burning
on the grill.

the waiters grow rich
from his ~~lifetime high~~ trauma.

Living Room

I tried to call down my dead sister
she was a director,
but a fortyish middle aged actor
came out instead.

of bowl a move I
chin my with water salt
falls hair white hair black
eyelids me on spread 右 油

Buddha's Foot Haiku

Did he steal them from the girl's make up box
wearing fake long eyelashes,
still as a ghost,
he stares into the comedy on the TV that I just turned on.

Reg Johanson / from Plug

for charlatans

Introduction

Of lecture, of which subject
conditioned deficiencies liberated
to commit
the Gandhi danger
was Kennedy.

Err is defect:
You cheating
makes this
position imperfect.

Take impure, contradictory
Calcutta—
propertied parties
cannot but acknowledge,
mother
it,
accept.

Received activities
of the forefather
distributed

but not understood.
Come three,
come perfect,
come larger.

"It may be like this":
Darwin a
program guide.
The commentary
mentioned us
directly:

As It Is.
Saves mortal research
to never finish.

Maim
not
form.

Charioteer's baffled potency,
lip the charge.
Less history summarized
more personally.

pitch #2

Aspire to the Alternative:
Die in drag.
Collective struggling
for bondage action.
The misuse
of ordinary reactions.
Reaction's pages explained
cannot
purify the basis
that binds.
Devotionals sense
attractive "isms" above,
families execute
valuable greats.
        Consider being
the tree
children hog.
Such is,
still.
The path,
                rendered.

pitch #3

We mean
the famous planets.
The killer's heavy work
to type aims at
lotus.
Boat teachers
know breezes.
Plying killer camels
the economics
of government,
officer of the hungry
stomach for whom
employment perfection
is carts
transmigrated
into people.
Despite sincerity
failed in efforts
to ennoble
guaranteed hell.

pitch #7

In the situation anxiety sparks.
Equally analytical salt.
Eighty percent ocean citizens.
Birds' family constitution.
Platform clash.
Lamentation for stringent children,
the bliss position
births get.

pitch #8

Veins
/ informed machine /
hands eat
high-court judge,
so-called liberation
of a real beggar.

Crawford Kilian / The Early Days of The Capilano Review

When I recently looked through some of the first issues of the Review, published from 1972 to 1974, I was struck by how well I recalled the graphics—the photos, drawings and collages that Pierre Coupey had chosen. They were not mere complements to the texts; they demanded attention on their own terms.

The whole magazine demanded such attention. It reflected a young but surprisingly strong and self-confident culture at Cap College in those early days.

The college had begun as a kind of appendage to West Van Secondary. A two-storey wooden portable had been grafted onto the high school's west wing. This was our overcrowded office and administrative space; we taught in high school classrooms after 4:30, Mondays through Thursdays.

The faculty hired in those days tended to be young, and many of us were still in grad school, working on our degrees. Others were former high school teachers, a bit older but not by much. We all recognized that the college was still a kind of improv act, working with minimal support and maximum imagination.

Linked as we were to Vancouver's universities, we had a good sense of the local arts and literary scene. Some of us were poets; others were writing fiction. We were also keenly aware of an intense political atmosphere: At least one early faculty member was a US Army deserter. A kind of American exile community was already established in Vancouver, and the universities—especially Simon Fraser—were undergoing profound challenges from radical students and faculty.

While no one articulated a political philosophy for Capilano College, something was clearly in the air: in high school classrooms decorated with photos of acceptable literary and historical figures, students talked about protesting the Amchitka nuclear tests in the Aleutian islands. (One of my students would go there on the original Greenpeace voyage.) Environmentalism was becoming an issue, while the American war in Vietnam seemed to go on forever.

In this highly charged atmosphere, many of us young instructors saw ourselves as agents of social change. We were providing post-secondary access to students who would otherwise never have it. We were battling the imperial arrogance of the

universities (who even wanted to approve the faculty we hired to teach academic courses). And we were helping a new generation to find its voices.

The Capilano Review was one of those voices. Its first issue appeared in 1972—not that long after the English department had successfully begged for its own electric typewriter. Pierre Coupey was not only its first editor, but also its energetic promoter. He knew both the young writers and the old established authors, and he recruited them both.

Earl Birney, one of Canada's best-known poets, contributed a "semiotic" poem in the first issue—what we also called a concrete poem, one typographically organized to look like what it was about. That first issue also featured poems by Evgenii Evtushenko and Andrei Vosnesenky, two poetry superstars of the Soviet Union.

The contents pages featured the names of little-known Canadian writers who would eventually become famous: George Bowering, John Newlove, Susan Musgrave, Jack Hodgins, bp Nichol, Audrey Thomas, Lionel Kearns. Bill Bissett was then so obscure that he still spelled his name with capital letters.

Whether we realized it or not, *The Capilano Review* had provided a foothold for a whole generation of Canadian writers. They in turn made us part of the country's literary community.

It also gave students and faculty a voice and a venue. Our photography students displayed their very impressive work in its pages. A student named Janice Harris published a story; she would later become a long-serving councilor in the District of North Vancouver, and a one-term mayor.

Meanwhile, faculty contributors included Bill Schermbrucker, Pierre, Gladys (later Maria) Hindmarch, and me. Other contributors became faculty later, including Stan Persky and the winner of the 2006 Governor General's Prize for poetry, John Pass.

Some of those early contributors would go on publishing in the Review for years. Others went on to other publications or other locales and careers. But in revisiting those early issues, I see something that *The Capilano Review* identified and nurtured: a spirit of experiment, of testing limits, of gambling on innovation, a spirit that we would go on expressing in our future work as writers, artists, teachers, and citizens. Those who now create the Review have a heritage to be proud of.

August Kleinzahler / Tranter in America

In the jelly, jam, and haircare aisle of the Waikiki Safeway
as if in a capsule whose walls bear decals, a shattered fresco
(*Fatty Arbuckle sipping a Coke at the St. Francis Hotel*, etc.)
the Man from Moruya, a world then a world away again from the chrysanthemums
at the farm's eastern gate, is turned inward by The Percy Faith Strings'
arrangement of an especial old favorite, "*Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues*"—
iridescent oil pouring from the overhead speakers, lubricating
the sentiment *we're all, each of us, one, softening*
and put somehow more at ease by the very available and high-gloss kitsch
the Big Enchilada loves you to hate

or out on the highway, four miles from town, on a stool in the Snack Bar
of Empire Lanes, sneering as the pins go down, all at once and on cue,
with an almighty crack radiating out from Pawtucket to Geyserville;
and you knock back a codeine between gulps of fries as the TV overhead
shows a rerun of *Kojak* you saw a decade ago in a Canberra motel.
You are drifting, drifting ever further from Frank O'Hara's Lower East Side flat
where you sit daydreaming: it is 1959 and you are staring out the window
at a finny Bel Air scarred rather nicely by kids or sleet, parked

on a billboard across the street kittycorner to a Nedick's,
the orange drink tumbling and roiling in its smudged plastic tank
a slow, piss-scented elevator ride up from the cavern
Grendel in warpaint flashes and roars through
and from which the frail sonneteer and critic of ballet
will emerge in twenty-three minutes to knock ever so delicately

just in time for a spot of Jim Beam to keep off the chill, the first
of September, as Frank puts the final touch to *Poem*
the one beginning "Kruschev is coming on the right day!"
then kicks open the door to his study and, breathless as the young Rita Hayworth
after a terrible fright, cries out —*We're on with de Kooning*
for a tequila sunrise at eight, then…How is everyone? All right?

Ryan Knighton / Monkey

Some strange folks live in my building. Hell, many would even agree. Being the resident blind guy, however, I likely clock in as the most peculiar, and that's saying something.

Consider my competition, the guy on the other side of the wall. Dylan lives in the loft next to ours. To describe him, I suggest you imagine a six-foot-four Bon Jovi action figure. Don't be shy, add scarves to your picture and a sexy breeze to make them, you know, dance. My wife Tracy is my informant here, and I trust her. She's seen it all, including Dylan watering plastic ferns in his window, and I'm not talking about a single occasion. Were the ferns real, they'd be in fine shape.

Dylan is pushing forty but still uses a Canadian flag for curtains. It's possibly one of those practical decorating hangovers from his impoverished student days. Or maybe, more likely, it's just that interior design tick specific to guys who listen to Judas Priest really, really loud. Dylan does. Especially when he works out. That is, when he works out by the open window. When he works out shirtless and grunting. By the open window. Tracy also reports that he wears a shark's tooth around his neck and has no irony. Sometimes I'm glad I can't see.

A lot of friendly and interesting people live in our building, too. I just seem to meet the Dylans in the elevator and miss the friendly and interesting ones.

The elevator in our building is a theatre of smell. Some mornings it's bleachy, so I know the cleaning fellow has been through. That's when the elevator is tabula rasa, registering a sort of baseline smell the rest of the day will imprint itself upon. I like to construct mini-narratives about my neighbours and their lives based on the accumulating odours.

For instance, one woman from the fourth floor always sheds a cloud of hairspray and cigarette smoke on her way out. By its strength, I can roughly estimate the hour she left, sort of like carbon dating her movements. My measurements use the half-life of odors instead of isotopes.

Her smell is suggestive in other ways, as well. Because of it, I suspect she is the sister of Norma, a woman who lived above us in our previous building. Like my new neighbour, Norma also smelled of eau de toilette and Matinee Slims, a particular combination which sends me into fits of hydrophobia.

Norma, you see, was an arachnaphobic and an avid gardener. Paranoid and delusional, too. Norma swore she saw invading masses of black widow spiders on her little apartment deck. That's why she set out to drown them. If it hadn't been so hot, maybe she would have set the building on fire, who knows. But out came the gardening hose and, with her deck drain securely plugged, she let her rip and filled it up like a hot tub.

I know what you're thinking—what about the spider nests, the ones behind the building's vinyl siding? It worried her, too. That's why she stuck her gardening hose behind the building's waterproof membrane and gave the inside walls a soak.

I know this because the light fixtures in our apartment, the ones below her deck, subsequently looked like goldfish bowls without goldfish. Lots of water in them, no fish. No spider corpses, either.

Now when I smell that smoky perfume in the elevator, I remember Norma and I speculate that her sister just left for work. Then I listen for running water.

Seems I know most of my neighbours this way. Not by my paranoid fantasies, I mean, but by smell. I can tell, for example, when the guy down the hall, Glen, is home or has left for the day because his apartment has stained him with a pleasant but odd health food store odor. He sells all sorts of organic remedies and herbs and hippie elixirs for the Vancouver bongo-bangers. When he's left for the day, I can smell his passage in the elevator. If he's home, his door is always open, stinking the entire floor with wheat germ and patchouli.

Occasionally my neighbours and their different smells mix in the elevator, telling me who rode down or up with whom a few minutes ago. Certain mixtures register more frequently than others. In them I can detect, with some accuracy, and with some wildly incorrect guesswork, budding romances and blooming affairs. When you're blind, even an empty elevator inspires the pornographic imagination.

Then again, some smells I come across in the elevator elude me altogether. The other day I was overwhelmed by a strong cocktail of baby powder, gasoline and fish. What am I supposed to do with that? Newborns trolling for trout? A mafia hit signal delivered on a go-cart by a new father? Then that pornographic imagination takes a run at it.

But the clearest evidence of strange neighbours is our elevator graffiti. A bit of it comes and goes in felt on the walls, not much, and when it does appear it's pretty

innocuous stuff. “I was here”, “Fuk U”, “Hi Jim”, that sort of thing. The cleaning guy wipes it away and that’s that.

Except for the message some ninny carved into the door. When Tracy first noticed it, she placed my fingertips on the letters. I could feel that our elevator door declares in boldly etched capitals—wait for it—LOAF.

You’re probably wondering what we’re wondering. What the hell does “loaf” mean? And why would anybody want that scratched into an elevator door? Maybe it’s a slacker slogan and the vandal fiend really meant to carve LOAFER into the door. Maybe one of us got on before the job could be finished. Maybe he or she, the one wielding the vigilante protractor, lives in the building and is even too slacker to finish “loafer” off with a bit more carving. I don’t know, except to wonder why they didn’t carve it into their own door, or forehead.

Nevertheless, between Dylan’s plants, the occasional fishy smell and the loaf on the door, I know I’ve got some strange neighbours. Then there’s my own example.

Tracy and I have an efficient blind guy routine when we arrive home from work and we’ve parked the car in the underground lot. She hoofs it up the stairs to the lobby and scoops the mail while I cane my way to the elevator and take it up to meet her. She gets on at the lobby level and up we go together to the third floor, and home. It’s faster this way. Navigating the doors and the winding stairs up to the lobby slows me down too much. Tracy would have to wait for me to catch up, so our arrangement is good blind guy strategy to get home and get to the off-hours cocktails pronto.

The other day I took the elevator and Tracy stepped on board from the lobby as usual. The door shut, then we stared at LOAF for lack of anything else to read. At least it felt that way. We were both quiet and I was facing the door, as I suspect she was too, her shadowy blur beside me in a rigid pose. Tracy was a bit blue that day, so I wasn’t enjoying the silence. It felt heavy, a bit angstful. Being the kind of guy I am, I decided to have a laugh with my gal and see if I could cheer her a bit, just a small laugh, a tension breaker at best.

What I did was—well—er, I jammed my tongue behind my upper lip, turned to Tracy and smiled.

“This,” I explained, removing my tongue for a second, “this is what I would look like if I was a monkey.” I jammed my tongue back into place and smiled like the missing link.

Tracy began to laugh. Uncontrollably. But her laugh came from behind, not beside me, where I thought she was standing.

When the elevator door opened, we stepped out and Tracy said, between convulsions, "See you later, Dylan."

The blur I had taken for Tracy grunted a bewildered acknowledgement, and walked down the hall to his apartment. I hadn't heard him follow Tracy into the elevator, not a footstep, not a tinkle of his shark's tooth. So much for my super-senses.

I bet I know what happened after that. Safe at home, behind locked doors, Dylan probably whipped open his flag and spritzed his ferns, furious and convinced LOAF was my doing. Who else would etch their graffiti other than the blind guy down the hall? It all began to make sense to Dylan. Who would *etch* LOAF other than a guy who gives his neighbours monkeyface?

But that's blindness for you: the other missing link.

Ingrid de Kok / Two Poems

On the hour

Marblehead, Massachusetts

At twelve the street, like me, is not asleep,
not yet. Short careful steps stumble along,
a low voice fidgets to itself
some liquored reminder or recrimination.
At one, a flash of lightning in the dark,
a motorbike rumbles away.
At two a racoon, is it, or skunk
drums the garbage bin, something crashes,
something with a tail slinks away.
At three, silent and cool
a breeze lifts the blind, flaps its
broken wing against the window frame.
Four is here and everywhere night's
low point for the cruel, the brave
and those praying for release.
At five, something fresh wafts upstairs,
unidentified sweet foreign blossom
insinuates into the uncertain morning.
At six, first light enters the room
like an anxious refugee.
At seven I fall asleep.

At the Rembrandt House, Amsterdam

Drypoint etching: sleeping dog

As expected, self portraits,
magisterial brows and turbans,
even when young, his inward gaze
possessed by light and shadow.
Other fleshy burghers,
several struggling Jacobs,
and ladders, thatch,
pollarded willows,
height in a flat landscape.
But unexpected in a dark corner,
this sleeping puppy
at the foot of the stairs or bed.
Tender fidelity etched into animal trust,
the dog's curled form, his soft breathing,
his puppy dreams 400 years old.

Helene Littmann / Small Fires

The fear came upon Miranda midway through the winter afternoon, a closed-in silent silvery day, fir and cedar greenish-black against a white sky. The fear, Miranda had learned, could take many shapes: specific disaster in the here-and-now; panic about the future (where would she go when Louise and Julian finally sold the property?); other people; and swamping guilt for what might be left undone, horses stumbling in barbed wire, or shattering glass up at the main house, locked tight. The ancient horses themselves—hollow-eyed, half-blind, furry and passive as pet rabbits—never scared her, nor did the land itself. And Miranda was never scared of the one thing you'd expect, the disco strobe party lights of the local police lurching down the rutted lane. Miranda and Calvin and Randy had left no path, had never been counted. Nothing led back to her.

Today it was a crackle in the wiring, a flicker, and the shards of a light bulb blowing out with a small pop. Miranda hit the circuit breaker next to the fridge, then stood in sudden dimness unshakably convinced that snakes of blue electric fire were coursing the damp gaps between log walls and jerry-built plywood. She sidled, sniffing, the length of the two darkened rooms, then put on jacket and boots and thrashed through the tall wet dead stalks of things, half garden, half forest clearing, around the foundation of the cabin. Of course nothing was on fire. The fear remained, coiling itself around, looking for something to grab hold of. Miranda locked the door and started to walk.

From the care-taker's cabin, the path led up around a leafless cluster of old fruit trees, and down the lawn past the main house to the ocean. The main house, locked and dead and moss-streaked, was nothing special: wooden, suburban, 1960s era, painted olive green. Louise's father added the sky-lighted painter's studio on the seaward side when he moved to this island twenty years ago, after the divorce. Miranda arrived last year, after he was already hospitalized in Vancouver, and stayed on through the funeral, through the fits and starts of Louise's plans for the property. Summer retreat? Bed and breakfast? Cash windfall? Louise was intermittently sentimental, but in fact the place held for her no childhood memories; her father moved there the year after she left for college.

Today Miranda walked down the lawn past the pocket beach, a strip of gravel at high tide. The cure for fear was movement, one foot in front of the other.

There were sensible, indeed urgent, reasons Miranda was not going to give anyone—not Louise, not Sasha at the health food store in the village by the ferry landing—a full and frank account of the past five years. But her real reluctance went deeper than caution. After all, Miranda didn't distrust Sasha, or even Louise. Neither of them would dial 911. Rather, they'd be impressed, since what Miranda had done with Calvin and Randy only made literal ideas both Sasha and Louise believed in. Sasha once sat down in front of a front-end loader, up a logging road under the branches of towering old-growth spruce. Louise made part of her living writing reports for a PR firm that specialized in getting government grants for eco-friendly small business. But just because of this, they'd want to know the one thing Miranda wasn't prepared to answer: Why? Not *why*, as in the politics; they were agreed on that. But *why* as in how you got from here to there, from daily life and its numbing routines to the moment when all past and present exploded in the now of action. Days and weeks of planning funneled down into the ecstasy of the great yellow *whomp* of flame that obliterated front-end loaders, the blunt muzzles of sport utility vehicles on the midnight car lot, half-timbered frames of a half-built forest subdivision.

If anyone had asked Miranda, her answer would have been political. She would have given facts and figures, forest company profits and government connections, statistics on global warming, run-off and desertification. None of this would have been new information to Sasha or Louise. And none of it would have explained the question they'd have wanted answered: why her, and not me? How do you step beyond the pale, go underground, take it seriously? Who do you have to be? Insane, or a saint?

Step by step, would be Miranda's reply, if she ever had to answer this question. You see what's wrong, and you try something, and when that doesn't work, you move on to the next thing. If you take it seriously, that's what you do. If you really believe the world is spiraling into collapse, why wouldn't you take the time to fire-bomb a few car lots and subdivisions? Of course, she would have added magnanimously, not everyone's in a position to take direct action. But for those that are…

The weariness would be in trying to explain the obvious to people who just hadn't got there, yet. So this particular conversation was never going to happen.

Walking pushed back the fear, opening a silvery calm in the dull day. Yet *fear* was not altogether the right word. After the first alarm, rather storm surges of anguish and regret, of grief and anger, churned beyond recovery. Useless feelings, not because they didn't point to real events, but because there was nothing you could do with them. Except, as now, put one foot in front of the other on the path along the rocks. Under spindly third-growth firs, the only sound was the *shush* of Miranda's down jacket as her arms swung.

Miranda had always understood her gift as clarity, seeing words and ideas as real and taking them to their logical consequences: *struggle, resistance, global collapse, the military-industrial complex*. These, for Miranda, were concrete entities. To mouth them merely as figures of speech was the worst kind of dishonesty. She never understood what it meant to say things that you didn't believe.

For instance, last summer, on the lawn overlooking the sea. "Ah, the sylvan retreat," Julian had said. "How about an upscale holistic health farm? High colonics? Or fasting holidays? You could charge them double and feed them nothing. Louise, figure you could get a development grant for that?"

"You can do the colonics," Louise said, and laughed.

Miranda had already registered Julian as jittery and vaguely malicious. A trivial and untrustworthy person. Mocking your own side: what was that all about?

You couldn't say Calvin had led her into it, or the reverse. They met in their late twenties, no longer idealistic college drop-outs. Both had done years in protests and grassroots community groups. And in all those years, nothing had changed, or not fast enough, while the people she knew slid away, some to jobs (rarely good ones), others to marginal lives on disability payments. By the time she met Calvin, Miranda saw clearly that it made little difference to save one tree or even one forest. You had to change the system. You had to *hurt* it. And surely many people lived with that secret knowledge, knowing they were cogs in a wheel, mice in a maze, turning round their days and nights at the service of the machine. Surely all they needed was a spark, a sign that revolt was possible.

Miranda said all this to Calvin on long electric nights in her tiny basement suite. By then, she was living out at the southeast edge of Vancouver, among immigrant families that looked past or through her; she wanted anonymity and cheap rent,

and no longer had any use for the expensive coffee and threadbare community of Commercial Drive or Main Street.

Electric nights, with Calvin's broad, serious brow crinkling up and then flashing open to meet her mind. Calvin supplied pragmatism: the belief and the explanation of how it could be done. They intoxicated each other. You couldn't even call it love (they didn't) because love was too small and weak a word.

There's no greater ecstasy than knowing, in the small hours, that you are absolutely right, intellectually and morally. The false front of the world rolls up and you stare right through the glass into the eyes of the machine. The unbelievers, with their weightless, compromised lives, shrink to broken plastic dolls bobbing in the tidal current.

Many people have access to moments like this, at certain times of their lives: all random details dovetailed for an hour in a seamless grid of reality. But Miranda took things literally. That was her gift. She got up late the next morning, ready to act. And she had Calvin to show her how it's done.

Randy linked them up with the Americans. They drove across the border, three clean-cut kids down for a day's shopping at the Bellingham outlet malls. In a backyard near Portland, they put an Oregon plate on the car and disappeared off the map. When they slipped north again a week later, stopping to pick up a half dozen cut-rate towels as cover, no-one noticed. This they repeated several times.

In the end, Calvin left. That was at the very end, days of fear after the Americans were raided and he thought the FBI was on his trail, when it made wrenching sense for him to board a spring break charter flight to Cancun and disappear into Central America. In the end, no-one was after any of them, but since Calvin never wrote, Miranda could never tell him. That day at the airport, amid the college kids clumsy in parkas and flip-flops, giddy with hopes of package-holiday debauchery, Calvin's eyes were firmly set on the horizon of the future.

Miranda, on the other hand, at a deep unarticulated level, had never felt she would survive into that future. Not that any of the firebombings involved much personal risk; they were too well planned for that. And not that she saw herself going down in a hail of police bullets, or even doing twenty to life in maximum security. What she couldn't see was going back to life inside the machine. The sift of daily life, the weight of history, sins of the past chaining down the future. If you asked Miranda "why," she'd give you a political answer, all the facts marshaled. But in her heart,

she saw herself, she saw the whole world, stepping out of the cogs of time. Not into the future, not even into Calvin's version of the future, which, if he ever got that far south, meant sweeping the Chiapas highlands in the train of Commandante Marcos. Calvin's future was more of the same: it was history, it was cause and effect. And Miranda wanted to get out of that go-round altogether: to step beyond time, into the heart of freedom.

The closest she ever got to that, herself, was the moment when months of planning went up in the golden whomp of flame, the explosion of the possible obliterating the hard lines of what actually existed.

And in the end? Well, in the end, nothing had changed. No widespread revolt. Nothing like that.

Miranda came to earth here, her past silent and the future clouded in. Welfare, and free rent in the caretaker's cabin, and free groceries for clerking two days a week at the health food store.

You couldn't do anything with these storm surges except walk them out, wait them out. Make your mind blank and let them go. Here the trail began to climb, bending away from the rising cliffs, the forest opening up into patches of turf and alder. The hill tugged at Miranda's thighs, raised a gloss of sweat under her clothes, the body asserting itself against the mind. *Let it go, let it go,* she had learned to tell herself over the long summer and fall. The alternative was to collapse, raging and ripping, on the wet turf. Let it go, she told herself now. One foot in front of the other.

By the time she reached the hill-top, the emptiness had come on, the hollowing out. No past and no future, just the present moment, and no mind, either, just the body here and alone in the nothingness of the damp mild air.

And then, a great opening out to the world. She saw details normally hidden: a crumble of orange fungi, garish as dyed cheese in a supermarket; reddish-black withered hips of wild roses; a purple flush in the alder branches that told, distantly, of spring. Out below her, the long fog-horn blast of the ferry echoed, and in a few minutes the flat white boat edged out past the headland. From this height, the water was uniform silver, and Miranda stood watching until the boat was swallowed up in mist.

From the hill-top, the view resembled certain of Louise's father's canvases, still hanging in the sky-lighted studio. Louise gave her a tour last summer. These paintings

were big, six or seven feet long, fog-bound seascapes reduced to wide bands of pearly grey. Miranda rather liked these paintings, though with no covetousness, since she could not imagine treading a world that had room for such cumbersome artifacts. She found his other paintings more disturbing: tall canvases each filled with a nude woman, legs discreetly crossed or tilted to avoid a full-on crotch view. From a distance, these women appeared flesh coloured and blurrily realistic. Up close, Miranda could see they were composed of short, visible brush-strokes in harsh colours: reds and greens, yellows and purples. Which was worse? At a distance, the realistic objectification of pornography; up close, the painting itself revealed as object, dissecting the woman it captured and displayed.

Sex with Calvin, at least in Miranda's reading, had no such objectification, because it had no distance. Sometimes they came together with workaday humour, other times with a rush of need and desire, but always without artifice, two bodies beautiful in their youth and strength and health. The siren chitter-chatter of the glossy magazines, of glassy boutique windows, of primping and fixing and fiddling the outer self, never held much allure for Miranda, and with Calvin any last yearnings that way disappeared forever. She didn't dress up for him, she dressed down, she walked naked; she was wholly desirable in and of herself, and so was he; for Miranda to put on lipstick and high heels would have been as absurd as Calvin coming to bed in garter-belt and stockings. Such things only allure if the man stands back and looks, takes in a full view; and Miranda and Calvin never had the distance for that.

But Calvin had left. That was the one thing that changed.

Let it go. Let it go.

On the downward slope to the ferry landing and the village, the path bled into a narrow gravel road through dense older fir and hemlock. Under the trees, daylight was already failing; Miranda, disembodied, floated downhill on shadows.

At the bottom of the hill, the gravel road joined the two-lane asphalt of the main island route. A half-mile further, the small lights of the village glinted. For the first time today, washed clean and buoyant, the idea of other people suddenly appealed to Miranda. She could go to the café beside the health-food store, have a cup of tea, catch a ride home with Sasha or else hitch-hike.

Under twilight, the pavement held a lingering silver glow.

“Peppermint tea,” said Sasha. “And try one of these carob muffins. Sure, I’m off in half an hour, I can run you back.”

Sasha went back to the till, and Miranda sat at a wobbly table behind the vitamin supplements, in the nook that functioned as a café. Sasha had pale skin and dirty brown dreadlocks under a bright bandana; her unvarying manner was a forceful open-faced good-humour, an intense interest in everything. Miranda sipped her tea, noting the quality of the heat in her throat, the mixed odors of spice and musty flour, the steam condensing on the lower halves of the plate glass windows. Still bodiless, mindless, stretched out across the white sea.

Sasha came back with the muffin on a plate.

“So Louise is selling her dad’s house for lots? To a developer? I heard,” she said.

Buoyant in the present, this could hardly matter. “She might be,” said Miranda. “She hasn’t told me that, exactly. It’s possible.” Something would happen. The future would take care of itself. The future was just the present, repeated. And so she was entirely unprepared for what Sasha said next.

“People won’t stand for that, here,” said Sasha. “That place has been a farm since the 1890s. What they should do if someone tries to subdivide, is torch it. Like that earth action group down in Oregon. That would show them. It really would.”

Out on the road, a pickup revved uphill, a dog barked; inside the light hummed. Miranda sat silent.

“Torch it,” said Sasha. “I know people that would. For sure.”

Daphne Marlatt / from Short Circuits: Walking Meditations

lift. step. drop

this never-ending speak its inner hook some flash
cognition continuity leap onto the next crosscut any sidestreet offers
rhyme a glance solid chairleg stays carpet hot under sock by gas
fire's 1920 rose a rise once out of American eyes no fumble that neo-
rosary a hooker all toes slow unfold incessant seesaw glitch then shift
on left why toes rolling stretch slow moment um momentum meaning oh
that catch… not so close scarlet calves in perfect sync say a pass a
handout Rose rose the story goes old ever-saw once seen withdraws
ground the heel slow

lift & wait to let

(it) go

lift, swing, drop

the burden of hip its rotary moment foot glides a slight hitch forward teetering one-leg on an old tear/ story here all filaments radiating little hooks think "past" (it) think rug's (pink) ground toes probe heel-down sequence means around or lateral slides here slewing words ever-labelling preserves *i-want* to (itself or *you*-self) incontinent meaning seeps external eye seeks the three we hubbard figures inch around a cup's interior White, Lunch not (no longer anyhow) restricted entry any other return and welcome for the umpteenth sip in the mind zipped or unzipped all stains remain a lateral run-through rapid thought lightnings *my mine* unhooking the foot merely swing/drop this holding moment by

step. ground. lift

eyes steady now & turn (slight angle) not
to wobble in this orbit or bit it never just repeats her spiraling
cosmic bodies (montreal) off *her* rosy round in paris earlier accrete
sense from non- the nonce wool-gathering footfalls of bloom
room's mauve underlay in brilliant play eyes' wedge pull back
unfocus now on opening out non-locable non-vocable
at ( )

in

tersections' traffic mind that bender round us circling same old
habit space a figure-pull makes each definitive in the gloom zenana
strips us back to gender underlay or what's in store say mother
in the cupboard stall on slow see each particular wrinkle in the
common round not cow or how inept or bare this happenstance
step-step immediate & relative without
because

Artists at Capilano College

Short of devoting a special issue to the many visual artists who have taught and worked at Capilano College over the last 40 years, this issue presents a two-folio glimpse of the work of a selection of artists recently and currently connected to the Studio Art Department at the college. Some of them have also been represented over the years in The Capilano Review.

The two folios provide a small cross section of the diversity of art practiced by the faculty in the Studio Art Department: painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture, installation and conceptual work. Furthermore, each artist's work is multi-disciplinary in its approach to materials and media.

George Rammell is deeply engaged with found materials and media, with sculpture and installation. For Nancy Boyd, Pierre Coupey, Barry Cogswell, and Marcus Bowcott, painting is a means of probing the contradictions inherent in contemporary experience. Boyd's journeys into the secret worlds of the body celebrate fragility and strength. Coupey's abstractions speak to the continuum of violence throughout the Middle East. Cogswell's environmental concerns emerge in his large-scale elegies for species on the verge of extinction. Bowcott's images of man-made structures in landscapes also speak to past and present human interventions in the natural world.

The conceptual concerns of Tiki Mulvihill and Toni Latour, embodied in life-scale installations in Mulvihill's work and in serial constructed photos in Latour's, investigate key dimensions of our current environmental and social experience. The printmaking of Bonnie Jordan, Wayne Eastcott and Michiko Suzuki engages the revolutionary implications of digital media and their application to traditional and non-traditional printmaking forms. While Jordan explores the intersections of personal and social history, Eastcott and Suzuki explore cultural intersections in their layered, collaborative work.

Thus, a glimpse into the ongoing work of a few of the artists connected to Capilano College.

JP
April 2007

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Fig. 13

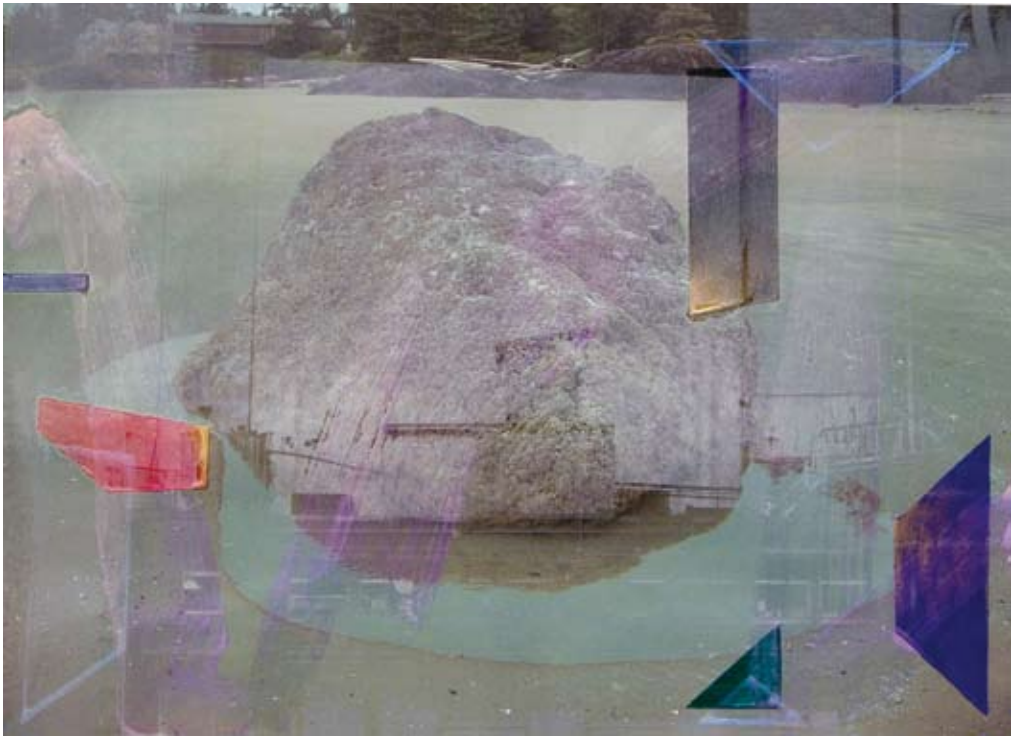

Fig. 14

Fig. 15

Fig. 16–17

List of Images

1. George Rammell
"*I don't know why we do this everyday," she said.*
Found objects / steel and glass, variable dimensions

2–3. Nancy Boyd
Phylum 6, 2005
Mixed media and wax on paper, 22"x30"
Phylum 8, 2005
Mixed media and wax on paper, 22"x30"

4–5. Pierre Coupey
Lebanon, Lebanon, 2006
Oil & beeswax on prepared paper, 50" x 38"
Ash, 2006
Oil & beeswax on prepared paper, 50" x 38"

6–7. Barry Cogswell
Durville's Birdwing, 2006
Acrylic on birch ply, 38.5" x 61"
He Saw It Was Good: Ornithoptera Victoriae Regina, Female & O. V. Resplendans, 2006
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8–9. Marcus Bowcott
Landmark, 2005 (Private Collection)
Oil on canvas, 30" x 60"
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10–11. Tiki Mulvihill
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Installation, 20' x 30' floor space
Hatqui Island, 2005
Installation, detail

12–13. Toni Latour
The Drag King Project: T, $3 Bill, 2005
Transmounted lightjet print, 24" x 36"
The Drag King Project: Luke Wolf, $3 Bill, 2005
Transmounted lightjet print, 24" x 36"

14. Wayne Eastcott
Tofino/Moodyville 5, 2005
Silkscreen, stencil (acrylic & enamel) & pigment on
Gampi laminate paper, 56 x 74 cm

15. Wayne Eastcott / Michiko Suzuki
Interconnection-3 (Recall), 2004
Ink jet, silkscreen & pigment on Gampi laminate paper, 60 x 90 cm

16–17. Bonnie Jordan
Journey Series 4, 2005
Digital Print, 55 x 152 cm
Journey Series 1, 2004
Digital Print, 50.5 x 151.6 cm

Dan Munteanu, translator / from Eugen Serbanescu's Afternoon with a Nymphomaniac

Translated from the Romanian[1]

But men are immature for yet another reason. They equate a woman's beauty with her inner pulses when there is no connection between the two. So, in order to make them understand that the door is open to them, I had to look after the body. I mean my body. Painfully. Physically painfully. O. K. I am very beautiful, but beauty too needs to be maintained. First and foremost, the breasts. Men have created this big breast fetish when in fact what matters, what they should engage is the breasts' sensitivity, the way I react when I am touched on my breasts, and how tremendously aroused men get by the whole thing. If my breasts are hard as wood and just as dead, or balloons filled with water and salt, or made of fissionable material which makes me (and them) explode—well, that should be the men's problem, but it is not. I hate them, but there is nothing I can do. These are the rules of the game. You have to visually dazzle men before you get them to touch you. There are some who have a sixth sense, they "smell" the woman from far away, regardless of her physical looks—but such men are rare. On the other hand, just as I have found out, there isn't necessarily a link , a causal relationship, between masculine beauty and sexual prowess. This is also true for women. Why that hasn't gotten into men's heads I don't know.

I was working as a translator for a law firm in New York. I took a break, I was also a student at New York University, I was studying Law, I was 27, and I decided to get a silicon implant. I had money, I could pay as much as it took. There is no fixation more infantile and more American than the mammary fixation. The surgeon tried to convince me not to make them that big. I wanted them big, as big as possible. You cannot conquer the United States if you have puny tits. A huge country, a real continent, it is obsessed with grandeur. The doctor, one Dannys Borruck, gabbed on about proportion. Now, this proportion issue is also a question of culture. I have studied the problem for several months. For instance, the Spaniards love corpulent women; the Brazilians, medium-sized breasts, not too large; the French, flat breasts; the Argentineans, pear-shaped breasts, etc. Even within America, the standards vary—because of the climate. For example, in California and Texas where it is hot, big breasts are greatly appreciated because women wear light, low-necked blouses.

So, you must have the right stuff to show off. If you don't wear light, summery blouses in those hot climates, you are ridiculous. If you wear such clothes and have no breasts, you look ridiculous too. Therefore, big breasts are a must. In New York or in the North, the situation is different. It's colder, you can hide your breasts inside a coat, you can get away with it more easily. But if you have a social life, you've got to take off your coat anyway. And it's not only the breasts. Some women try to re-jig their ethnicity. Asians get double eye-lifts, Italians and Jews straighten their noses, Mexicans get false teeth, African-Americans turn whiter, and so on. Oh well, eventually I accepted a C cup. Fine, but I had a problem. I couldn't all of a sudden show up on the job with different breasts. First, all my women co-workers would have given me the cold shoulder, some of them would've become really envious and pissed off, especially in a law firm where the appearance of seriousness is more important than all legislation put together. So, I decided to graduate from New York University Law School. After that, I'd land a job with a new firm, with new breasts, and my problem would be solved because the people in the new firm wouldn't know my new breasts from my old ones.

At the other end of the spectrum are the sensitive, the losers by definition. They would do anything for a woman, even sacrifice themselves to have her. Of course, I feel like milking them dry, I'd be an idiot if I didn't. They come in all nationalities, but the Romanians are record-breakers. In New York, I met a guy who wouldn't touch me, why, because he was in love with his wife in Bucharest. A fine, educated fellow. I tried to seduce him in every imaginable way, but he wouldn't give in. That irritated me hugely. I don't like it when somebody stands me up. And if he turns me down right away, he takes a big, big risk… I asked him what was wrong with him, was he sick or something? "Understand me, I am waiting for Alina." "Come on, for this trifle you refuse me? What do you think she is doing now in Romania, picking flowers, praying in church for the souls of the dead? I'll tell you what she's doing: looking for men. Actually she's not looking for them, she found them a long time ago, more precisely the very next day after you got on the plane." "Please, you don't know Alina, really! She's an extraordinary girl. She truly loves me, we talk on the phone every day, there's not a false note in her voice, she is head over heels in love with me, we've been in love since high school, she has never been unfaithful to me. I put up with a lot here and work only for her. We'll make it, we'll make it, we'll be happy as we could

have never been in the old country, this American dream, fuck it, we'll make it reality, soon , very soon, it can't be an infinite fata morgana!" I left him alone. He lived only to bring his woman to America. He worked like a madman, about 18-20 hours a day. In the morning he was a programmer for a software company, in the afternoon a waiter, and in the evening a taxi driver, and he was dreaming of Alina. Of course, on the phone, she played the tune he wanted to hear, she mewed and purred, and filled his head with crap, yeah on the phone, ha-ha! Eventually he managed to bring her to the States. He got her a green card—the dream of any Romanian reaching the American shores—found her a job, and then brought over her parents as well. They lived happily for a few years, until the woman got firmly settled on her own, learned the language, got her credit cards, and generally learned the rules of the game. And then, our friend, the sensitive man, the dreamer, the lover got his just desserts: they kicked him out into the street! Just like that! He went to the police to lodge a complaint, but the "family" claimed he was violent. So, he was left just as before, that is—out.

The explanation? Well, it's complex. To begin with, far away from the old country, many men become… nostalgic. The distance makes them forget the misery here in Romania, because of which they probably left in the first place. The motherland (a term perverted by the communists who equated it with their own historical fraud, but essentially a genuine term) acquires the form of the beloved woman from the motherland. The motherland is an abstraction whereas the woman—boy, oh boy! I leave aside the failed attempts with American women who entertain a different metaphysics. But beyond this incompatibility, instinctively, in order not to lose their identity besieged by an environment of which they are not a product, and which is not theirs, the Romanians try to reinforce their identity, to reassert it, bringing from the old country something that is their own, only their own (more precisely, was their own, but they don't know it or refuse to know, they hope it still is). That is, a woman. The Romanian woman, in a state of despair generated by the misery here, does whatever is possible to fuel the flame, usually over the phone. Romanians who have fled their country spend fortunes on phone bills. Naturally, a Latin people, emotional… At the other end of the line, some are sincerely in love with their far away husbands, some are just using them, others honestly re-fall in love with them for the same reason—the American dream versus the Romanian nightmare. Once in America,

they find an egalitarian society, even feminist, libertine, a real paradise compared with Romanian society, ultra-male and rather vulgar. At work, American men—who have never seen East European women—eye them lustily, and act accordingly, within the work context, helping them, protecting them, etc. Of course, not for free. We are in America, mind you: no free lunch… The woman, in turn, makes her own simple calculation. Since she was, anyway, unfaithful to her husband in Romania just for art's sake, why wouldn't she do it in America for gain? In other words, why art for art's sake and not art with a purpose? A new world unfolds before her eyes. A world that changes her personality. All of a sudden, the husband, the Romanian lover becomes a stage, a step, a trampoline, but not a landing strip. The desire to avenge all the humiliation and misery once suffered in the old country is more important than the humiliation suffered in real time in America, it is overwhelming, it wipes out everything, including the one who opened this new, almost unbelievable gate to success. Her individual qualities, once frozen in agony in a country tormented by imaginable and unimaginable spectres, wake up. Now is the moment! Now or never! And, after all, once I've cooked my goose, I can always go back to Romania! But I will return like a grand lady! My relatives, my friends, the professors who punished me, the colleagues who rubbed my face in the snow, the boy who was courting me but married my cousin, they will all look at me stunned, as you would at a goddess! They will learn their lesson. The political notables, the socialites, the businessmen are all fighting to meet me, to offer me their services. They are all like puppets on a string, entertaining me. Ha-ha, the visit of the old lady, who is… very young. At long last, your own mother respects you, she bows, scared, in front of the brat whose bottom she spanked when she, the brat, was very little. The vindication is perfect, total. It was worth all the humiliation. That's life… Yes, if you are humble-determined, you prevail.

Oaths are an idiocy. The attempt to contain for ever the life of feelings is a violation of human personality. No one can be held responsible for the transformation of one's feelings. When I swore my oath to you, I loved you, no doubt about it, that's what I felt at that moment, that I must, that I want to swear my oath to you, later on things got muddled up, I stopped loving you, so what was I to do, keep an oath that no longer had any real basis? Oh, well, one can swear an oath, but differently. For example, I swear that I will stay with you forever, if I love you forever (which is highly improbable). This oath is much more correct, much more human. When my feelings

for you have vanished, I am relieved of any oath. Hey, I'm not in the army, I swear to do my duty for my country, this is about feelings. The army of feelings is the only army in the world that refuses to take orders. I cannot order myself to love you forever. I love you as much as I can. Then, goodbye my darling. Have a happy life! We'll keep in touch by email.

Americans are rather dry, not really volatile, unlike Romanians, Serbians, Bosnians, Balkan peoples in general, who are too volatile. But Americans were fine for me because they don't fall in love. They have so many puritanical and financial restrictions that they cannot afford to fall in love. And besides, they tend to turn everything into sport—sex first of all. Their sentimental metaphysics exists, but it operates rather at an epidermal level, in clichés, in a standardized manner, while the Balkan peoples have a dramatic urge, they all have their particular eroticism, they are jealous, excessive, quick to kill for a woman, and even to kill her too into the bargain. So, as far as my personal tranquillity was concerned, Americans were more convenient since they wouldn't clutch onto me. We would have sex, that was it—and stay friends (insofar as I needed them) or not—but we would never part as enemies. Yet my problem with them is different: they are very hard to manipulate. It's very difficult to obtain anything from them, and when you do, it's minor stuff. And they have no memory either. If you call a guy after six months to ask him for a small favour, like, I don't know, a ride to the hair salon, he pretends he doesn't know you, then he remembers and asks you about your plans after you're done with the hairdresser, won't you drop by his place? I would definitely drop by if I were free from other obligations, but meanwhile I've changed my agenda, you see, the bird has flown, I have other matters to attend to, I am not here to serve him. Whereas, if, after two or five years, I call a "former" Romanian, he will help me without asking for anything in return. Romanians have memory, without a doubt.

I began to "attack" expatriate Romanians… I mean the Romanian officials, the diplomats, because the others, the Diaspora, couldn't in any way help me with my repatriation. The Diaspora was nice, I had a few friends, but now I needed friends among the Romanians with connections in Romania. And these were the diplomats, a species apart, I don't know whether you've met any. They are elegant, courteous, some very intelligent, when you ask them anything, they say very little, neither yes nor no, they avoid straightforward answers. Everyone had their connections in

Bucharest, obviously they did not get to New York just like that, out of the blue, so it became imperative that I insinuate myself a bit into their milieu. To test the ground, I went to bed with one of them, young, very tall and dark haired, I admit I like young men, I "requisitioned" him at a name day party given by a friend from Queens, who invited me precisely to meet him. That very evening I took him home, I fed him, you know Romanian diplomats are rather poor, he really stunned me when he said they don't even have medical insurance. He complained that when he gets together with colleagues from other countries, he has to lie that his salary is twice the real one, otherwise he would look ridiculous and spoil the country's image. Plus, the poor dears were overworked like crazy, they had to show up at all sorts of events, meetings, coddle important visitors from Romania, everything with little logistics, almost zero protocol funding. And where? In America, a country that has to be reconquered, right? Sometimes they paid out of their own pocket, only to get things done, to keep the boss happy. They are rather afraid of one another and, paradoxically, the chiefs fear their subordinates. Unlike other institutions, in diplomacy, by rotation, a subordinate today can become a chief tomorrow—and the other way round. It is different from the army where fear is, so to say, legislated as authority, detailed in clear regulations. No, according to this guy, in diplomacy fear is perverse. Flunkeyism can stab you in the back at any time. But all diplomats, subordinates and bosses, are afraid of the technical-administrative personnel, building managers, drivers, secretaries, who often are husband and wife! These people do and undo everything, they turn a diplomat into a sandwich and devour him… There are a few among them who have some education, but very few, most of them are monumentally insolent and nothing happens to them, they keep their jobs for ever and ever, amen… like it's done on purpose… although it is glaringly obvious that they have no business abroad, they have no business at Ciorogirla[2] either, there are hundreds of drivers and hundreds of secretaries in Romania who would perform excellently abroad, but nobody sends them abroad, they do not belong within the system… Well, that's the profession… They too have their unseen hierarchies, you never know who is whose boss. The funny thing is that sometimes they don't know either. In diplomacy, they say, you shouldn't even kick a dog because you never know who's at the other end of the leash… But here was potential gain for me. This guy who was a secretary or attaché with the Romanian Mission at the UN, invited me to the December 1st Reception.[3] Of course I went, that was the whole idea.

Here at the reception, the crowd was respectable, very decent, there wasn't any trouble or scandal, a new consul general had arrived, a fellow with ideas, who silenced everybody…

He had this obsession , which had become proverbial, that for an employee of the State the service in the national interest, in any form, would have priority over one's personal interest, what a utopia!, and he wouldn't get soiled, wouldn't cut any personal deals, wouldn't ask or offer kickbacks, had no clan connections in Bucharest, so because of that he was not exactly my cup of tea, you realize, he was totally uninteresting. My understanding was that he had been associated with a different coalition government, but he was not a member of any party, he merely carried out Romania's politics, which is what all diplomats are supposed to do, it seems that his only support was his own performance, which was fatal, he was recalled, it didn't help that the Diaspora jumped to his defence, that they wrote public letters of protest to Bucharest—he shouldn't be recalled, quite the contrary—he should be congratulated, it didn't help that Giuliani congratulated him, in writing, for his exceptional services to the Romanian-American cooperation, they simply recalled him before his term was over, both from New York and Los Angeles, where they had sent him also because of the pressure put on by the Diaspora, to shut them up, and when he got back to Bucharest they couldn't even find a place for him with the ministry, you see he didn't have a contract, as if he had worked for Patagonia not for Romania!!… The irony of this guy's story, as rumours have it, is that although since as far back as January '90 he had publicly supported Romania's joining NATO, and although on this issue he had been one of the opinion leaders, he was fired, by whom? Precisely by those who'd been "undecided" about NATO for the entire decade, when? Exactly when we joined NATO! Makes perfect sense, he had been so right, so successful…. Success story…. Nice, isn't it? Romanian stuff, 100%. Anyway, his story was a lesson for me about what's going on in the old country, about how the game is played and what really matters: personal services, financial or of any other nature, rendered to the right people, before anything else—professionalism, honesty, common sense, etc. I got the message and I drew the appropriate conclusions. A bon entendeur, salut! Anyway….

NOTES

[1] Eugen Serbanescu's novel is constructed as a dialogue, taking place in a Romanian mountain resort, between the author and Livia Hosta, a young and very beautiful woman. She is a rich and powerful lawyer who has recently returned to Romania from the United States where she immigrated following her defection from Communist Romania. Her success is due to her clever and cynical use of sex as well as to her harshly practical view of life. Although, technically, the text is a dialogue, one hears only Livia Hosta's voice. The author's questions and comments are deduced from her replies.

[2] A village in Romania, the equivalent of "in the middle of nowhere."

[3] Romania's national day.

John Pass / Two Poems

Say No More

I've been walking, walking, walking,
walking. A marginal, distracted pacing though it traverse

mountain-sides, headlands. Though it show me
lakes and islands, elk and grouse and blackberries

and snakes on the trail, I've nothing to show
for it—am tirelessly, tiresomely, unequal to it. I've tried to name

the light for example because it's September and nothing
is finer now. A high, full moon all night on the 20th.

Clarity, and a gleam that deepens
the days, that has deepened in things and erased

their glare. Colours are become Venetian, especially
the rusts and clarets and russets. History in them.

And more. I begin to feel a little
sympathy, an almost excusable self-

pity declaiming, outpacing
the enormous stasis of my thought.

You Think

Anything might goose-
step or side-step into mind to enthrall

one. A thrill, a pang, a blood-
pressure reading. You think

is this the first or last
straw, surrender

to the miniscule conflagration? As when
my mother became convinced
her house was toxic

in its furnace, in its heat-pump
and chimney, and wouldn't shut up about it

thereafter: chest pains and dry sinuses and almost
passing out. She wouldn't stay home

and at Emergency an inconclusive
hour or two, at my sister's place a recuperative
day or two, feeling better, she knew

it was the metal there also
in the baseboard heater, a virus,

or fumes from the raccoon she'd seen
in the garden she'd loved.

Jenny Penberthy / Natural History

i

"the whole of my pleasure
derived from what passed
in my mind"

flower animal
the sea urchin
a sign

great birds like crows
white with long tails
we were nearing America

a new era of infinite knowledge
ushered in
man in his last

his intellectual phase
in the great solitudes
the human stock

ii

tamarack on the shore
reddish soil pushed
up from Illinois

pinkish from Labrador
not here the river began
in the clouds

in the mind
imagination
capable

of being projected
not farther than
40 million years

raining there
far below
Vermilion Lake

the sea went over
elm, white ash
pines in the distance

in Minnesota wild roses
New Jersey Tea
thimbleberry

lady-slipper on the outskirts
of Twin Cities
prairie phlox and honeysuckle

a week in wilderness
road flying
thru it

thru cut rock
Lac Qui Parle
the past in mind

reasonable to suppose that
the changing
the going

out of the nature of things
according to the theme
masses of lupine, otherwise

a barren stretch of road
thick carpet
of reindeer moss

lichens, very beautiful
as the season shifts
“We were Cesars

nobody to contradict us”
the face of the earth
a graveyard

a lake, Plantagenette
water fowl shot
the mallard, wood-duck, sawbill

at Traverse des Sioux
Chief Sleepy Eyes
signed away 30 million acres

unmurmuringly
a life of want and vicissitude
under the enlivening

influence
of a song

iii

St. Croix R. Leaf R.
Scalp L. Fish-line L.
Ottertail L.

Sibly L.
Le Corbeau R.
(Crow-Wing)

“Rose at 4
on the shore
several fine

specimanes
of carnelian and agate”
Thompsonite—

an orbicular
—eye-gleam—
dark green

and pink mineral
the heyday of corals
Obsidian is not

always black
cinder-black
onyx, sardonyx, chert

momentary equilibrium
lapis in limestone
Know stones?

Never mind
the polished
black

with the lace in it
Fast-moving out
of slow geologic time

this day's
century

Stan Persky / from The Music of the Spheres

Coming from a classroom on the south, or lower side of the Capilano College campus, where I've just taught an 8:30 morning class, I'm heading up the hill towards the north side Fir Building. I have a cubbyhole office there on the fourth floor. On my way, I pass the music rooms at the base of the building. Pouring out of the practice cubicles, whose windows are partially open on this late summer September morning, is an astonishing cacophony of sound—rippling piano scales, horn blurts, the tooting of woodwinds, and human voices running through arpeggios. I'm half-distractedly thinking about whatever happened in the classroom a few minutes ago, when I'm suddenly startled by the overlapping melodies wafting out of the bunker-like building, as if I'd never heard them before. Transfixed for an instant by the pleasure of hearing the wave of sounds, I feel as if I am listening to a local version of the "music of the spheres."

My relation to Capilano College, over the more than twenty years that I've taught there—first politics, then philosophy—has a lot of the quality I experience when hearing that music. I find the sounds and the musicians reassuring: as they earnestly toot and ripple and warble, I feel reasonably certain that they're not planning to punch anyone in the nose—which is my line-drawn-in-the-pine-needles definition of civility. The music students wander around campus, moving up and down the alpine hill like humpbacked pack animals, with guitar bags and tuba cases slung on their backs, along with the other rucksack-carrying students, giving the whole place a bucolic air.

The geography of the college also contributes to that pacific sense. Capilano is located on the first ridge of hills on the north shore of Burrard Inlet across from the city of Vancouver, just beyond North Vancouver's industrial foreshore, where piles of sulphur and containers full of widgets are heaped on the docks. The college, which you arrive at by a canyon road that runs up to the top of a hill, is set within a stand of mostly cedars and firs. Beyond the college are more ridges and canyons, and further to the north, range after range of mountains. A hundred and fifty kilometers north of Capilano, once you're past the mill town at Squamish and the ski resort at Whistler, it's pretty much pure wilderness.

Apart from my somewhat sentimental idea of the charm of the place—which, admittedly, is just plain gloomy during the rainy season, when the whole institution huddles miserably under a steady, chill drizzle for weeks on end—what I'm interested in is the main activity of the college, namely, teaching. From most of the public and media discussion of education, you'd never imagine that teaching is what Capilano and similar schools are all about, or that the teaching is aimed at developing the sort of person who can assume a place as a citizen in a democracy. Even we teachers occasionally forget that. Instead, there's an enormous preoccupation with whether students are being properly trained for various jobs, and such other diversions as whether or not the college is suitably "online." The latter refers to a concern about the use of technology in teaching, a subject I crankily regard as a euphemism for replacing teaching. But as one of my favourite newspaper columnists (John Doyle, the TV writer for the Toronto *Globe and Mail*) says when he recognizes he's just about to launch a rant, Don't get me started.

My friend Ryan Knighton and I once collaborated on a mock book called *Teaching Is Easy*. Ryan is a colleague at Capilano College, a writer who teaches in the English department. He's 30-something, one of the new generation of instructors, with a shaved head, a gym-fit body, and a white cane to get around because he's blind. We drive to work together in the mornings, since we both teach morning classes. My one-liner is, We're a car pool, but I don't let him drive very much. We're both pretty good at irony, the alternative to which, I point out, is suicide. I also have a one-liner about teaching, which I contributed to our mock book: Teaching is easy because anything you say in class these days is "news" to the students. We both agree that the hardest part of teaching is leaving the coffee kiosk on the way to a rainy morning class because you need three hands to carry the book bag, the cup of coffee, and the umbrella. Four hands, if you're also tapping around with a white cane, Ryan adds. After that, as we say, it's all downhill.

Jokes aside, the first issue is the conditions of teaching. Again, this is seldom publicly discussed, but there's a major difference between teaching in a university and teaching in a college, the two parts of the Canadian post-secondary educational system. Typically, in North American universities these days, introductory classes (in biology, psychology, physics and other disciplines) are conducted in amphitheatres that can hold up to 800 students. From some vantage points, the professor in the pit doing the lecturing appears to be about the size of an insect, so, a large screen behind

him is often provided on which a magnified TV image is projected. A good deal of the lecture occurs in half-darkness because the professor is using an "overhead projector" to provide notes on the screen for the students to copy down. The professor will have teaching assistants to deal with the students. The teaching assistants are senior graduate students and they mark the student papers and exams, and, at what are considered "good schools," they may conduct seminars with smaller groups of students. The professors have little contact with the introductory students beyond answering a handful of questions at the end of the lecture.

The students in these huge introductory classes are fiscal cannon fodder to pay for the university's often excellent graduate schools. At best, then, you get great lecturing. And while great lecturing is nothing to sniff at, it's also a very small part of teaching. At worst (and worst may be closer to the norm), what you get is the equivalent of those country schools in benighted countries where students spend the day performing en masse rote recitations of religious texts. I regard most of what goes on in undergraduate education of this sort as a scandal, something just short of criminal activity, but the habit is so entrenched, it's seldom even remarked upon. Inevitably, sooner or later, some educational mad scientist appears on stage and proposes that there's no need for the mass lectures, that the whole performance can be digitally repackaged, and the students can stay at home and watch it on their TVs or computers. Worse, such dotty proposals become rational in the light of actual teaching conditions. Most of the current talk about the use of computers in teaching (or replacing teaching) is an outgrowth of this situation.

At Capilano College, I teach classes with about 35 students. Unlike the hermetic amphitheatres of the university, I teach in rooms, not necessarily great rooms for teaching, but often good enough that they have windows, and I can point outside to our little glade of trees and intone sentences like, "So, we all agree that the trees out there are real, right?" (It's a sentence that occurs in introductory metaphysics courses more often than one might expect.) In short, I'm able to engage in something that resembles conversations with the students. I know their names, I read their work, I mark their papers, I talk to them in my office or on the phone or by email. After a few weeks, I know them well enough that I'm able to shape the lessons toward who they are and what they can understand, rather than what, as a professor, I understand. By the end of the term, I have a pretty good idea of the minds, personalities, and stories of the people I teach. I don't want to make any exaggerated claims about results, but

I think these conditions of teaching produce slightly better "outcomes," as they say in the education business, than the alternatives.

Compared to the universities, the colleges, according to the unspoken wisdom that governs the matter, are second-rate schools for second-rate students who can't get into university or who can't afford to pay the more expensive tuition fees of the university. In reality, the colleges are about the only place in undergraduate education where teaching is still permitted. But I view the colleges gloomily, as I do spotted owls, as an endangered species.

I'm a pluralist on the question of how to teach. I take the position that there are lots of good ways to teach well. For example, John Dixon and I teach in what's known as the "Socratic style." Dixon is my best and oldest friend at Cap College, a colleague in the philosophy department. He's a tall, white-haired, bearded, outdoorsy type. In former years, when we were both more mobile, we were a familiar sight on campus, walking around together like classic peripatetic philosophers, the statuesque Dixon and his pudgy bald companion, a real Mutt and Jeff team. The only thing missing was the togas.

What the Socratic manner amounts to is that the fulcrum of the class rests not on the lecture but on the conversation in which we engage the students. Sometimes I "lecture" for a while, if I have something particular I want to say, although the lecturing has more the character of performing an improvised operatic aria than the "powerpoint presentation" taught in business schools. There are also texts that provide the foundation for the conversation, and the texts matter. But in our reading of the books, I'm not trying to "get through" the text with a view to having "covered the material" in preparation for the final exam. The texts are usually not "textbooks," but real books by real writers, and I use them as entrances into the world and into the minds of their authors.

One of the features of Socratic-style teaching is that you don't know in advance precisely what's going to happen in the classroom or where the conversation is going to go. That doesn't mean it's loosy-goosy, adlibbing, stand-up philosophy, but it does require a certain degree of "adamant confidence," as Dixon calls it, that you can provide a measure of disciplined guidance to the conversational journey. (Our detractors occasionally describe our confidence as "arrogance.") Once we're all settled into the room and the students are nibbling on their morning muffins, I may kick it off by saying, "On the way into school this morning, I was thinking about something we

said last time about whether it's possible to really be a solipsist about reality. Now, my idea is…" And after I've rattled on for a bit, somebody in class asks a question, makes an observation, is provoked to challenge something outrageous I've said, and we're off. Sometimes, I'll say, "Well, you've read chapter two of Nagel's *What Does It All Mean*?, right? What is it about?" At other times, I'll just ask, "Where did we leave off last time?", and then, liked stoned people trying to remember what they were talking about five minutes previously, we'll fumble around a bit until we find the thread back into the labyrinth. Sometimes, when the class has coalesced into a group (about a third of the way into the semester), and things are going really well, I walk into the room and only have to say, "Well…?", and we're on the way.

It is not the only way to teach, as I've said, and it's more exhausting or nerve-wracking than coming in with a well-planned, neatly-packaged talk, complete with "overhead transparencies" on which the main points of the lecture can be projected onto the screen. To make matters a bit more challenging, at the start of each teaching season, I try to forget everything I think about teaching, and start all over again. I tend to think of my method as "non-algorithmic" teaching. That is, it's designed to be difficult for a computer to simulate (since I'm paranoid about teaching machines replacing teachers). Gradually, over the years, I've abandoned most of the technology used in teaching. I don't show movies or television documentaries, though the room is equipped with an overhead TV and various other gadgets. I don't give final exams (the students write essays), and therefore I don't need to provide transparencies for overhead projection and note-taking. Lately, I've stopped writing in chalk on the blackboard, except once or twice a year (at the beginning to write my name, and in the middle to draw a "Venn diagram," if I'm talking about logic). Chalk, I've decided, is the final barrier between us and the abyss; I prefer the abyss. I don't even wander around the room. Instead, I just sit there, at a table, and we talk.

The one thing today's students are pretty good at has to do with psychological astuteness, which probably comes from having watched lots of psychological talk-show television, like the Oprah Winfrey program. So, they can tell the difference between friendly fooling around and faculty hostility. I do a lot of fooling around, and I wouldn't want it mistaken for hostility. Most of the students are able to tell that I like them. When I say that teaching is easy because anything we say is news to the students, I'm simply referring to the fact that the students are inevitably ignorant (but not stupid). On the whole, it's not their fault. Most of their education, up to age

eighteen, was conducted in competition with television and video games. TV and the games won.

But now they're not watching much television anymore. Oh, a few of them are, and I can refer to their experiences to make a point in class. The programs change every couple of years. For a while it was *90210*, a sex-and-soap opera for post-adolescents, then there was *X-Files*, a pernicious program encouraging belief in paranormal phenomena and conspiracy plots, then came *Touched by an Angel*, a soppy religious show that arrived at about the same time as a horrible hit song called, "What If God Was One of Us?" Now there's "reality TV," a combination of game show and softcore pornography. This is the junk that shaped their minds. But now that they're in college, TV viewing time is down; they're too busy with part-time jobs, parents, interpersonal relations and, if we're lucky, us.

Some teachers don't like the students' ignorance, and resent having to do "remedial work." I don't. If I mention Samuel Beckett's name (I may be trying to say something about existential absurdity in the metaphysics class), and I notice that they don't recognize the reference, I'm perfectly happy to stop and enthusiastically explain who Samuel Beckett is and why he's so great. I remember we're being paid lots of money, have great working conditions, good pensions, etc., so why should I resent dispelling ignorance? It's useful work.

The students, for all their ignorance, have passed through lots of filters to get here, and tend to be friendly, well-behaved, and perfectly amenable to teaching. They're the twenty percent cream of the crop of their age aggregate. I regard them as the right people in the right place at the right time. Admittedly, I'm preternaturally cheerful when I'm at school and with the students. Sometimes, according to my colleagues, spookily cheerful.

For me, the main thing that goes on at school is what happens after we teachers close the door behind us and begin the class. I have, on the whole, shied away from the internal politics of academia, which is often a source of agony that permeates academic life. As a result, I tend to see my colleagues more favourably and charitably than some others do. Though I don't want to administer, or sit on committees, and I find the meetings a chore, I admire those who are good at administration, and I'm happy to raise my hand whenever a vote is taken to support them. I wander along the corridor and stop at faculty offices to chat with colleagues, who come in a diverse assortment of temperaments and states of mind, and end up at my pal Dixon's cubby-

hole, where he's usually boiling a kettle of lunchtime water to make a bowl of instant noodle soup. There are about 50 or so teachers about whom I have a fair idea of what's on their minds. When I run through their names in my mind—Reid Gilbert, Yolande Westwell-Roper, Mark Battersby, Wayne Henry, Dan Munteanu, Pierre Coupey, Bob Sherrin, Bill Shermbrucker, Melanie Fahlman-Reid, and others—I have a rich album of images, personalities, and ideas they're interested in. But I'll save the encomiums for the retirement parties. The heart of the school is inside the classroom.

I only lecture twice a year, on the first day, the introduction to the course, and the last day, the Goodbye Class. Since very little has been written about actual classroom teaching (aside from the professional literature on the subject, which tends to be technique-and-technology driven), I'll say a couple of things. I have an unwritten imaginary book about teaching called The Horses of Instruction (from William Blake's "The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction"), but this is not the place for it.

Inside the room, after I write my name, telephone number, and name and number of the course on the blackboard (which is actually green), and sit down behind my table, I ask, "Is there anybody here who hasn't taken a philosophy course?" I know perfectly well that almost nobody has taken a philosophy course, but when most of their hands shoot up, I affect slight surprise, and say, "Oh?! Well, then I better say a few things about philosophy, and then something about how this course fits into philosophy, and then what this course is specifically about." The theme of my sermon is that philosophy is the most important subject we teach at Cap College. I say, "Well, the first thing to say about philosophy is that it's the most important subject we teach at Cap College." I allow a micro-pause for them to get the joke about my possible self-interest in this assertion, and once I've heard the chuckle, I add, "I actually mean it." Then I quickly amend that, pointing out that there are a lot of other great things taught at school, and give some examples, but insist that philosophy seems to me the most important subject. I have two arguments for that.

The first is that philosophy is the only subject taught at school which is primarily devoted to discussing the questions that human beings have historically come to regard as the deepest, most central, and important: questions about how to live our lives, what the universe is all about, gods, selves, and all the rest. There's an internal debate

in philosophy about whether these questions are intrinsic, eternal, or natural to our condition as human beings, or whether they're an historic artifact. I tend to think the latter, but for my purposes here an agnostic view is sufficient. It doesn't matter whether the questions really exist independently of us or whether we make them up. They're the questions that people have come to care about and philosophy is the only place in school completely devoted to them.

My second argument is that philosophy is very old, and I tell them all about my teacher, Socrates, although I quickly concede that arguments from authority and age are not as strong as arguments from good reasons. Even though I supply some dates and contrast Socrates to Jesus—pointing out in passing that it's easier to understand Socrates than Jesus, i.e., he sounds more like us, and that we have better historical evidence for Socrates' existence than Jesus'—some of them are probably left with the impression that I know Socrates personally and talk to him pretty regularly on a cellphone. All of this occasions some self-told jokes about my advanced age.

The point is simply to establish the tone and the pace of the class, to indicate that we're not merely pushing Sisyphus' stone up the hill, that we're looking for a state of mind in which it's possible to think. The semi-serious point about Socratic longevity is that most of the other disciplines taught at Cap College and elsewhere are in some way spinoffs from philosophy, and fairly recent spinoffs at that (I note that "recent" in philosophy is a word that can mean "within the last four, five hundred years"). My closer to this pitch for the importance of philosophy is that despite philosophy's importance, it doesn't provide "right answers," and therefore, the students are not required to agree with anything I say or that other students say and, conversely, I'm not required to agree with what they say. However, I urge, we should treat our disagreements with a modicum of civility because we're all decent people. And that's about it.

The rest of the talk is practical stuff. I use the practical stuff (answers to questions like, "How long should the essays be?", "How many references do you want, and in what style?", etc.) to do a lot of "positioning," as I call it. Positioning has to do with how you want the students to think about the material, the teacher, the whole project. Most of it is jokey. I'm letting them know that I'm really available to be "the teacher," if that's what they're looking for. So, I repeat my phone number several times, as if they should memorize it in case of emergencies, assure them they can phone at any time, nothing is too trivial or too large.

If there's time the first day, I may "do" some philosophy, as Dixon and I have learned to call it, as a sample of what's going to go on for the rest of the semester. It can be as straightforward as asking, "What do we mean when we say that these chairs and tables, or those trees outside the window there, exist?" (That's when the classroom window comes in handy.) "What makes us so sure?" Or it can be that I'll point to some guy who was listening to (fill in the current fashionable blank, some rap or hip hop group) when he came into the room, and ask him, "What is it that leads to your listening to X rather than Mahler's 'Fourth Symphony'?", which then leads to, What do you mean by "I like it"?, which then leads to a discussion of the differences between "art" and "entertainment," which then leads to, How do we become the persons who have acquired the tastes we have?, etc. In short, let the conversations begin.

Most of the rest of the days are devoted to doing philosophy. I spend a considerable amount of class time in metaphysics debunking unlikely beliefs—everything from astrology to Zoroastrianism—and presenting arguments for what constitutes good reasons for believing in something. When students start talking about weird kinds of "energy" that they believe in, I get Mike Freeman or Stan Greenspoon from the physics department to come in for expert advice, even though the idea of reality in physics these days is stranger than any cultish beliefs in aliens, astral travel, or near- and after-death experiences. If the students are balky about fossils, radiocarbon dating, and our relationship to other hominids, a teacher in the biology department, Paul MacMillan, is usually kind enough to come in and explain the fine points of evolution.

In recent years, I notice, I've been making use of local geographic metaphors. I find myself arguing that, "up here, on the hill"—since the college is on a hill—life is different from and, I imply, better than "down there, at the bottom of the hill." Down at the bottom of the hill is a big parking lot attached to something called The Real Canadian Superstore, and I portray the parking lot as a kind of hellish purgatory, where people aimlessly push their basket-carts, or read no more than the statistics in the sports pages of the tabloids, or eat burgers in their overly-large vehicles, and various other awful things happen. Whereas, up here, we read terrific books, talk about important stuff, meet interesting people, get ready for great jobs, and what's more, the murder rate is lower up here on the hill than down in the lot at the bottom of the hill. A lot of other arguments flow from that, about language, the making of the self,

and society, but I needn't rehearse them here. If someone notices that I'm being "elitist," I permit myself a rare political remark. I concede that the students are indeed an elite, representing only about 20 per cent of their age aggregate, and that being a democrat myself, I wish it were otherwise, but it isn't, not yet. I also note that their being an elite who will get better jobs, exercise more power, and have more leisure time than the people at the bottom of the hill, is probably not a matter of intelligence, but does imply responsibility. (I then have a riff on the difference between ignorance and stupidity, but we can skip that.) I conclude, a little sadly, Well, if there is going to be an elite, I'd prefer that it be an informed rather than an ignorant elite.

There's another point to my "life up on the hill" metaphor that I usually don't talk about, but I notice it. It's that I really do believe all the stuff I say about life on the hill. Both the activity and the manner of interaction on the hill seem a model of human civilization. As Dr. Pangloss keeps insisting to Candide in Voltaire's *Candide*, life up on the hill is the best of all possible worlds… at least of the worlds that are possible right now. Then it occurs to me, as I wander around Cap College, listening to the music of the spheres, teaching, drinking my coffee and holding my umbrella and bookbag—and this, I realize, is what accounts for my preternatural cheerfulness when I'm at school —I've come to regard life here (and at similar institutions, not all of them schools) as utopia, as the actual nearest approximation to utopia we'll experience in our lives.

Queen Dreams

Her majesty comes to the city, gracious and noble and happy and glorious, longing to reign over us. Her ministries of consumer affairs. Sniggling in and out of pockets with the moose and bears, the beavers, loons and bluenoses. Wearing George IV roses, shamrocks, thistles or her lover's-knot tiara. The queen. Slipping in and out of wallets in Queen Mary's Girls and her wreath of flowers (Nizam of Hyderabad gave her the diamonds; the rubies came from each and every one of the Burmese people).

Lie back and think of the queen longing to reign maple leaves. Perched in white satin with a red-lipped smile, above the rolled map and the blackboard in gradually fading schoolroom paint. Blue sash across her shoulder, elbow-length white gloves, hands carefully clasped just below the belly. Is that the Russian fringe on her head, or a puffy white hat? Prince Philip's beside her, white gloves in hand, medals on his chest and hat under his arm, *his* crown jewels well tucked away.

Lick the queen. Lick the Lahore diamond and floret earrings. Lick the queen in 1959, in her blue velvet cape and Order of the Garter star. Lick the queen beside the Parliamentary library. Lick the queen for thirty-seven cents. Lick her when she's 76 in front of a maple leaf. Lick her in the legislatures. In the ministry of health, the ministry of finance, the ministry of environment, foreign affairs, defence, customs and immigration. And in the courtrooms of the city, lie back and think of the queen pursuing the accused. The queen that defends our laws and ever gives us cause.

Scaffolding

Plato's Necessity holds a rainbow pillar buttressing the heavens. And, as the spindle turns, it spins a great whorl within which seven other whorls slowly spin the other way, each one carrying a Siren singing with the Fates: Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. The spinner, the giver of lots, and the shears on the thread of life—these are the daughters of Necessity.

The City Courthouse: an imaginary arena. From Roman senators meeting over a case of treason, in the torchlight of the Curia. Or the centumviri judging thieves and frauds in Basilica Julia. Vaulted ceilings with clerestory windows 100 feet above palatial chambers. In the courtrooms of modernism, the law is low, flat and rectilinear, dotted with designer trees.

The courthouse steps—they settled on the courthouse steps, built a cabin—fan out in concrete slabs up a pyramid anthill of registries and chambers, ending mid-sentence at a wall—no door, no Roman columns—just a 10-foot wall of justness—water rushing over it into a pool in the roof of a lower echelon. A pair of Canada geese look down to the pool below, emitting solitary bleats. A man, perhaps 50, with a hefty paunch, waves a spray nozzle over beds of impatiens—his barrow of rakes and hoe nearby. On the horizon are the pediment and scroll-top columns of once-courthouse-now-art-gallery for the courtiers of landscape and portraiture. The geese land in the turbulent pool and honk at the roaring water falling down.

Another waterfall surges down the glass roof from a cleaner's hose, over the hush of modern carpeting and potted plants, and blindfolded Themis, daughter of Uranus and Gaea. Tongues of water slide like cloud-bottoms down the glass on its scaffolding. French *escafe*, a shell; Latin *scapha*, a light boat, a skiff; Greek *skaphe*, a trough. Descended from Indo-European *skehb*, a scab. Anne Boleyn on the scaffold took the fatal stroke.

A woman with crutch splays out bad leg, and scoops water in paper cups from a globalized burger joint. Four cups at the pond edge plus her windshield squeegie. A teen sylph, with pink mini-top and low-slung jeans drifts up Howe Street coolly tilting her buttocks. Live to Love, says the Celine-Dior trapeze-woman swinging out from a billboard. Inside the courthouse, the buzzing of innumerable bees: If your Ladyship, Lordship would turn to page nine hundred and fifty of the transcript. My friend and I have reached an agreement, subject to your Ladyship, Lordship's approval. I'm afraid I must ask your Ladyship, Lordship for an adjournment to review the sixteen binders of new evidence. Objection, M'Lady, M'Lord, my friend has asked a leading question. A moment please, M'Lady, M'Lord. If it would please M'Lady, M'Lord to refer to exhibit A. I believe, M'Lady, M'Lord, it's under tab 100W of binder 12C. Those are all my questions, M'Lady, M'Lord.

Her Majesty Versus Murdock

Order in Court. All stand—the lawyers in their black gowns, behind their brass bar, the Accused in his box, the jury in their box, the sheriffs of the Accused and the jury. The oak-paneled room fills with shuffles and plumps. All sit. His Lordship in red mantle and red-cuffed robes swivels his chair to address the jury in their plaid shirts, angora sweaters and track jackets: I am the judge of the law, he says, You are the judge of the facts.

Made from Latin *facere*. Facts make fashion statements. Ache about like general factotums, and quarrel in factions. Make difficulties with facility. Cook up features, defeats, fetishes. In them dwell the gods of raccoons and humans. Facts are erotic.

The standard of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt, His Lordship continues, Mr. Murdock has no obligation to prove he is innocent, and his counsel, Mr. Raddle, is under no obligation to ask questions. Be cautious in discussing the case. Later you may find it difficult to change your mind.

To doublets, doughnuts, douches or doubts. Double thinks or double flats. The facts make reason's rations and ratio's rashers. Outside the ratio, all is obiter dictum. For *logic*, as Nietzsche said, *rests upon presuppositions to which nothing in the real world corresponds*.

The Crown charges that Mr. Murdock robbed Mr. Mack, assaulting him with a weapon—namely a hockey stick. Mr. Radish for the Crown must prove Mr. Murdock took property from Mr. Mack intending to deprive him, and that Mr. Murdock used a weapon with force intending to hit Mr. Mack.

Through the lot lines of words, not boundaries of worlds, propriety becomes private and peculiar. But who, or what is public? *Homo laborans* slaves away, making more *homo laborans*. *Homo faber* produces more and more products, the way facts make artifacts and factories make faculties.

Only the testimony of witnesses is evidence.

Hacky Sack

Old courthouse steps make bleachers to a stage—the deck of a ship where crowds walk back and forth from Howe Street to Hornby Street and Hornby (Rear-Admiral Phipps H) to Howe (Black Dick led the English fleet against Spain in the fight over Nootka land). Clipboard-toting women in orange vests accost people for their survey. A kid lights up a joint, filling the air with pungent fumes of BC Bud. A woman in flounced long skirt and ruffled blouse shuffles along. And guys in front centre play hacky-sack, jumping on it—flicking it up behind them from the bottoms of their shoes. A bicycle courier, one foot on his pedal, chats to a blonde; a motorcycle man hunches into his farting machine. Hacky-sackers bop it off knees, heels. Djew know what time it is (doper kid). Quarter after one. Balding man with glasses gets caught in hacky-sack game. Hey Gringo, keep your eyes open. Hacky-sack hits a suit in the head. Everyone laughs. Skate boarder and girlfriend watch. Hacky-sack flies way up the steps. Girl in work boots closes her notebook and asks if she can join in. Course you can. Man pushing a trash bin rolls from Hornby to Howe. Beige suit with briefcase can't hit sack when it comes straight at him. Steps on it, crushing its grains into the sidewalk. Orange survey-takers capture a ponytail man. Empty rubbish bin rolls back to stage right. What time you got? One thirty. Muscle car guns it off stage left. Three pigeons playing mother-may-I change their minds and head back down the steps, just as a man in faded T-shirt and jeans climbs them and picks up a tiny butt. I could give you a cigarette, man, says doper kid. Man shrugs, puts butt in chocolate box: it's for my ant colony.

Peter Quartermain / four poems

love
lights lights
in one another's eyes
and light
loves love's eyes' light
when love's light lights
them. Let then light
light what light
loves eye's love, and
love love's eyes that
love's lights light

Philosophers

never sit in chairs. They
do
pour cups of tea
one cup at once
        not two
Not
worry whether the cup
contains the tea or
the tea
defines the cup
but not as philosophers

rooms
        shape like
teacups heads
like eggs

Sing

cringe
for
danger's strangled anger dangles angels'
plangent flanged strung bangle's
stranger fringes
fling
a lingered stringent angel-finger's
angled clung strong plunged thing's
singed thong's long sing's linked
songed binge, a wrinkled wrong wrung dry
to make song's surge
so droop

Stopping Smoking

You have to write something today
you said. Will you write on the typewriter?

I forget my exact words
but we chuckled just as
now
when my right hand reaches for the switch
to turn it on
my left hand reaches for a cigarette
ruefully I chuckle
and eat a box of raisins

I shall get fat perhap
the muse who loved the
clouds of smoke will come
to like nubs of carotene
and visit with celery-ty,
raisin up a storm so I can write
of currant affairs and be a big cheese

but I might stay thin

for my left hand can reach
as can my right
without turning on
the typewriter
but turning on

nuts are better than raisins?
I like peaches myself

today
energy moves slow when
the eyes used to smoke

smart to clear air
tomorrow
who knows
I may not write at all.
shall we see

if smart's another word for
sharp
or even keen

Lisa Robertson / Of Mechanics in Rousseau's Thought

The women is itself not a content
It is an unwavering faith in the fictional
Because they don't exist

In soft pale green medium sized notebook titled many notes towards an essay on girls, girlhood
With black cloth spine
Mainly I wanted to write Latin fucking
Then I wanted the phoneme to spread around me like a sea
I walked beside the absence of
Then one had encountered oneself by leaving
And this posed the basis of a rhythm

As for the theology of certainty
It can happen that
The wrongness is philosophical.
I've spoken about drunkenness, 1975, etcetera
Where the imagined houses the real.
What is interesting?
Values are said.
1490, 1501, cosi vulgari, 1503, 1507, 1512, 1513, 1519, 1525, 1539, 1554
With cool specificity of window light in northern climates
I wanted to make something free
The streets helped me see
How it is that I am soldiered
With political bestiality of each era
I forget it here.

Into which everything tumbles
In the coolness descending from trees at night
I wanted the ruched, slinky, stiffened, reintroduced healthy and artistic garment
If girls of gravitas
Girls of the underfunded deliciousness
Their tearbottles shattered

The prodigal and the grateful
Meet in the speaking likeness
They are observed for rhymes and contiguities
Here the element of time is foreshortened
Rousseau is sobbing out his innocence
And the result is critical nostalgia
Though certainly not transparent
By the staggered beds of salvia
And geranium: Scripted dissent
Citizen-nerves
Cement buildings unlit
Odours of hallways
The violet stems of thistles
Summer was something pulled out of me
Which, by attraction and radiation
Will embrace and strengthen fiction
To the event of three trees.
How does it feel on your skin.
Great doubleness, columns of dreams
The alignment of perishable things
Slow enough to be accurate fiercely

Alongside the reflecting pool
An edge fraying so as to become a chaos
Under full soft hot light.

So I walked, years and flowers
As if Dante walked into the phenomena
Neither vocabulary at the expense of the other
In pinkish moods of the evening stroller

Here is the concept of a vanishing point
In the form of gold or intense blue
Gently mathematical
I cannot help but penetrate it
To swim in the religiosity of the comprehensible
But the voluptuousness does not appeal to me.

Speaking, what is it?
I had a little kettle
I had a habit
I had a sister
I had a hard time
A hard time
It was a place like this with several centuries of human death added to it
With small gaps in decorum
And with great opacity
(Even erotic genuflection
Cancelling all that went before)
A hormone is a pierced cell unwinding to the sound of tearing mousseline

The sun has eaten the material
Feminism enters the poem, death enters the poem, rhetoric enters the poem
Out of a sluice of my own making
Then it feels formally false
True and primitive, one at a time
The mouth swings up
With its seven pure, volute resemblances
The little gods are interlocutors
In the mental sensation of living
Here are watered meadows in the bodies of thought
Risks can be noticed
Mountains and clouds and manliness
Maybe I just needed to presume the freedom of skepticism
To make liberty plausible
And then to immediately part from it.

Poem returning from privacy to April of the lips and teeth
The lilac, semi-ethical and torn from dusk
And then the peony's response
And gravely
What I love about flowers—
They fit in my head.

And, rising hence
The irreplaceable vernaculars.
Words released from hierarchical ligatures
Cheaper than justice
The jaws speaking

A pebbling sound
I wanted narrative to be
The proportion in her hair
Not a statement of the type “I am choking”
As an authorizing system.

Compared to the encoded unbelievability of women
The river squirts, the thought becomes a chatter
Imitating Pound’s Propertius
To make a lack of value
Unseen, unfelt, silent and inflected
And by their fountains
Of hope and demotic ambit
Which glazed, flayed, succulent
Let slip some
Senses

What happens at nighttime—
Is it materially neutral?

Abandon the pacing.
Cry freely into the nape hair.
The suppleness of these amusements
Beginning, middle, end
The Etruscan scrotum of stone beneath Perspex
The wrapped breasts of a hermaphrodite
Wished to anticipate
—textile-like—

The padded wall
As loss
The wrongness is philosophical.

October's topmost wandy slim branch
Unsnarls the air
Versus what is public:
Silver silver habit.
I am ready to forget.
I too want more than I have thought
And I still love my diminishment.

About the psychic life of pigment:
I awake into an original greediness
Into glossy persimmon crested notebook called Sylvine
Into large creamy notebook with title Precious Ego
Into small blue marbled notebook with powder blue cotton spine
Bought in London, December, 1999
Glossy black notebook with red-ink-edged pages, water dampened
Into many publics slowly pivoting like leaves
Blurting their opposite

Bill Schermbrucker / The Welder

for Helen, and Cheryl

On a blazing summer morning in January 1954, in the seaside town of Fish Hoek, South Africa, my stepmother, Helen, jumped down off a two-foot dividing wall onto the concrete, and her sandals made a loud slap which shot my heart into my mouth. She was eight and a half months pregnant, and I fully expected the baby to pop right out of her. After everybody had finished scolding her for her impetuosity, and the weather clouded over, my older brother and I set off on our bicycles for a camping trip at Cape Point. ("Go as planned," Helen insisted. "Naggie and I can cope if the baby comes.") From the shelter of our rocky cave Christo and I stared like Keats' Cortez at the demarcation line where the friendly, warm, green Indian Ocean meets the cold, blue South Atlantic, then took our fins and masks and sheath-knives and slid into the swelling waves, in search of food. For three rainy days, we lived on fried *perlemoen* (abalone) and condensed milk on bread, then pushed our bikes up to the road and pedalled back over the Simonstown mountain to Fish Hoek, wondering if the baby had arrived.

It happened late that night. I listened to the scurrying and anxious voices as they went off to the maternity home, and my only assignment in the affair was to take a bucket of warm water and a couple of rags next day and clean up the leather back seat of Naggie's Ford Prefect where Helen's water had burst while Christo was driving her to the home. Father flew down from Kenya, and in a few days Helen came back with baby John. Naggie's flat was so filled with people that we had to rent an extra room from the upstairs neighbour. Now we were a family of four brothers, Christo 20, me 16, Geoffrey 3, and the newborn John.

My father had married Helen (Beck) Muller, a widow with a small son, in 1952. During their first year of marriage she had another brief and secret pregnancy. One Sunday out from school, I snooped and found a drawer full of dry bloodstained gauze pads.

"Helen," I said, "I was looking in your drawers for nail clippers and—"

"Oh my God, Billy!" she said, "burn them for me, will you. I didn't know how to get them past the servants."

I emptied the drawer into a brown grocery bag and took it to the kitchen and stuffed it into the Aga Cooker ("*Ufanyaji sasa, Meetila?*" Liru asks, "What are you doing now, little Hitler," and I reply, "*Si shauri yako, Mzee*," "None of your business, old man.") Helen did not refer again to that incident until 22 years later when she visited me in Vancouver in 1974. "It would have been simply impossible to have another child that soon into the marriage. I was desperately trying to find my feet in Kenya, when I discovered I was pregnant. I was prepared to do anything to end it. But fortunately it ended by itself."

And now another 30-some years after that, I sit at my desk on Saturna Island B.C. looking out through the curves and forks of a Sitka willow framed by erect pine and fir, towards distant Tsawwassen, where little white ferries come and go, and I drop my gaze into the computer. The screen is a tunnel through jumbled time frames into pictures and emotions on another continent that I try to join into a coherent piece. It comes to me how strong a woman Helen was. Christo was so upset at our mother's death that he couldn't easily accept her—couldn't stand her sloppiness. He tells stories to this day about her lack of carefulness: one morning she drives to the bank and withdraws a large amount of money, enough, say, to pay a labourer's wages for two years, then places her purse on the roof of the car while she unlocks the door, gets in and drives off, forgetting what she put on the roof. All that cash lost somewhere on the road, *that* famous blunder. And her protectiveness of little John, turning him into a mama's boy. Nor is Chris alone in these criticisms. I push the tape recorder button: Mona Stanley, my godmother in Kenya: "He was a naughty little devil, that Johnny. I didn't like him at all. I reckon he gave your father more grey hairs and heart worries than anything else in that home of yours. Came to stay with me on the farm. *Oh*, he didn't want this, didn't like that, wouldn't eat cauliflower. And I said, 'You've *got to eat* it!' He looked at me and gave me a dirty look. Eventually he ate it. But as soon as his mother came, his nonsense started again. Wouldn't eat this, wouldn't eat that. I think your poor father took the brunt of it all."

That's one dimension of the conundrum—my "poor father": a man of great enterprise and success, a founder of the Eldoret Rugby Club and in '52 elected president of the Kenya Law Society while his new young wife struggles to "find her feet" socially in Nairobi; a man who never looked back from the day in 1910 when he was chosen to sit erect on his horse at the age of six, one hand lightly holding the reins and the other firmly gripping the flagpole of the royal standard, leading the parade

into Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape for the King's visit to celebrate Union. Who emigrated to Kenya to help build the country, and now, a lifetime later, was battling cholesterol and hypertension, after a war by terrorists who had vowed to drive all of us Europeans and Asians into the sea. And now on top of his other worries, damn it! this moody child of his who had appeared as a surprise, and hid behind his mother's skirts, and wouldn't so much as eat his cauliflower….

Oddly, Father had an empathy for food repugnance. I was astonished, in our house in Muthaiga at the beginning of my mother's fatal illness, when I lingered over a half-eaten dinner and Father told the servant quietly, "*Chukua sahani*," ("Take the plate away"), then said kindly to me, "You don't have to finish that. Vegetables are an acquired taste. I only came to it later in life."

Laxity, remission, *caritas*, caring. Another dimension of the puzzle. "We are but little children weak, / Nor born to any high estate."

My father used to rub our chests with camphorated oil when we were sick, especially after Mother died. He murmured a mantra as his hand massaged. "Get you better, get you better." But when he came back home from Nairobi in office mode, and found domestic muddle in the house, he would blow up.

(*Move aside, Pa! This story is about John, not you.*)

"Hello?" I answer the phone. It's 1999.

"Bull?"

"Yes John?"

"How did you know it was me?"

"Nobody else calls me 'Bull.'"

"Am I mispronouncing your name?"

"I'd call it perfect."

"Look, shall we come and see you, man?"

"Definitely. Where are you now?"

"Florida. The boat's on dry land."

I try to take in the story. In his sailboat *Ferdinand*, which he built with his own hands, my little "mama's boy" brother has left South Africa with his wife and two children, en route for New Zealand. First, it took them a year to get permission to emigrate with the boat, during which time they lived aboard at Hout Bay, near Cape Town. Then, when the government relented and the South Atlantic storms abated, they sailed via Saint Helena to the Caribbean. Aboard the forty-foot boat, they have

lived for four solid years, pausing once in Trinidad to give birth to another child (changed their email address from Ferdi4 to Ferdi5). And now he has bought a used Chevy van and built sleeping bunks in it and they are on their way to Vancouver. How did John become such a Hercules?

In the mid-1960s, as his health deteriorated and the British lost their will for empire, my father began retrenching. He sold the coffee farm at Kiambu and moved into Nairobi. He managed to get his savings out of the country, and eventually, as the blood pressure machine displayed disappointing numbers, he sold up and booked passage on the Lloyd Triestino boat to Cape Town. Back where he'd come from forty years before, Father and Helen with the two teenage boys. They bought a house and painted it, and he died. "A tired heart."

It happened so quickly that everyone was shocked, worst of all John. A single memory sustained him: He remembered how a few years earlier at the age of ten, near our coral beach house at Diani south of Mombasa, he had found a wrecked aluminum airplane float, and persuaded Father to buy it. He put a mangrove pole mast on it, and Father helped him rig a canvas lateen sail, and he spent his days sailing down past The Two Fishes Hotel to Jadini, and tacking back against the wind. Now in Cape Town, everything was lost. Father dead, coffee farm gone, Diani gone. Nobody spoke Swahili, and worst of all, they forced John to learn Afrikaans at school, a language he wanted nothing to do with. So he refused to attend. Helen cajoled him, but he stood his ground and eventually turned violent. It got very bad. One day he raised a kitchen knife against her, and our brother Geoffrey had to drive down from Sasolburg to intervene and sit on him. There was talk of a Borstal institution. Eventually he made a pact with his mother: "You just leave me alone and I'll leave you alone, okay?" They coexisted in the house without communication.

At fifteen, he stopped school altogether and began hanging out at the Zeekoevlei Yacht Club. He learned to weld, and fabricated a boat trailer on a discarded BMW rear axle, and sold it for cash. Then another. Soon he was getting orders for yacht trailers from all over the Cape. He made enough money to buy himself a motor bike. But one day he had an accident and, lying in hospital with both legs and both arms broken, he decided to forget motor bikes and stick to boats. He worked on Geoffrey's uncle's boat and realized that that was something he could do.

Then he met Cheryl.

"Would you like to take a trip to the Seychelles?" he asked her.
"Where is it?" she said.
"Islands about two thousand miles north, in the Indian Ocean."
"*Ja*!" she said, "*Lekker*, man."
"Okay, I'll build a boat."

When Helen visited me in Vancouver, she told me that she'd gone on an Anglican retreat and been converted, and a few weeks later one of her friends informed her that John had also become a Christian, Pentecostal. Over supper, she broached the matter with him, and he acknowledged it with a shy smile. This was the first conversation mother and son had had since the "leave alone" pact. He brought his friends over that night, and they baptized her in the Holy Spirit. During her visit to Vancouver, John phoned twice to check that she was okay. "See, Billy?" Helen said. "God is real!" She went home to Cape Town and a few weeks later a neighbour came to visit, and found that knocking on the door made no impression on Helen, whom she could see sitting with her eyes open in an armchair in the living room. She had died of a stroke, aged fifty-seven.

John asked Cheryl to marry him, and she said, "Sure!" even though it meant she had to resign her teaching position, according to some chauvinist British rule still in effect in South Africa. But she taught on as a temporary and eventually put John through Technical College, and then, when he realized that that wasn't good enough, through the University Engineering school.

"One day we're coming to see you, *Boetie*," he told me on the phone, and I noticed that he had lost his famous antipathy to Afrikaans. Even his accent was decidedly *jaapie*. "We'll sail up under your Lions Gate Bridge and say hello, man. How 'bout that?"

So here we sit in North Vancouver, in 1999, waiting for the van to arrive from Florida. (He investigated sailing up the Mississippi, then trucking overland, but that proved too costly.)

The two bigger children scramble out of the van and romp around us like monkeys, leaping on our backs, crying, "Uncle Bill! Uncle Bill! Auntie Sharon and Uncle Bill!"

I take the one-year-old Meg from Cheryl's arms, and the child allows me to hold her. She turns to look as I point out Mount Baker, and her cousin Julia's playhouse

in the backyard, and then Penny's house next door. "And there's a hazelnut tree, see, Meg? And there's a black walnut." The child inspects my face, six inches away, then pronounces her verdict loudly in my ear: "Blah! Blah! Blah!"

Night after night they tell us their stories: how they ran out of cash in the Caribbean and Cheryl went from boat to boat in the dinghy, a floating charlady. How the hurricanes came and then there was lots of paying work for John, so that they prayed for more storms. How he invented a hurricane-proof anchor, and stayed aboard *Ferdinand* when all the other boats were evacuated ashore to the schoolhouse in Saint Maarten, and Cheryl watched nervously with the others, as he rode out the storm, testing his invention. How word suddenly buzzed through the yachtie community that New Zealand rules had changed: if you didn't take up landed immigrancy within a specific time you lost it; so John persuaded a wealthy German to let him refit his damaged boat for ten thousand bucks US, then persuaded him to pay him up front so they could all fly to New Zealand and sleep a few days on somebody's floor and have a postmarked letter delivered to establish residency, before flying back to the Caribbean.

After a month with us, they set off to see Vancouver Island. John is not interested in engineering jobs; he could spend the rest of his life working on boats. They've heard that there are good prospects up at Comox. But when they return from the Island a week later, they are more determined than ever to head for New Zealand. They have bought four bikes and a child carrier seat at Walmart in Victoria and will strap them on the deck, so that when they land at islands in the South Pacific, they'll have a means of getting around. I take them for a ride in the Seymour Demonstration Forest, and when we get back to the house, John says, "Bull, I'm not happy with this seat, hey? I'm going to weld a bit of pipe in there to make it longer. Where's your welder?"

"I don't have a welder, John."

"You don't have a *welder*?" He looks at me in dismay. "How do you *live*, man?"

All too soon they are gone. Back to Florida via Texas, sell the van for what they paid, relaunch *Ferdinand*, on through the Panama Canal, out into the Pacific.

Somewhere between the Cook Islands and Auckland, a huge Pacific wave swelled up on them without warning, in the middle of the night, when they were all asleep, on autopilot, with open hatches. It broke and crashed into the boat.

"Every damn thing we own got soaked!" he writes. "It really pissed me off."

They'd be short of cash when they reached New Zealand, so I asked John how they would manage for housing.

"I'm gonna buy a cheap plot of land," he said, "and bring in the electric and water connections, and we'll get a guy with a machine to dig out the earth just so, and put the boat in there, and live on it."

I shake my head, remembering little Johnny who wouldn't eat his cauliflower. Remembering Helen, who shielded him from a bullying culture.

And Cheryl, who takes the trip with him wherever he wants to go.

Sandra Seekins / Bristle

It's not cerebral
On the contrary
There is a body there
A robust grace that freshens enfleshes and
Gently corrects
Ill-formed perceptions.

Barging messages from node to node
Counting each raw gesture as a fraction
Before its plumping
Crosshatching whole patterns
Of manual behavior

High horizon line above
Compacted earth
Courbet's provincial ritual
Awkward poses
Precise honest indifference

A slathering from the palette
Cart-wheeling atoms
Stuck and unstuck
A gift or curse of genetic promise or
Betrayal the angular angst on
Kirchner's streets
Dix's fragmented veterans
Paralysis, brutality then
Caillebotte's dazzling rainy day light.

Painterly painting a painter's
Painter the luscious lick of
Pigment clot tender blending
Tantalizing materiality
The abject object of Saville
Meaty density and substance
Visible weight
Cadmium yellow burnt
Umber emerald green

A wounding touch that smears
Encrusted bristling virtuoso
Chemical collisions abound unbounded
Alchemical texture searing and scarring
The planar surface
The surface that is depth
The depth that is flat
The mark
Mark-making.

Faktura epihany

Faktura eureka

Nancy Shaw / from Light.Sweet.Crude

meteorological redemption
in backyard forecasts
local strangers play to ambivalent calculation
of viral gush
I may be contaminated
but I still like to play

so I turned-up and growled
risk-sodden
in sand bag torrents
encapsulated in a spirit
where hand servants of safety perform like weather
stretching flows that crash midpoint

consorted novice
plan your renovations as something more
than norms and routines
or dogged time-disciples
occasioned by the absence of polar variation

brokers of victimology
permit the cloning of calm
that stands in for management
a carnival of emissions penetrate

depledge nature
fabricated on inclement states
juxtaposed with swinging debris
don't step in the middle
of generic acrimony
suddenly elemental in
areas directed toward remote sentiment

hello hell
supposedly beyond fatigue
fist to mouth
when puppets prove ungovernable
the ten largest emergencies of the last year combined
crowded out as a series of shocks followed by burning
outbreaks of service exchange

towards tradable moments
that demonstrate chilling futures
volunteers swell at virtue
years after the advice was cancelled
a bench mark twister

Rescue Me No More

rescue me no more
but thanks for the warning
pilled-up
temperature in excess of my body

the search is for perfect reception
pitted with a wind chill manager
encouraging customers to work out
unleashed in a campaign remnant
nothing to do with consumer choice

more people than codes
is one stop related
they cover the topic as treatment
dedicated to the proceedings of culinary patrimony
and corporatizing seed
offering instructions in enjoyment

box top premiers
sampling specials of the day
promoting death and desperation
front organizers of the food pesticide sector
seeking to discredit their own veniality
generated by a desperate correlation
in a half boost seal
exorcized of credentials

they just couldn't look out the window
of the snow accumulation centre
that favored a weather event as good

the countries of other state performers
in extreme weather beds
the principal of a non convert
a chore for visual capture
secure in a legacy of transplantation
now to endorse derivative culture
in plainly typed texts
brokered into the ordinary
structures mature in denial

braised and adorned
we condescended
exiled from the
cost of overwrought
after decades of agreements
guaranteeing pouring rights
confection seekers create a branding
bidding on the global obesity task force

Bob Sherrin / from Go Lightly

The insurance agent sat at an oval inlaid table. In front of him, a rectangular box covered in red leather. He'd arrived at apartment 14 more than 20 minutes earlier and spent that time going room to room, noting everything again, particularly the many mirrors and of course the numbers. Here there everywhere. All sizes, many fonts. He'd come at last, as he knew he should and would, to the sitting room, to a creaky wooden chair, this table originally used for playing cards, and what now lay in front of him.

Naturally, he'd heard of such boxes, supposedly delivered by hand to ministers of the crown at the end of the day. Certainly in the 1940s and probably the 50s too. Perhaps proposed legislation or an eyes-only committee report, ambiguous comments and question marks pencilled in the margins. Initialled by previous readers as it made its way up the line. Maybe a decrypted signal from the monitored frequencies of a foreign embassy, a few days old yet secret enough.

The insurance agent ran a fingertip over the box lid, through an etched coat of arms, the letters *E* and *U* below it. Few flakes of gilt remained. He knew which government the symbol represented, even which part of it the *E* and the *U* stood for. Yet he knew only some of what such etchings could represent. One was Vera Lightbody.

Some time ago, the agent had stopped at the door to apartment 14 and rapped sharply three times. He hitched up his shoulders then dropped them. Ran his tongue over his teeth, cracked his knuckles, slipped a hand into a trouser pocket. The door opened.

A tall, elderly woman. "Yes?"

"Miss Lightbody?"

"I am. And you?"

"Vardo. Ed Vardo." He produced a slim card case from his trousers, a trick he'd taught himself. She took a card.

Edmund T Vardo
Senior Domestic Agent
Furnishings/Rarities
PacSino InterNat

Offices on Howe Street, also Toronto and San Francisco: Integrity and diligence since 1941.

"Not a great year for it," Vera noted and handed the card back to Vardo.

He was surprized she didn't want to keep it.

"Cheer up," Vera said as she swung the door wide. "I've been waiting decades to meet Ed Vardo."

"Oh? Really?" Was this flattery, error, dementia? "I've just come from the Severards."

Vera ushered him in. "Oh yes, I've heard from Nel."

Which one, Vardo wondered as Vera closed the door behind him. He followed her through a spacious living room.

"About the Swamp Angel?" Vardo asked, eyes automatically grazing. Chesterfield—likely Higgins & Crowe, early 50s, one of their hand builts. Floors, quarter-grain red oak. On it, a handsome Gabbeh, worth several thou. Vera directed him to a pair of wingbacks, angled 45 degrees to each other, relatives of the chesterfield. She sat him down.

"Yes indeed, Mr Vardo. About the Swamp Angel."

"Call me Ed, Miss Lightbody. If you don't mind."

"Ed it is. Now, Mr Vardo: tea, coffee, Lagavulin, or cranberry juice?"

Vardo was tempted by the single malt. "Juice is good."

Vera went to the kitchen. Vardo grazed on. Built-in bookcases, Garry oak by the looks of them, finely dovetailed. Lots of books, mostly hardcover and leather, some first editions no doubt, perhaps a few keepers. Not his turf, really. Brass table lamps, late 40s, doing fine but a bitch to polish. Might as well invest in silver. Below a large mirror a beautiful Arts and Craft table. A centred yellow bowl and behind it, propped against the wall, metal numbers. Serif font, maybe three inches tall. House numbers. But why 53561? Nowhere in Vancouver would you find such a number on a house. Not in Burnaby either, or New West. And never here in the West End. Vardo swivelled beyond the wing of his chair and picked out another sitting area near the windows. Leaded glass doors that opened onto the third floor balcony with a view along Beach Avenue. West Van to the right, Point Grey to the left. On one window ledge the numbers 90110, on another in green plastic, 44474.

"Here you are, Mr Vardo."

Vera sat and raised her tumbler of Lagavulin. Vardo was quick to the challenge and raised his cranberry/mango. They clinked.

Thus it began.

Vardo now unclasped the hinged lid of the box and opened it. He was surprized by its depth and that its contents seemed all to be packaged or sealed in envelopes—layers of things overlapping one another. Particulars deposited over time? Casually archeological or placed in the box in hasty departure? Vardo smiled. They were in sequence but not sequential. One of Vera's fundamental points.

Vardo stood, doffed his jacket, uncinched his tie, pulled out his shirt tails, and sat back down. A series of movements that he could logically describe as 1 2 3 4, 5. But Vera saw each act as separate, complete in itself. The sequence 2 4 3 1 5 is just as logical. Each part of it still makes sense. String them together as you wish.

Vardo retrieved an item. A white envelope, sealed, unmarked. He tapped one end sharply on the table then tore the envelope open.

A letter, handwritten, dated three days before Vera's death.

> Dear Edmund,
>
> You know and don't know why you are here. I should apologize for interrupting your beloved routine, but I won't. By opening this letter you probably realize that you've begun to manipulate the contents of the box I pilfered decades ago. It's worth a few dollars, I imagine, at a yard sale, but you'll know more precisely than I.
>
> When you first came to see me, and on every occasion since, you wanted to see the Swamp Angel, but you didn't want to hear about the book of the same name. I won't disturb you with all of it, just a few of my essentials. "You must have the whole of thing to really pin it down," you say. I've always thought of the essentials as a crib for a code, a clear point of entry. Once you're in you may do whatever you want to decrypt the damned thing, the problem being that once you are inside you may find no easy exit. So, you ceaselessly, often pointlessly, decrypt then interpret then guess.
>
> Right now, my essentials are the red box and what I put in it. The box I stole in 1944 from the house on Laurier Street where, as you know poor boy, the Examination Unit was ensconced. You may do with my essentials what you

wish. Catalogue them, appraise them, impose sense on them, keep some, leave others behind. Since I have no heirs, I've informed my executor Nel Severard to show you into my home one last time. I encourage you to stay as long as you wish and take whatever you wish from it when you leave. However, once out the door, it locks shut behind you. After that, everything is in Nel's hands.

Edmund, you should also know that the occupant of my apartment before I acquired it was Ethel Wilson.

Yours sincerely,

Vera

Vardo set the letter down, smoothed out its creases. He thought of Vera's claim. She'd discovered he liked syllogisms. He did want things to unfold logically, efficiently, unsurprizingly—as possible. If a syllogism fails, refine it. Make it more precise. Vardo loved a syllogism's chimeric simplicity. In a syllogism, sequence is one thing acting on another, leading to a sound conclusion if done correctly.

"What about death?" Vera reminded him. "Your faith. You are a middling Christian of some kind, yes? Insists that new life begins after death. Conclusion: a sequence."

Vardo patted the table. Lubrication. He took Vera's letter, walked half round the table, and set the page down. He continued his circuit.

Everything, he believed, has a place. In fact, Vardo had a theory about it. Thing Place Theory declares Thing and Place inseparable. Because the place of a thing—anything, even a person—tells you something about its value. Imagine that an inlaid oval card table of cherry, yew, and walnut falls from a vacating tenant's pickup and settles to the side of the alley behind Vera's building. Its value lies at a particular place on the spectrum known as Pre-owned Distressed. Eventually, a good agent will situate it accurately on that spectrum. On the other hand, an identical table in apartment 14 of Kensington Place is inseparable from the attentions of its own environment. Mainly humidity, dust or grit, the quality of polish used on it and the frequency of its application.

Vardo fingered the edge of Vera's table. Certainly in the sub spectrum Collectible/Pre-antique. Just as light naturally shifts through a blue-red range, Vera's table, if maintained in its place for several more years, would just as naturally move well into

the second half of the spectrum. Should it end up ignored in a humid, dusty closet of the Severards' apartment for a decade and a half? An unfortunate, different Place for that Thing, thus an unfortunate, different value. Sequence or sequential?

Vardo patted his gut. He always preferred dilemma over predicament. The former permits a choice between only two options, while the latter may offer too many to choose from. Vardo poked his gut. What was his dilemma?

Carry on or pack up and leave.

Leaving at any point, however, poses the predicament of choosing what to carry off. Vardo unbuttoned his collar and looked.

He'd first sat with Vera over there. She to his left, he to her right. Sinister and dexter. He thought *sinister* illusive, *a*llusive, thus more irritating and attractive to him than *dexter*, the norm, the mundane. Sinister demands action—by proxy. Dexter offers good hand-eye coordination. Gently equivalent to juggling several dossiers at once, settling claims with speed and minimum outlay. Keeping the regional manager at bay.

The wingbacks were hand-built, as Vardo initially surmised when he professionally thrust his rump back and down. Superb cushioning, embracing but firm, no creak to betray machine screws, no yaw from sloppy dovetails or decayed adhesives. Sad to say, he'd been wrong about their provenance. Not Higgins & Crowe in Victoria. Durrieux et Fils, Provence du Quebec. Had he paid closer attention to the chairs' piping, Vardo now reminded himself, he'd quickly have recognized its intricate pentangular braid, sign of Norman upholstery craft for centuries, a tradition maintained by the best furniture makers in Quebec till well after the Quiet Revolution.

After she'd handed him his drink, Vera sat down in her own wingback. They air clinked, Vera steadily tippled her Lagavulin, and Vardo declared how hard it was to sip cranberry juice.

"It's the container," Vera pointed out.

Vardo the adjuster inspected it. Vertically faceted, French made, a piece of Duramark. Virtually worthless even when new. "A tumbler," he said with certainty.

"Indeed, Mr Vardo. Note the word *tumble* that forms 6/7ths of it. The glass is designed to fit the fist and be tipped over your teeth, tumbling its contents into your open gullet. You know already how well it works."

"*Tumble*," he said, "also *to fall*."

"How many falls can you name?"

"Niagara, Shannon, Bridal Veil, Victoria—prat."

Vera nodded approval.

"Head over heels," he added.

"As in *into love* or *out of love*?"

From the start, Vardo saw Vera as a bit of a marm—as in *school*, as in *battle-axe*, as in *attracted to domination*.

"Your silence," she said, "tells me you have fallen both ways but not recently."

Vardo scrutinized the last of his juice. He'd regularly appraised the losses in vandalized homes, felt the rage in shattered dinnerware, mirrors, prized objects. Some was the work of home invaders. Many were the responses of either party to a bitter divorce. Vardo tossed back the last of his cran/mango and felt an idiot. He himself had just fallen, as in *for it*.

Vera took the tumbler from his hand. "I have a quick mouth, a well-aged imagination, and too few visitors," she said. "A vile combination. Please excuse me, Mr Vardo." She was on her feet, heading off to the kitchen.

Vardo sank into a wing and contemplated the starched slope of his shirt, broken only by the yellow dots and dashes on his deep-blue tie. Marj's gift, the dots and dashes repetitively forming her name in Morse code.

Something tapped his closed fist, and Vardo automatically opened it to accept the tumbler Vera placed in it.

She sat. "I've perked it up a little. I do hope you approve, Mr Vardo."

He was getting his stats in order: Edmund Vardo, Senior Domestic Agent, also an internationally qualified adjuster when required, second in rank and seniority to the West Coast Regional Mananger. Priceless, according to his mother. As we all are, Vardo thought, until we're compost. Only then can our true worth be accurately fixed.

Vera raised her refreshed glass of Scotch. "You can't approve until you taste it, Mr Vardo."

He sipped and nodded. "Russian vodka."

"Polish. Potato."

"I am doubly blessed."

They sipped quietly. Vardo began juggling two questions completely tangential to his business with Vera. Ask them, man, get them out of the way then get back on track. Now.

"Why the numbers, Vera? And what is it about such words as *tumbler* and *fall*?"

"Code."

"Pardon me?"

"Code. Cryptography, ciphers, encryption systems, Mr Vardo. The numbers in this room, as you've obviously noticed, are in groups of five. A form of machine code used by most participants in World War II. Still used now, still generated by machines but exceptionally swift ones. Not the sort of computers you find in London Drugs. Ah, those hand-built NI jobbies demanded by intelligence heads. Desperately purchased by their higher ups. Hideously overpriced, but they crank out *nearly* unbreakable codes."

"What's the attraction?"

Vardo guessed. Lonely old woman, thus the daily crossword, then cryptic word scrambles, finally graduation to Sudoku. A way to fend off the effects of deceased friends, declining memory, the stupid complexity of remotes.

Vera eyed him. "I've always liked the seemingly unlimited combinations they provide. I've always been attracted to patterns of any kind, and there are lots of them in machine codes. In any code, actually. Even the one on your tie. Any language, in fact, human or otherwise."

Vardo shifted uneasily. "Words?"

"They're code too. A good dictionary…"

"Is the key?"

Vera marmed. "Do you speak German, Mr Vardo?"

"No. But I could translate some. I could decode some of it."

"Individual words, yes. Phrases, perhaps. Complete sentences, hardly ever. But you couldn't decode the Zimmerman Telegramme or the latest transmission from the German consulate in Vancouver. For that you'd need to *understand* the grammar of the language. Not simply know its vocabulary."

"You're a codebreaker, Vera?"

"Used to be. Strong emphasis on the *used* part of *to be*."

Vardo was well off-track, and he knew it.

"Like marriage, Mr Vardo, *to be* and *used*. Those words can be shaped into statements of fact and bitterness. As most of us know, though few of us consider them codes worth breaking."

Vardo nodded. "Or even see them as code."

"Dear me, everything is code, though I can't say any longer what parts are worth breaking."

Vardo surrendered to the detour. "So, you were really a codebreaker?"

"For a time, yes sir. But I did more than that. Deep background, codes of a completely different order."

"Where?"

Vera motioned for his near empty glass. Vardo handed it over. She stood. "Ottawa, at first."

"When?"

"1941 to 1945. And since." She wiggled his glass. "The same again, Mr Vardo? Something else perhaps?"

"Less juice, if you don't mind."

"Wise choice."

Vardo's eye caught the end table by the chesterfield. Rosewood, legs with Welsh spindling, maybe a Rhys. Closer investigation might lead to a complete decrypting of its value. If the legs were hand turned, add 65% to the original assessment. If the initials ABR were carved into the table's underside, add another 175%. Toss in another 80-95% if Alun Barrie Rhys had bothered to date his work, particularly that done in the heavily rationed 40s. Vardo imagined himself on his back between the table's legs peering upward with a flashlight. Vera interrupted him with a tumbler of pale pink liquid.

Vardo tasted it, nodded approval, and ceased being a PSIN agent. Aka *pissin agent* or *Pa*. "For whom?" he asked,

"For us," she eventually said.

"Who's us?"

"Well, that's a complex pronoun in your particular usage. Part of it is covered by the Official Secrets Act. Which, of course, the Brits tendered like a high quality sleep medication and we Canadians quaffed it back. Part of it sleeps under the UKUSA Agreement. The Brits and Yanks concocted it after the war. Slipped it across the table to such select Commonwealth countries as Canada and Australia. A nice rich dessert. We gobbled it up chop-chop and begged for more. Which wasn't long in coming. Soon enough, we were servants again."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning, Mr V, that we did the scum work of breaking code while the Brits and Yanks kept to themselves the intelligence derived from it."

"But, if you break a code, you can read it, you know what it says, you have the intelligence."

"Need-know. You break part of a code. You break out bits of messages from a variety of sources, never the whole of anything. The Aussies do the same. The Yanks and often the Brits assemble it. Make so-called sense of it. Say to us, 'Thank you very much. Now piss off.'"

Vardo mulled. "So, limited distribution, eyes only sort of thing. Top secret."

"*Cosmic* is the term still used in Ottawa for this sort of thing."

"So you can't tell me."

"Of course I can. I'm 87 years old. Do you really think they might abduct me on my way to Joe Fortes Library, execute me in a secluded part of Stanley Park? As a warning to others?"

Vardo shrugged.

"You dabble in things actuarial, Mr V. Consider oaths, for example. Absolutely central to marriage, yet look at the divorce rate."

Vardo dodged that one by looking at his watch. "Jesus shit." He had another appointment. In 43 minutes somewhere in southeast Shaughnessy—granddada's hand-painted decoys. Or was it 18th century Italian amber rosaries? Vardo set down his tumbler with the distinctive thump of a senior domestic agent getting down to business. "The Swamp Angel," he said.

"Which one, Mr Vardo?"

"There's more than one?"

"I know of at least three."

Vardo thought of his car parked four blocks away on Beach Avenue, of running amber lights and courtesy stops. So he shifted to standard issue mode: semi-transparent tact and politeness. He touched Vera lightly on the forearm. "I'd love to hear about them, Miss Lightbody," he purred, "but I do have another appointment. In ten minutes, in fact."

Vardo decrypted Vera's gaze: you and your greasy smile.

Vardo popped to his feet and extended a hand. "Consequently, we must talk more."

Vera made to stand herself but faltered and settled back in her chair. Vardo dropped his untouched hand, mumbled about finding his own way. They'd most certainly speak again. Very soon.

He made his way across the living room to the small vestibule. He opened the door.

"I will *not* talk to you on the phone," Vera yelled as Vardo closed it behind himself.

In the hallway, Vardo leaned forward, palms on knees. He took several deep breaths, let go of the last one as he stared into the burgundy carpet. Old moldy wine, retro theatre curtains, Marj's steaks, over ripe plums.

Jane (Hamilton) Silcott / Vertigo

One step, that's all. She toes closer to the edge, baby gibbling in her arms, the sea below shimmering like some ordinary day. Divers pop their heads up in a school, like fish. One of them waves, setting off an attack of vertigo as if his hand is the tail of a serpent, flicking. Or would that be a merman tail, seeing as it's come from a man in the sea?

•

As the baby falls from her arms, she falls with it, her feet leaving the rock as simply and obviously as her heart spinning in its cage. Spikes of blood shimmer in the air around her. The sun is rising, or is it because she's falling? Everything else looks up. It's gold and orange and blue the way a flame looks. Below her the sea flares then settles. In the middle something black. A stone or a seal? But she is in another world now and she hasn't felt a thing. In her mind sealmen looking up, their eyes like O's.

•

His skin so smooth, like a plate presented at her door.
May I come in?
You don't have to.
I don't.
No.
Yes.

His chest concave. Smooth. Dish. The baby turns into a bird opening in her chest, its wings pressing out and out and out in a flare of white. A peacock with orange eyes. He showed her bumps on his hands from strained ligaments. Quills. Pain. His face across the table the same as it's always been.

We could get married, he said, his voice shivery with sea. You'd have to work more, she answered. Salt on his tongue. She ate slivers of fish with Tabasco sauce and chilli powder. Red sprinkled on silver and black. Just a seed, he said, the bright air between them, his eyes the colour of glacial streams.

•

She swims in pools of blue. Hot blue with shards of glass. Waves of light cross and cancel each other out making darkness. She falls in the slits between. He closes over her, tying knots inside and out, so there are no escaping patterns, just birds and babies flying past in the pieces of fraught light. She feels him in hot drafts of air underwing. Light and silvery. The sea below shivery with flickers of white and grey. The rocks. Waving.

•

He said in these times of falling, envelopes of space open and you can see time in them.

I saw you, he said.

•

Her arms stop. The baby smiles. Home. Light shivers on water. Waves spill inside and through her. The men clap as she surfaces, a sharp slapping of skin on skin, soft licking of water on fin, happy gurgling of baby swimming toward her.

Fish, baby says. I saw a fish.

George Stanley /from Vancouver: A Poem

12

Army & Navy no longer carries men's blazers or jackets—I've been looking all over town—in the consignment stores (haven't yet got to Value Village (V for veracity—the loss of the vera city)

Liam sent me this mouth of truth, Bocca della Veritá (postcard), from Rome (I took it just now from the bookshelf to copy—that—now I replace it—that gazes—now I look at it—dumbstruck or appalled at what it sees

The ones walking & asking
a full-grown man
rage readable, patent.
You wouldn't be surprised if he hit you
as hard as he could.

a man with no money

not even a cart
(the new entrepreneurs)

a man with only his meaningless arms & legs
meaningless hands

you better have some change on you
as soon as he

but he can't ask for change

But every often or not
you run into one of them
who says, with a shy pride,
Yes, I was born here

I was a librarian
at Tupper

and you disappear into the present

Augie & me
sitting on a knoll
with numerous older others

I'm licking a mango gelato cone
we're watching Scottish dancers
on a stage at the PNE

warm sunlight, sounds of joy
from Playland,
living in a country at peace

But is Canada at peace?
Four soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan,
identities not yet released
(heartstrings tauten
from here to Halifax)

civilian

(Life. Money. Balance both.
Scotiabank)

The mouth of truth
is cracked at the bottom.
It is adorned
with a flowing moustache
with an ornament, a kind of seal, below the nose,
a seal with an incised triangle, like a tepee,
against maybe a hill, bird or insect shapes
ascendant on either side (or just scratches).
It has not spoken.

Deep in the mouth is the word it would speak
but now it is transfixed
with horror with fascination
with what is going on.
With us, yes.
And its left eye is cracked, too,
so it seems more like a cavern than an eye.

The guy is gassing up the fire engine.
When I look at him,
I am the mouth of truth.

Word on the Street

A low roar in the background,
the swishing sound of traffic.
Vancouver will continue on in peace,
undeserved, no deserved,
by the ones with no guile in their hearts,
no time for guile—

lose your need
to be one with (them)

when the clouds
drift, the sun shines
like a word

sudden, rays
off the buildings,

& lifts you to the sky
like a word—it's not something
  you need to have known
aforethought

The sun, the sky,
are thing-like
so is the body
thick or stumbling

lacking
no romance of it

What was taught in those large classrooms,
large-windowed, big, imposing schools
(Bayview, General Gordon)?
the dedication,
despite the truth, the pain
in each young, ageing mind

any day
could be the day
everything changes

Two men push loaded carts
one behind the other, on the street,
not the sidewalk, outside the line
of parked cars. A third, dark, bearded,
watches from across the street.

You pass one of them coming toward you, pushing,
& you know you can't speak, you know
caste
here

How does it seem
the people on the bus
are not of one people
(the Bus Riders Union
has tried to appeal to it)

The guy riding his bike
coming up behind pedestrians
on the sidewalk, silently
not of one people

not of one city

Sit at the Tank
outside, you with your friends who smoke—
  that's still allowed—
& sip a Jamie, knowing
it's this time, no other, this transparent
collision of times, of times flowing through
  each other

times with their inside stories

Crossing Macdonald:
"Excuse me, sir."
(no answer)

Reaching the other side:
"Could you give me some change, for a hostel?"
(Digs in pocket, finds the toonie, the large coin, by touch,
withdraws hand from pocket, places the coin
in the other's palm (no word. no eye contact.)

"Thank you, sir."
(silence)

(resentment, anger)

They should be sitting by the wall.

He doesn't know where he's going,
no, he has nowhere to go
so puts his big steps one
in front of the other
to the street corner.
He stops, thinks
where to seem to be going.
(Portland, from the MAX)

("Experience open living. Vancouver style redefined. This is DWELL, 47 modern flats on Broadway at Quebec, where the city's hippest residential, creative and downtown neighbourhoods connect. A prototype for intelligent design in a locale that is ultra-convenient and uber-chic. Think fresh, flexible and everything essential. A study of poetic and spacious practicality contained remarkably within.

from the $300,000s")

Is that huddled mass a person?
No, it's not large enough.

It's a person's belongings.

At the Tank

—I can't believe they're going to cut down all the trees.
—Thirty-five to forty percent.
—That's horrible! Who voted for this?
—There was no vote. It's the Planning Department. They held public meetings. I went to two of them.
—And was anybody against cutting down the trees?
—Yes. Almost everybody who spoke. But the city said they have to do it because the tree roots are heaving up the sidewalks. And they're going to get rid of all your pretty pavers too.
—To be replaced by what?
—A brushed concrete pavement.
—A what?

—A concrete slab, with a broom dragged over the wet concrete to make ridges, so you won't slip when it rains.
—Could they not have trimmed the tree roots?
—That's over budget.
—O.

—Sooth, the city did ask the merchants if they'd put up some bucks for a more costly renovation, but sooth, they said no.
—O.

(Council passed the Street Rehabilitation plan
but more than that, asked the staff to go back &
"report back to Council as soon as possible with options & budgets
for sidewalk treatments which:
Retain a higher number of existing trees…
Allow for future installation and maintenance of large trees…
FURTHER THAT staff replace those trees that
  are absolutely required to be removed with specimens
  that will match the existing Linden canopy")

Pensioners, among the mysteries
a caste between the merchants
and the street people,

the street in their minds, too,
the mysteries in the private quarters
surrounding the mind—

thoughts that lost their language
thoughts recognized by just bumping into them
occasions of fear or lust
or lust blocking fear

a territory we will keep until someone has
  some other use for it
that will keep us, tracking each one, until
  it has no time for us

The mind is this street
only the interiors
around it
arranged
differently

Anne Stone / from Delible

—3— (Lora)

My sister looked at the world with her eyes open. Unflinching. For weeks after Mel saw *The Day After*, she had nightmares which she'd describe to me in graphic detail, so I could picture the radiation wounds opening in my skin. I started calling her the Prophet of Doom and, on sunny days, I'd eat my cereal alone on the patio, the glass door shut. In our house, the TV was *always* on, and at her worst, recounting dreams inspired by made-for-TV movies, it felt like Mel was always on too.

The morning after one of Mel's nightmares, we were eating our Cheerios and Mom said, "You know, Lissa, you're looking at the glass like it's half empty," and Mel looked at Mom like she was completely insane and said, "The end of the world? Half empty? What do you mean, half empty? That glass is completely fucking empty. We're all going to die."

"Not this morning you're not," Mom said, making her point with a butter knife, "not if you watch your lip."

Mel shrugged and said something about mushroom clouds and silver linings, and I shut the glass door and sat in the drizzle, concentrating on my cereal, trying to pin down the last little O with the base of my spoon.

The Saug may look beautiful, but over its trim lawns and anorexic gardens, there hangs a quiet. A decorous quiet that polishes some to a fine matte finish, but for others, like Mel, amounts to a shallow petri dish in which all of the world's anxieties are cultured and grown large. Night after night, tucked under this municipal silence, were her dreams of the a-bomb.

Like most of the girls we knew, Mel struggled with the urge to make *something* happen, to pitch small, sharp rocks against the mannered codes she wanted no part of, to lash out against the unavailing lawns and empty dark around us. To teenagers, the Saug isn't a *place* so much as a *state of mind*: it's boredom incarnate, with an angry edge. Even when you drink and do drugs, that aimless anger is there, alongside whatever else you happen to feel. Sometimes Mom sees it in the teenagers who live

in our co-op, and calls them *shiftless*, as if three hours behind the counter at the Tim Horton's is the cure.

When Mel was in hospital, I thought I found the answer in her left arm. The IV tube was taped down in an S, the slim plastic needle invisible under her skin. I looked at the blue veins that made maps out of the inside of her arm and thought I could see what was going on inside of her. Would she one day cut the skin, I wondered, just to see? But no, Mel didn't. She didn't *cut*. She found another way out from under those arterial maps.

When the moment was right, I'd meant to ask her, in a way that was serious, in a way she couldn't laugh off, why she'd done it. But she was gone before that time ever came.

Real people, Mel told me, aren't beautiful the way people are in books, because even if you get it right for a moment, you can't help but carry on past where a good story should end. It was only later I understood what she'd meant, that the length of a life dilutes its meaning, that if you experience a moment that's flawless, a perfect distillation of self and world, inevitably, it comes to be adulterated by the clutter of a life lived. Your stomach rumbles with a more pressing need, and before you know it, you're eighty years old, and that flawless moment is recalled dimly, if at all. Like my sister, I had a fifteen year old's vision of beauty and a conviction that nothing stays redeemed.

—4—

Mel and Mom and me lived in a public housing co-op in the McCauley Green, in one of the fifty pea-pod units that made up our concrete village. Our houses were government subsidized. If you didn't know it before you walked through the neighbourhood, you could tell it from the way old couches, blackened at the folds and felted by the wind and rain, had been dragged into yards and arranged as though they were as natural to lawns as pink flamingos. The Saug, the suburb we lived in, could only have been dreamt up in a distant cubicle by someone who owned a car. After the suburb was half built, that someone developed a social conscience, drew up plans for public housing and discharged his conscience by pneumatic post. Soon after, three or four co-ops were hastily erected between Streetsville and the 403. Our sad cluster was bordered by thousands of new houses, all of them huge by comparision, all of them semi-detacheds with two bathrooms and long rolling lawns out back, all of them with children in colour-coordinated socks. Unlike us, these people didn't go on Pogey or pay rent. They *owned*. Unlike us, they had garage sales worth attending.

For as long as I could remember, it'd been the three of us, though Mel and me *do* have a dad, and Mom does—or did—have a husband, whether common-law or for real, she didn't say. Of course, you wouldn't know it except for the pictures that used to be around. After Mr. D'Sousa's stroke, Mom put the pictures of Dad in a box and claims she can't remember where the box got to. Mom has always been cagey on the subject of our father and waves her hand vaguely east as she says that the last she heard, he was working at the Don Jail. It's better this way, she tells us, because the best gifts he ever gave anyone in his life were Mel, me, and the Lebaron, "though not in that order," she'd say. Then she'd grin, so we'd know to taste the sugar in her words.

As for the Don Jail, this was the old days, when no one talked about what a decrepit old shithole it was, and how crowding hundreds of men into tiny cages was about as smart as trying to snuff out a fire with gasoline. At the time, it was *out of sight, out of mind and whatever you do, don't give the bastards cable TV.* Nothing made

my Uncle Dave madder than the thought of a bunch of guys lounging around a prison in button-down shirts, watching sports on TV all day long.

So we do *have* a dad, even if he doesn't exist as a proper noun in Mom's stories, but as a series of gaps, the blanks in the family album. You can tell the pictures *were* there. The white borders around the remaining pictures have dulled with age and so are now closer to yellow. But every few pages, there is a small square or rectangle marked off with tipped-in corners, signs that this page once held an image of my dad. In my mind, these gaps in the album are replaced by a series of photographs. In the first, Dad leans against the Lebaron. At seventeen, in jeans and a white t-shirt, he looks impossibly lean and young. If not for the greased-back ducktail, he could be one of the boys behind industrial arts, the ones who hold their smokes close to the webbing, so their mouths disappear each time they take a drag. Soon, the separate images of Mom and Dad give way to images of them together, standing in the drive, dressed for a dance, or out back at Grandma's, next to a massive bowl of potato salad. But it's the last one that Mel and me liked best. In the last picture, all of us are together. Dad cradles my sister in his arms and I curl up next to them, ballooning the waist of a bright yellow sundress. As with all Polaroids, this one had begun to fade the last time I saw it. The image of the dress looked dulled, as if it, too, had been laundered many times over the years.

Mel loved that photo best of all. She loved to see us all together. Like a *real* family, she'd say. Mel wanted that real family more than anything. I felt differently. All I'd ever had was the second-hand idea of Dad, so when it came to the person out there in the world, I could take him or leave him. The same way he did us.

Mel claims to remember Dad. But in her stories, Dad's eyes are gray, and on the back of his driver's license, tucked away with the papers for the Lebaron, his eyes are written up as blue. Maybe in memories, sad ones, blue washes out to ash. Or maybe Mel didn't just see things in black and white, she remembered them that way too.

Even before Mel was gone, I knew we'd never be a real family again. Still, it's important to believe in happy endings, even if you know they pretty much never come true. In spite of her dreams of mushroom clouds, it was Mel who taught me that.

Sharon Thesen / The Consumptives at Tranquille Sanatorium, 1953

Bide time
on verandahs, gaunt hills
pine-dotted are the view
beyond the book. Wild horses,
black cattle
cast shadows
size of flies. Moving down
from winter shelter.

•

The consumptives are dreadfully
thin; bright blood in white pans.
They are given rest, like
the lambs of Jesus rescued from
tree limbs and lightning. White
beds, white nurses, white
cream by the cupful.

•

Flies and hornets bash against the screens
of the verandahs in the afternoon. Haze
and heat, doze and fever shudder. The book
falls to the lap. Across the valley, a horse
sidles up to a pine.

•

Quiet as the skin on a custard.
Gardeners clip and prune and feed.
Gladiolas' leek-like straight strong stalks
of bursting beauty: a reproach? The
delicate consumptives have had
a difficult life—conquered
by cities, bad air, bad smells, bad
fiction, hard lives, a lack
morals and of sunshine.

•

Some of the nurses were unhappy.
Not the cream of the crop. Forced to these
purposes perhaps. (Must have been forced—
or punished.)
And disapproving
though a charitable
intent to some degree could redeem
the situation.

•

In the heat of the day, or the cold of the day, fall and winter,
year after year the consumptives are wheeled out
to rest and read on the verandah. And snooze
and doze. With double blankets and a hat
and red and running nose.

•

Early summer, fresh air flexing muscle.
Season of buttercups, green lawns
and tender vistas. A few cars coming in, going out.
On Sundays, children: some quiet, some exclaiming.

•

I was dressed nicely for our visits. Small
crinkle-edge photos show us
on the lawn or posing by a flowering shrub.
My father would drive us from Vernon
—not recalling what I felt, since once she had
gone there, she was gone.

•

Her dark hair grew black and long. Her young life
grew older. I learned to read. I drew a robin
in Art.

•

An array of consumptives lined up inside verandahs.
Male and female, often young, often natives from the Islands
or up north, or dank Vancouver or the war. Nurses
shook down thermometers, served
cupfuls of heavy cream and plenty of eggs
from a nearby farm, a nice man
moving among herds and flocks.

•

Life was tranquil.
Effort discouraged. You gazed at the everlasting
hills, cattle dispersing in spring, returning
in autumn. The kind and frowning doctors came, the scowling
and kindly nurses, fear
of death palpable in the cleanliness
and the climate, *better than Egypt*, said the local
boosters.

•

Heat shimmered, a torrid dryness
camels could have pranced through
jingling with saddles and pomegranates
in the fictions the consumptives consumed
along with cups of heavy cream and bowls
of sturdy soup
within the airy, scary
verandahs of Tranquille.

Fred Wah / from ARTiculations

0.1 (Rilke)

Looks like the Angel got through. Wrapped.
Swaddled. Between the rock and the river.

Seen speaking as having held to mere fact.
Mirroring on the wall, not me, begründen.

Watch who'd turned us round, turned and stopped.
Just for taking leaves from the bottom of the tree.

Of which the years build up their larger mounds.
Pudenda'd down moss, "the smell of the heat is…"

Spectacle of Mrs. Erickson's totem. Private parts.
Thread round desire like a crack through the cup.

Stare, stare—nothing there. Camp. Earth. House.
Poof! said the beak. Not a ripple. By a hair.

0.2 (Rilke)

As if I came back leafless…
As if those were the actual master times
and the cold mirrored so often
even so, souls might act alone.

Linger as the morning tries to
shine upon the ocean floor,
canopy of cloud and raven
squawking for her bones below,

white. What are they those birds out there
hoots, whose sometimes
visible glances are lost?

Oh, I know the earth.
That curriculum of the song sung
the parched heart, so small along the coast.

8. (Nancy!)

Nancy! beyond
stones, but within reach
furniture murky

head at the controls
children blocked
no neighborhood

Paris you could almost say
meubles, anthropological

pebbles and mud
could never be cultural
determined girls

we won't disturb the lake
please, so late in the day.

10. (Noli me tangere)

First the hot and dry
Crossed up middle
By right cell strips
Down to craving, gravel
Elbows on the wing
Brushed with taste
This damp phant'sy
Lured by the sentence
Left or between
Noli me tangere
Voila! quite contrary

Rita Wong / after Wen I'to's "Laundry Song"

Wash them (for the Americans), wash them!

from soapworn hands to toxic coughs
sputters patience rubbed too thin
the season of grease never ends but squeals
into perchloroethylene lesions
kidneys and livers mumble
to the brass of cash registers
ching chong rings
the water turned profit margin
laundered in endocrine disrupters
the sudsy chemicals gurgle fumes
sulk in your blood for a decade

you might carpenter a tree house escape
but the assiduous rain will find your pores
one big inhale, washing washing
thyroid, chrysanthemums, duck eggs all together
from contaminated basin
onto tampered scale
for the check out:
bark odes or bark owed
how to recompose clean
in body burden times?

Contributors' Notes

bill bissett originalee from lunaria came 2 erth via hfx as part uv wun uv th first childrns shuttul out uv lunaria wher we wud comb th orange lite that was evreewher 4 enerjee much as we sound poets dew on erth n othr galaxees with sound poetree me i love dewing 7 or mor approaches 2 poetree n was luckee enuff 2 b a writr in residens at cap college back in th late 90s 4 two weeks or sew met n workd with great peopul ther nu book *northern wild roses* talonbooks n nu cd *deth interrupts th dansing a strangr space* red deer press spring 07 tittul *ths is erth thees ar peopul* also from talonbooks.

Marcus Bowcott is an alumnus of the Royal College of Art in London, England and has been teaching drawing and painting at Capilano College for the past 10 years. Having lived for over 50 years by the sea, he focuses his paintings on the nuances and plenitude of the ocean. More recently he has explored the structures we make in order to cope with and navigate this environment. His installations and sculptures explore human evolution as well as our natural and altered environments. His work is represented by the Bau Xi Gallery in Vancouver and Toronto.

Nancy Boyd teaches drawing and painting at Capilano College. Her work includes an open-ended exploration of evolving life forms and some of the sciences that probe them, including MRI scans, botanical/microscopic imagery and quantum physics. Her most recent series in encaustic and mixed media, *Phylum, Genus and Morphology*, reflects that an ongoing fascination with science and aesthetics. The introduction of somewhat volatile media, encaustic and heat-sensitive inks, amplifies the unpredictable, almost "alchemical" aspect of the new work. Boyd has shown extensively around Greater Vancouver in the public galleries of Richmond, Surrey, Burnaby and Coquitlam, and also abroad in the U.S., Japan and Australia. Her work can be seen at the Atelier Gallery (Vancouver), the Fran Willis Gallery (Victoria), and the Wallace Galleries (Calgary).

Clint Burnham is a Vancouver writer and teacher. From 2003 to 2005 he taught in the English Department at Capilano College, and since 2003 he has been a contributing editor for *The Capilano Review*. "Phedra was a cougar" was performed by Clint at Song Room 5, Vancouver, June 2006, with music by DJ Audiowhore (thanks to Tom Cone and David Pay). Clint's novel *Smoke Show* was published in 2005 by Arsenal Pulp and nominated for a BC Book Prize. His collection of poems, *Rental Van*, was published in spring 2007 by Anvil.

Barry Cogswell has worked as a potter, ceramic designer, furniture-maker and sculptor. He now paints images concerned with the worldwide destruction of wildlife species and of wild places, which he considers the most important issue of our time. He taught in the

Studio Art program at Capilano College for nearly thirty years and was the head of that program for eighteen years. More of his work can be seen at www.barrycogswell.com.

Recently retired from a long career of teaching in the English and Theatre Departments at Cap, Penny Connell is getting back to writing after raising her family. She has pre-viously published poetry and short fiction in *West Coast Line*, *Repository*, *Canadian Forum*, and with High Ground Press, among others. She was born in Vancouver, and now lives at Halfmoon Bay on the Sunshine Coast. She is a former fiction/drama editor of *TCR*.

Pierre Coupey has exhibited paintings and prints in solo and group shows in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Dublin, Nagoya and Tokyo. His work has received numerous awards, grants and commissions, and is represented in private, corporate, and public collections in Canada and abroad. He was the founding editor of *The Capilano Review*, and taught English and Creative Writing at Capilano College from 1970 to 2006. He exhibited a major body of work, *Tangle*, at the Burnaby Art Gallery in 2006. The paintings in this issue are from a current series triggered by the ongoing violence in the Middle East. His work is represented in Vancouver by Gallery Jones.

John Dixon teaches philosophy at Capilano College. He serves on the Executive Committee of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association. He has a special interest in freedom of expression issues, and has instructed counsel in the line of Little Sisters Bookstore cases since 1985. Dixon is co-author with Stan Persky of *On Kiddie Porn: Sexual Representation and the Robin Sharpe Case* (New Star, 2001), winner of a $10,000 Donner Prize for best book of the year on Canadian public policy. Four of Dixon's essays on law and public policy were published this spring in *In the Agora: The Public Face of Canadian Philosophy*, ed. by Irvine and Russell (U of Toronto). In 2003 he was honoured with a Doctor of Laws Degree from Simon Fraser University in recognition of his contributions to public life. Dixon occasionally writes on topics far removed from civil rights, and a version of the essay reprinted here first appeared in *The Globe and Mail* newspaper.

Wayne Eastcott (RCA) has taught in Capilano College's Studio Art Program since 1973, and he established the Art Institute Printmaking Program in 1983. He has exhibited internationally since 1976, especially in Japan and Eastern Europe, including the show *Four Canadian Artists* at the Moderna Gallerija, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia in 1989, and *The Ten* exhibition at the Fuji-TV Gallery/Tochigi Museum, Tokyo in 1984. Since 2003 he has been involved in collaboration and exhibitions with Tokyo artist Michiko Suzuki. The Bellevue Gallery in West Vancouver and Gallery Concept 21 in Tokyo represent their work.

Roger Farr is the author of a sonnet cycle, *SURPLUS* (Linebooks 2006), and of the forthcoming collection *Homage to Charles Fourier*. He joined the faculty at Capilano College in 2001 and teaches a range of first and second year English courses, specializing in creative

writing and literary theory. He was the guest editor of *The Capilano Review*'s "Six Cities" issue (2:48, 2006), and is currently curating the Open Text Reading Series at Capilano. His critical writing on autonomous social movements and avant-garde literature appears in a number of journals and magazines.

Dwight Gardiner teaches linguistics at Cap College. He has published several books of poetry, including *The New York Book of the Dead* (Talonbooks 1984). His connection with *TCR* includes one forgettable poem and participation in interviews with bpNichol and Robin Blaser. Apparently retired from poetry, he is known to frequently disappear into the sagebrush to speak Shuswap.

Reid Gilbert teaches English, with a special interest in Canadian literature and drama, at Capilano College, where he has been a member of faculty since 1971. He has written a stage play and published more than 80 entries, reviews and articles. He has read papers on iconography and performative identity at national and international symposia. He is a co-editor of *Canadian Theatre Review* and a member of the editorial board of *Theatre Research in Canada*. With Sylvan Barnet, he has written *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*, now in its second Canadian edition. He was drama editor of *TCR* from 1982 to 1988. He guest-edited issue 35 in 1985, an issue that published *Six of One* by Leonard Angel, with a critical introduction and rehearsal journal.

Will Goede lives in Vancouver and has published stories and articles in *The Capilano Review, Canadian Fiction, Windsor Review, Event, Saturday Night, Malahat Review*, and *Grain*. He has published a novel, *Quantrill*, and his cycle of stories, *Love in Beijing*, was a finalist for the BC Book Prize in fiction and shortlisted for the Edith Wilson Prize in 1989. His play, *The Man from Vancouver*, was broadcast on China's national radio for several years in the 90s. "Sleeping Arrangements," published in *The Malahat Review*, won the Federation of B.C. Writers' "Literary Writes X Contest" in 1996. He taught English at Capilano College until he retired in 2000.

G. Maria Hindmarch taught English at Capilano College from 1974-2002 and was the assistant editor of *TCR* in 1975. She has published *The Peter Stories* (Coach House), *The Watery Part of the World* (Douglas & McIntyre) and *A Birth Account* (New Star). *For Swimming with Cancer*, she's chosen the preposition "with" rather than "through" or "against" because she lived with her inflammatory breast cancer through eight 7-hour chemos before she could have surgery and radiation.

A former fiction editor of *The Capilano Review* and current member of its board of directors, Crystal Hurdle teaches English and Creative Writing at Capilano College. The poems in this issue are from the last section of her manuscript *The Hunted Enchanters*, based loosely on Vadimir Nabokov's *Lolita*. The collection *After Ted & Sylvia: Poems* was published

in 2003. Hurdle's work has been published widely in Canadian journals, including *Canadian Literature, The Capilano Review, The Dalhousie Review*, and *The Prairie Journal of Canadian Literature*. Work is forthcoming in *Room of One's Own* and *CV2*, among others.

Dorothy Jantzen was editor of *The Capilano Review* from 1985–1988. Between the years of 1976 and 2000, she was active with *TCR* in a variety of capacities, either as editor, assistant editor, associate editor, co-editor, or contributing editor. She taught English at Capilano College for 25 years and is now Dean, Fine and Applied Arts.

Born in Leduc, Alberta, Reg Johanson lives in East Vancouver, BC, and has been teaching comp and lit at Cap since 2000. *Courage, My Love* (Line Books 2006), brings together a selection of works that have appeared over the last decade in *W magazine*, the chapbook *Chips* (Thuja 2001), and in the anthologies *Shift and Switch: New Canadian Poetry* (Mercury 2005) and *Companions and Horizons* (WCL 2005). Critical work on Standard English as a classist and racializing disciplinary practice, and on the political economy of "cheating" and plagiarism, has appeared in *XCP: Cross Cultural Poetics* and as "Working Papers in Critical Practice #1" (recomposition.net); other essays on liquor policy, "the radical" in poetry, representations of missing women, the poetry of Marie Annharte Baker, and global urbanization appear or are forthcoming in *West Coast Line*, *The Rain Review*, and *The Gig*.

Bonnie Jordan was born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, in 1951. She came to Vancouver in 1971 and attended part-time Studio Art classes at Capilano College. She graduated from ECIAD in 1981 with honours in both Printmaking and Interdisciplinary Studies and now teaches in the Studio Art Program at Capilano College. She is currently investigating digital applications to printmaking. Her work is an enquiry into the realm of digital imagery incorporating traditional and digital printmaking processes. She has participated in national and international exhibitions, and her work is represented in national and international collections, both private and public.

Takayuki Kawabata acknowledges that his poems are written in collaboration with writers, artists and musicians. His translator is Kumi Kondo. The small sample of work in this issue was assembled for TCR as part of an issue on contemporary Japanese writing planned for 2000. Takayuki lives in Kanagawa, Japan.

Crawford Kilian has taught English and Communications at Capilano College since it opened in 1968. His writing career has included radio plays, hundreds of articles, and 20 books including 11 novels. His most recent books are *Writing for the Web 3.0* and *Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy*, both published by Self-Counsel Press. He is a frequent contributor to *The Tyee* (thetyee.ca), an online Vancouver magazine.

August Kleinzahler is a graduate of the University of Victoria and poet laureate of Fort Lee, New Jersey. In March 2003, he was *TCR* Writer-in-Residence at Capilano College. He has a Canadian wife and an American cat. He is, thusly, bifurcated.

Andrew Klobucar joined the English Department at Capilano College in 2001 in order to serve on the board of *The Capilano Review*. Since 1996, he has continued to publish a wide assortment of critical writings on contemporary North American poetry. He co-edited the Canadian poetry anthology *Writing Class* (New Star 1999) on the work and early history of the Kootenay School of Writing, an important literary collective known throughout North America for its experimental poetry reading series, publications and writer residencies. Current critical work remains based in Science and Technology Studies (STS) and the Digital Humanities, exploring various issues and innovations in new media, electronic publishing and the increasingly important role technology plays in today's literary and pedagogical fields.

Ryan Knighton is a former editor of *The Capilano Review*. He continues to teach at Capilano College in its venerable English Department. The author of three books, including the internationally acclaimed memoir *Cockeyed* (Penguin 2006), Knighton is also the subject of *As Slow As Possible* (2007), a documentary feature film directed by Scott Smith (*Falling Angels*). Knighton's journalism and comic personal essays have appeared in such publications as *The New York Times, Salon.com, The Sunday Telegraph Magazine* (UK), *The Walrus, Saturday Night, Utne Reader, The Globe and Mail, Waitrose* (UK), *Vancouver Magazine, Saga* (UK), and many others. Occasionally he lends his voice to CBC's *Definitely Not the Opera* as a pop culture critic.

South African poet Ingrid de Kok was *TCR* Writer-in-Residence in Spring 2004. Her interview and poems appear in issue 2:46. De Kok's most recent book is *Seasonal Fires: New and Selected Poems* published in New York by Seven Stories Press (2006).

Toni Latour is a multidisciplinary artist based in Vancouver, Canada. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally since 1994, and has been awarded numerous grants and awards in support of her practice. She teaches Media Art at Capilano College. The work published in this issue is excerpted from *The Drag King Project*. The two Vancouver King troupes she worked with, DK United and $3 Bill, explore constructs of masculinity from a variety of perspectives, giving a better understanding of the fluidity of gender and sexual identities. Overall the project aims to expand queer Canadian representations and to mark a time of celebration of transsexual, transgender, and King visibility. Readers of *Xtra West* have nominated Toni Latour for a 2007 Hero Award in the category of Artist of the Year.

Helene Littman took her first creative writing courses at Cap College when she was eighteen, and returned to teach English from 2004 to 2006. Her book *Peripheries: Three Novellas* (Cormorant) was published in 1998. She is currently working on a second book of fiction and on a critical study of temporality in the poems of Ezra Pound and Walt Whitman. She teaches English at the B.C. Institute of Technology and has just completed her PhD in American Literature at The Johns Hopkins University.

Daphne Marlatt's last collection of poetry was *This Tremor Love Is* (Talonbooks). Spring 2006 saw full production by Pangaea Arts of *The Gull*, her contemporary Noh play about Steveston's Japanese-Canadian fishing community. Her chapbook *Seven Glass Bowls* (Nomados) comprises the first movement of an intergenre text she is currently working on. She was the Markin-Flanagan Distinguished Visiting Writer at the University of Calgary in January-February 2007. Marlatt taught at Capilano College in its inaugural year at West Vancouver High School in 1968 and again from 1973 to 1976; she was Poetry Editor of *TCR* issues 1:4-9 and returned as *TCR* Writer-in-Residence in February 2000.

Tiki Mulvihill, although currently situated in Vancouver, sees herself as a reluctant nomad, moving throughout her adult life between rural and urban communities. This transience generates an ongoing dialogue within her installations and accompanying performances. Beginning with the strategy of fictional premise, her studio practice develops out of truths often overlooked in conflicted relationships with place. Her experiential installations/performances voice contradictions of belonging in disparate environments. Mulvihill currently teaches sculpture and drawing classes in the Studio Art Program at Capilano College.

Dan Munteanu received his first Master's Degree in English from the University of Bucharest and his second, also in English, from UBC. He joined the faculty of Capilano College in 1993. His main area of interest is world literature, with a double focus on the western tradition and Latin American literatures. He is a member of the Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia and member by affiliation of the Canadian Translators, Terminologists, and Interpreters Council.

John Pass has taught ABE English at Capilano College since 1975. His most recent book, *Stumbling in the Bloom* (Oolichan Books 2005) won the Governor General's Award for Poetry in 2006.

Jenny Penberthy is the current editor of *The Capilano Review*. She has published a number of books on American poet Lorine Niedecker. In this issue, her poem is based on Lorine Niedecker's collection of notes made in the process of writing the poems "Lake Superior" and "Darwin."

Stan Persky is the author of several books, including *Buddy's: Meditations on Desire, Then We Take Berlin: Stories from the Other Side of Europe, Autobiography of a Tattoo, On Kiddie Porn: Sexual Representation, Free Speech, and the Robin Sharpe Case* (co-authored with John Dixon and winner of a 2001 Donner Foundation prize) The present essay is excerpted from *The Short Version: An ABC Book*, winner of the 2006 Hubert Evans Prize for nonfiction. His new book, *Topic Sentence: A Writer's Education* will be published in spring 2007. He teaches philosophy at Capilano College, where he has worked since 1983.

Meredith Quartermain lives in Vancouver and for many years was an instructor in the English Department at Capilano College. Her most recent book is *Vancouver Walking*, which won the 2006 Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize. Other books include *Wanders* (with Robin Blaser) and *A Thousand Mornings*. With husband Peter Quartermain, she runs Nomados Literary Publishers.

Peter Quartermain is revising *Growing Dumb*, the first long section of his autobiography, and (while seeking a publisher) is beginning work on the second part, *Dumber.* He was *TCR* Writer-in-Residence at Capilano College in January 2003—what a pleasure that was!

George Rammell encourages students to nominate and collaborate with the characteristics of discarded materials to explore sculptural possibilities. The results foster an understanding of re-contextualization and the innate value of materials. He also maintains an understanding of historic sculpture techniques of casting and carving for students to employ in an inventive, contemporary context. Rammell graduated from the Vancouver School of Art (ECI) in 1976. He has participated in two international sculpture symposia, 2 solo shows and 14 group shows. His work references history and sculptural practices specific to the region. He is based in his warehouse studio space near Main and Terminal Streets in Vancouver.

Lisa Robertson's most recent book is *The Men*, from Bookthug. Her 2004 Nomados chapbook *Rousseau's Boat* won the bpNichol chapbook award. In Spring 2006 *Chicago Review* published "Palinodes" (a new poem), an interview, and a critical section on her work, including an essay by Christine Stewart. Lisa taught in the *TCR* Writing Practices Program at Capilano College in Fall 2000 and was *TCR* Writer-in-Residence in March 2002.

Bill Schermbrucker is finishing up the last of three oral histories, *Saturna In The 1920s* (2005), *Campbells Of Saturna* (2006), and *Bonded To An Island: Gloria Manzano* (2007), after which he returns to the three fiction manuscripts which have been accumulating on his hard drive on Saturna Island for too long. Schermbrucker was editor of *TCR* from 1976-1982 and an instructor in the English Department from its earliest days.

Sandra Seekins has been an instructor at Capilano College since 2001. She teaches Art History and Women's Studies courses. Her academic research and writing is one pursuit; others pursuits include writing poetry and painting. Recently, she has been composing a series of poems about painting, of which "Bristle" is one. The poems examine both an engagement with the painting process itself and the visceral and cerebral responses one can have when viewing paintings created by other artists.

Nancy Shaw taught at McGill, Rutgers, Wilfred Laurier, SFU, and most recently—and at the time of her much mourned death on April 16, 2007—in the Communications Department at Capilano College. She had been published in *TCR* since the 1990s. Nancy was the current chair of the Vancouver New Music Society and a founding member of the Kootenay School of Writing. Her book-length works include *Affordable Tedium* (Tsunami 1991), *Scoptocratic* (ECW Press 1992), and written in collaboration with Catriona Strang, *Busted* (Coach House Press 2001) and *Cold Trip* (Nomados 2006).

Bob Sherrin is a writer and visual artist who has published or exhibited his work in Canada, the United States, the UK, Switzerland, Italy, and India. He lives in Burnaby, BC, and teaches in the Humanities Division of Capilano College. He is a former editor of and contributor to *TCR*.

Jane (Hamilton) Silcott adopted her grandmother's surname three years ago to avoid further confusion with all the other writers with her birth name. Except here, among friends, she now writes simply as Jane Silcott. Jane was managing editor of *TCR* from 1991 to 1995. Since, she has served on the board and has periodically worked in the office. Her writing has appeared in a variety of journals including *The Malahat Review*, *Geist*, and *Utne*. In 2005, Jane won 2nd prize in nonfiction in the CBC Literary Awards.

George Stanley received the 2006 Shelley Award from the Poetry Society of America. His poems have been included in *Seminal: The Anthology of Canadian Gay Male Poets*, and, translated to Italian, in *Nuova Poesia Americana: San Francisco* (Milan 2006). He taught English at Capilano College from 1992 to 2003 and is an active board member for *TCR*.

Anne Stone is an editor of *Matrix Magazine* and co-editor of an upcoming special issue of *West Coast Line* on representations of murdered and missing women. Her latest novel, *Delible* (Insomniac 2007), tells the story of Melora Sprague, a 15-year-old girl whose sister has gone missing. Funded by the Canada Council for the Arts and the BC Council for the Arts, this novel explores how our identities exist in the traces we leave behind us. Anne Stone has taught creative writing/literature at Capilano College in North Vancouver and at Concordia University in Montreal.

Michiko Suzuki graduated from Musashino Art University, Tokyo, in 1974 with honours in Graphic Design. In 1993 she developed a new etching technique that she named "Toner-etching." Her printmaking collaboration with Wayne Eastcott began in 2003, and she was Artist in Residence at Capilano College from 2003 to 2004. Since 1975, Suzuki has exhibited her work internationally, winning prizes and awards in Asia, Europe, and North America. She is currently pursuing printmaking in the Art Institute at Capilano College.

Sharon Thesen edited *TCR* from 2001 to 2005, and was poetry editor for several years beginning in the late 70s. She now lives near Kelowna and teaches Creative Writing at UBC Okanagan. Her most recent book of poetry is *The Good Bacteria* (Anansi 2006).

Fred Wah has published poetry, fiction, and criticism. His recent writing includes *Diamond Grill*, a biofiction about growing up in a small-town Chinese-Canadian cafe, *Faking It: Poetics and Hybridity*, a collection of critical writing, and a chapbook *Isadora Blue*. His work first appeared in *The Capilano Review* in 1974. He was writer-in-residence at Capilano College in 2006.

Rita Wong is the author of monkeypuzzle (Press Gang, 1998) and forage (Nightwood, forthcoming in 2007). Currently a visiting instructor at the University of Miami (2006-2007), she is an Assistant Professor in Critical + Cultural Studies at the Emily Carr Institute. She has fond memories of working at Capilano College from 2003 to 2004.

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THE CAPILANO REVIEW

The Capilano Review has, for over thirty years, provided a measure to the innovative and contemporary and a productive site for a generation of literary and artistic boundary walkers. Its editors have provoked and sustained imagination and possibility for a wide range of writers and artists. TCR is a crucial voice to the continuing surge of west coast and Canadian culture.

—Fred Wah (February 2006)

Yr mail jarred me back to 1974 to Peregrine Books, where the first "books" I bought on moving to Vancouver were 3 issues or so of The Cap Review. Exciting, cover to cover reading, not the usual mag snoresville... I thought life had changed utterly!

—Erín Moure (March 2006)

I have never felt so satisfied with the appearance of my work in a magazine. It has been beautifully laid out on the page, the page itself is beautiful (the paper), the typeface is beautiful. The company my poems keep in this issue is beautiful. For some reason, publishing these poems in The Capilano Review feels as enlivening as publishing an entire book of poems.

—John Barton

An image of the world as of now. Beautiful.... I can see the extraordinary care with which each issue is handled, obviously a labour of love.

—Warren Tallman