

■ M A G A Z I N E & P R E S S
inwords
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FOREWORD

When I started my undergrad I was shy and incredibly quiet. I tucked myself away in corners and read books where no one could disturb me. Thankfully, I had the pleasure of enrolling in a first-year seminar with Professor Collett Tracey, the founder of In/Words. In that small class, we would forego our assigned classroom and meet over tea, while Professor Tracey (who insisted that we call her Collett) opened our minds to Canadian literature and taught us about the Montreal poets and the small presses of the 50s and 60s. Twice a week, the nine of us would meet to discuss the poetry and lasting influence of Louis Dudek, Irving Layton and many others.

On the very first day of class she insisted to us that if you write, you are a writer and it is important to own up to that title. It is important to share your voice and experiences because no one else will be able to do it for you.

From participating in my first open-mic, to getting my first poem published and eventually becoming an editor it has been quite the journey. In/Words has always been a welcoming community, and we want it to be for you as well. We want your imagination and your voice. Come to our events and submit your work. You have something to say, and we want to hear it.

We have worked tirelessly to get this first issue in your hands (or on your screen). It has been carefully curated; each selection gives meaning to the next. The art is truly fantastic and the writers in this issue we believe all have bright futures ahead of them. We hope you enjoy!

- Abby Simone

WE, ROOTED by Dana Carly Andrews

I found meaning in your morning rise.
the fall of apple in your cheek
down the bole of long neck,
to bough, to bough.

from frond to palm I was sowed.
you spoke in whorled tongues,
my legs serrated, splintering, you:
I need to free the door.

we took hinges down.
with abscission of wood,
daylight thick weighted each bend,
& I heated your calyx where I for days hid.

from vein to rib, I ate each pome.
your smoke hickory, your fruit constant,
in cambium I crept to each berry
til my lips crusted your every sugar and twig.

we samaras, scattering to catkin wind.

ROAD KILL IN JUNE by Dorian Bell

A squirrel lost track of time...
and I imagine the clouds as mountains...

Care to play squash with the rawthingfresh*?
I'll blame yellow signs hidden behind bushes!
"Attention à nos enfants c'est peut-être... le vôtre."
(gothic child crudely drawn)

Listen to the cat's meow**,
And the dog's laughter.

* Rotting Flesh /'frigidus textus'(the latin spills)/ a fatal case of musing.

** Meow /'sui generis agape'(the greek spills)/ our cognitive dissonance.

IT'S DEAD, THE LIFE LETS DEATH COLLECT
THE MONTHLY DEBT, IT'S SET TO BET.

and I've been misplaced... and I drive off a mountain...
MURDER! MURDER! I am the beast of all gentle idiots!

I slide and scavenge for paws;
"Still fresh!"; raw thing its flesh.
Now sick, I puke from the eyes
And gag my path as a trail of red tracks.

All the same,
all the same.

THE DENIGRATION OF TOM THOMPSON by Anthony Sabourin

There are a lot of things that I want to do but it is getting harder and harder for me to find a shirt that does not have curry on it. In the quiet of my apartment, I check my phone, which counts as taking action.

At work today there were tiny Halloween sized coffee crisps and my eyes turned steely, cold, and my lips tightened, and I stared at these coffee crisps and thought 'Yes'.

This feeling was not excitement.

I pillaged coffee crisps. There were seven discarded coffee crisp wrappers lying on my desk by the end of the day, and this is where they will be when I come in tomorrow. I could hunt packaged candies and slow animals provided that they were in an enclosed space.

My apartment is a series of rooms - one with a bed, one with a toilet and shower, one with a couch and one with a fridge and stove. The light in my fridge has been broken for many months. When it is dark and I want to see what is in my fridge, I turn on the kitchen light. Oh! So many condiments!

Everything in the apartment is still covered in dog hair.

I was dog sitting, feeding an English Mastiff people food and trying to change its name to the name of my last girlfriend.

The dog and I had a falling out when I smoked pot indoors and the dog got high and started barking at me. I thought that it thought I was people food and I retreated to my bedroom, ceding the coffee-table/Netflix-watching area to the dog.

The name change did not take.

In remembrance of this I roll a joint with the dregs of both dog hair and dime bag that have grown inseparable on the coffee table. I don't get high but I do fall asleep on a couch.

THE DENIGRATION OF TOM THOMPSON (cont'd)

Her profile picture did not feature cats and she expressed an interest in breakfast, the indoors, and the 1990s canon of Nicolas Cage action movies. We first met at the National Art Gallery underneath the giant gnarled metal spider, our awkward introductions preserved in the background of pictures taken by tourists. We felt like we could live forever as marginalia.

We cut through the gallery making up names for pictures.

A general in a red jacket lay dying as a crowd of people who had the same haircuts as the people on our money looked on. She christened it 'Butt City' and if I did not feel love, I felt the rush of possibility. We knew nothing, but we knew everything.

A picture of a pine tree with its branches sloping downwards, shrugging eternally under the weight of its leaves was christened as 'Morrisey Bootleg'. This was Tom Thompson's *The Jack Pine*, a portrait of the Canadian landscape that outgrew its creator's disdain for it. I guess sometimes you think you did a shitty job painting a tree and the world disagrees with you. I wonder if my Domino's delivery man ever felt the same way.

The artwork became more abstract - impressionistic slashes of green representing more trees; a giant, absurdly large canvas with an angry red line smouldering, trying to escape its blue borders; a room that was empty except for a taut cable cutting it in half. This was the good stuff. You would look at it and have to create your own meaning, wrestle with your own emotions.

I felt invigorated. I asked her if she wanted to write a manifesto, start a punk band, plaster the city with our own propaganda. To create.

We did nothing, which left its own indelible mark.

THE DENIGRATION OF TOM THOMPSON (cont'd)

Seven more coffee crisps and now there is irrefutable evidence that I have eaten more than my fair share. At my desk there are fourteen empty wrappers lying contorted, empty, and accusatory in their cheerful yellow colours. To avoid suspicion I make several small trips to different garbage bins in the building.

The next day the bowl of coffee crisps is replenished and whole again under the fluorescent office lights.

In my dealer's lobby, a man smiles at me with genuine happiness and missing teeth and tells me that it is a good day for whale hunting. I cannot dispute this and when I am buzzed in I hold the door open for this man, but he elects to stay behind, probably to inform others of his news.

I share the elevator with a shopping cart. I check my phone. My friend is texting me about what did I do to his dog, his dog is acting strange around ceiling fans now, and I ignore it.

My dealer, Glenn, is in his late 40s and he plays in a two-person rock band called the Check One-Twos. Their entire set consists of the two members conducting a sound check for a song that never starts. It builds up for forty minutes - setting up the equipment for a full band, plucking at guitar strings, bass tuning, testing snares and cymbals - and ends when Glenn says "Check. Check one-two," into the mic. They draw a pretty decent turnout of clientele when they play at House of Targ.

Glenn is saying "As a society, we can no longer abide by silence."

I say "Yeah, man," and buy a quarter ounce and when I leave the cart and the whale hunter aren't there.

THE DENIGRATION OF TOM THOMPSON (cont'd)

We went to Toronto to see her favourite band. A fake monk in Trinity Bellwoods suckered us out of twenty dollars. We stayed in a basement apartment we found on AIRBNB that had no windows but did have shag carpet and smelled like cats and was very reasonably priced. We pilfered through our host's things and made up their life story. The band was stopped at the border and couldn't get into the country. We walked past a dive bar that was playing old Motown music and drank beer from dirty taps and danced. Our greyhound bus got stuck in traffic and it took ten hours to get home.

Abide by silence? I fill my apartment with noise. I revel in it. I watch a movie on Netflix. I listen to a podcast where people whose opinions I do not agree with talk about sports. I watch sports. I watch sports on mute and listen to music on my laptop, and when the music is too loud I turn the volume down on the already muted TV. Emboldened by my error I turn the volume of the music up.

Noise is everything.

Noise is blotting out the sun.

Did I tell her I loved her? We had just finished assembling Swedish furniture against its will in her apartment. Amongst empty beer bottles and crumpled instructions, with coffee table as my witness, I told her. She told me the same. We ordered take-out Indian and watched reruns of Seinfeld and were in love.

We should meet each other's families and be embarrassed in the company of those who shaped us. We should move in together. We should let each other down. We should go to a restaurant and not talk to each other; sink into our routines and let petty annoyances build. We should stop having sex. We should have sex and take too long to cum, thinking about other people.

THE DENIGRATION OF TOM THOMPSON (cont'd)

Did I tell her to go fuck herself? We both did, after we had taught each other how to hate. We are perfect for each other, in the ways that we let each other down. The Voice of Fire, that was us - we were the lines along the border being swallowed up by the flames.

I dream about my friend's dog running away. It sniffs at blades of grass in an open field, nowhere, and wagging its tail. In my dream I join the search, posting pictures on telephone poles around town. I walk familiar streets and I hear echoes of the dog's name from other members of the search party, and I know then that the dog will not answer to it, and if I only call out your name the dog will come back.

I won't.

I do think of The Jack Pine. I think of being outside, of the release of not being surrounded by walls. I also think of checking my phone, so I do that. I look at pictures of people I like on Instagram. I look at pictures of people I don't like on Instagram. I read reviews of brunch restaurants and become angry that a man I do not know and will never meet does not like the coffee they serve at The Manx. I click on his profile and read the rest of his reviews while looking for grammatical errors. I wonder if the feeling that he is wrong is deep in his belly, gnawing away at him while he feels uneasy but cannot pinpoint why. No, probably he is oblivious; happy. It is excellent coffee. Ah, I roll a pretty great joint. I have such dexterous fingers.

At work in the communal kitchen a woman who looks like the name Deborah and I talk about the weather. The weather is nice, we both agree. I do not eat any coffee crisps because Deborah is there. And is it not true that our relationship ended on a paddleboat? That we rented a paddleboat at Dow's Lake Pavilion one hour before rentals closed, as the teenagers who worked there looked at us with disdain?

THE DENIGRATION OF TOM THOMPSON (cont'd)

We had planned to do a circuit of Dow's Lake, which was man-made and therefore a lazy creation of manageable size. Yes, let's do this. Let's conquer nature in our own way, on a leisure cruise with the sun about to set.

Except we pedaled furiously and went nowhere. This was not leisure. This was a Viking Funeral. The only sounds were metal and plastic grinding in response to our pinwheeling legs, and water sloshing into the boat. We sweated out our life jackets, which stank of lake water. Happy people dawdled on the recreational pathway that bordered the lake, reminding us that yes, it is possible to smile. And each smile reminded us that yes; we were trapped on this fucking paddleboat. What was the point.

"We should stop this."

"Yes."

"I do not mean the boat."

"Yes."

Jumping out of the boat was not an option so we drifted until we heard the burr of a boat engine reach us. Teenaged Dows Lake Employees with indifferent faces were our deus ex machina.

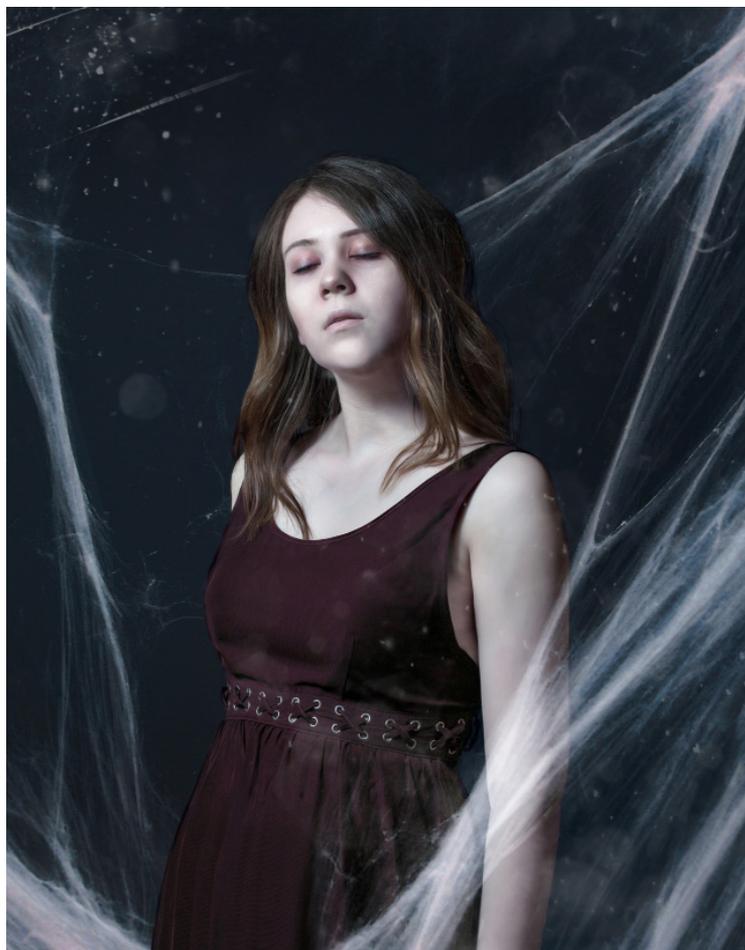
I could go to Algonquin Park. Go and see the tree that Tom Thompson painted for The Jack Pine. Pack a bag with some water and cold pizza and pre-rolled joints, rent a car and go. I'd smash my phone on a rock and walk through the woods untethered, wearing sneakers. I would venture off the trails and find a discreet place to get high. I would sit in the quiet of nature, surrounded by life, look upwards and be awed by the immensity of the trees, as sunlight filters down through them and fills me with a feeling of warmth. I could be transformed.

Instead I read on the internet that the jack pine died a long time ago.

UNTITLED #69 by Angela Wachowich

in my dream
you kissed a blowup doll of me
i tempted to switch myself out for her
worried you would notice

DECADENCE SERIES by Nicole Helena



DECADENCE SERIES by Nicole Helena



SEOUL STATION by Michelle Duquette

서울 역

taking the green
line to gangnam

강남

he asked if

i was miguk

미국인

i stumble

over hanguk mal

한국말

but he forgives me, my

pale face an apology

미안해요

"big eyes" he says

i know what it is to live as a wolf does

so it goes

our train, she floats across

the han river

한강

downstream, a magic trick

engineered by magnetism

and i feel it too

6 225 by Maggie Dewar

My body for lack of being touched by you is clay that has been
 overgrown by flowering vines,
the sweet scent of the blooms hiding the strangulation by the
 tendrils
until the skin that peeps out from beneath turns blue and hard.
Loosen me to flesh where I stand with my toes in the Rubicon,
I am here skipping stones but I am afraid to cross it.
I say to Eve that she should have unabashedly taken of the apple
yet I am a frozen gargoyle trying to re-find primordia so I can
 make these valleys fertile again,
and of course God is lost in the cosmic thumb-twiddling he
 never gave up since
making her ashamed that she chose to take back the lost rib by
 putting it inside herself.
It's dawn and I wish we were high enough to see the curvature
 of the earth,
and you'd be allowed to look at it as if it's a little more infinite
 than me, just this once.
Somehow rules clanked their way into the space we'd set aside
 for gardens,
and they cannot banish us if we leave of our own free will
to cross the river that was meant to deter us.

POSTHUMOUS FOOTNOTES by Christine Lyons

1.
you are a bad kisser. you kiss with your teeth bared
hungry for soft lips you can easily
rip

2.
for weeks red wine tasted like the questions
i asked the barrel of the bottle

3.
tell me:
what makes her
special

4.
her lipstick stains your neck
where your fingers
bruised mine

CHRISTMAS DINNER by Katie Vautour

An armada of travellers arrives.

Relatives arranged
at the edge of the table

flourish knives:

raucous carrion-eaters
slice and divide
ribs, thighs, stuffing
oozing from the cavity.

Both sides of the family
constantly pry
back and forth

over the bird's motionless bulk.

After, the kids shout:
gulls shrieking at trash
under the tree

where homemade owls hang.
Crafted from pinecones,

they gape, googly-eyed,
as the hostess asks me:
Isn't this nice?

Strangled by clumsy ties,
the ornaments and I peer at our kin,
the defeated generous turkey,

skeptical.

FOR YOUR CONSUMPTION by Florence Yee



VISIBLE MINORITY by Florence Yee



PAPA, WHY? by Kelsey May

The other girls have fathers who parade around wearing
their daughters on their shoulders like first place winners.

Their days are all cookies and milk, their nights bedtime
stories and princess kisses. I have something milky alright,
have some sort of kisses. When I picture you my age,

I see a pet dog with a red collar, a kitchen warm with
the smell of chicken pot pie, dandelion yellow on
the underside of your chin.

I hear a boy, confused but wanting for nothing, confused
as to how he should behave both as expected and as he desired,
a preteen hormone cocktail, a science experiment
guilty of bubbling over the side of its beaker.

I hear a rhythm to your sobs, I hear a question
you never voiced,

“Am I normal?”

I hope, for the love of God, you are not. I hope I am the only
girl torn between familial loyalty and running away,
the only girl flunking six of seven classes because her daddy
couldn't control his hands, digging for gold in her panties
like he was the only prospector in town.

DOUBT by Holly Day

My father used to point down that long stretch of Kansas road
tell me the state was so flat and the road was so straight
you could point a laser down the middle of that road from where
we stood
and it would stay right on the dotted lane divider all the way to
Nebraska.

Years later, I realized he must have been wrong about that
when my boyfriend fell asleep at the wheel driving back from
Topeka
had the wheel locked straight and tight while he napped
cruise control holding the car at a steady fifty mph.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN MY LIFE by P.C. Vandall

That summer I was Frances Houseman
learning to tango, samba, and meringue,
giving up leg warmers and off-the shoulder

slouchy sweatshirts for white canvas tennis shoes,
cut off jeans and spaghetti-strap tank tops.
In the mirror, I made my 'hungry eye'

look, batting butterfly lashes and sipping
kisses from soda bottles labeled: Sam,
Dalton and Johnny C. I'd climb upstairs

in mother's high heels, stuff tissue in my bra
and swivel my slim hips like a bar stool
at the Double Deuce. It was the year my heart

went gagoom for the boy in the slick black
pants whose arms flowed like caramel rivers
I longed to dip, eddy, and glide into.

Maybe, if I had found an Indian-
head penny, took up a potter's wheel
or said ditto more, I might've had a ghost

of a chance. Mostly, I was the cry baby,
the wallflower wilting in the corner,
the girl carrying the watermelon.

TEACUPS by Nicole Bayes-Fleming

It was almost noon and Lizzie opened the door in a pair of faded blue boxers and an oversized white tee. She wasn't wearing a bra and you could faintly see her nipples poking out from her small breasts. She was the kind of thin that made me flush with envy – her collarbone cut clean across her shoulders, her legs had a muscular arc preventing her thighs from rubbing together. In this moment, with her strawberry blond hair in a sloppy knot on the top of her head and her face scrubbed of makeup, I could see the light flecks of freckles across her nose and up around her eyes, which were a dull greenish brown, like dead grass.

I'd always been too jealous of Lizzie to be friends with her. She was gorgeous, her laugh was infectious, she had a substantial scholarship, and I was the only person I knew who didn't like her.

"You can leave your coat on the couch," she said now without concern, and wandered back into her apartment without making any special concession to the fact that I'd never been over before and we didn't know one another well enough to be hanging out without anyone else around. I pulled my feet out of my boots without unlacing them, dropped my coat on the couch as she'd suggested, and timidly found my way from the front door to her bedroom, where she was sitting in the middle of her bed with her legs crossed, blowing on a cup of tea.

I hovered in the doorway. Her room was smaller than mine, and messier. Papers dusted the wooden floor, the bed was unmade, clothes spilled over her laundry hamper, her curtains were rolled at the bottom and tied up with hair elastics, holding them just short of missing the radiator.

I imagined her mother heckling her over the phone: "And make sure you do something about those long curtains you wanted! It's a fire hazard to have them hanging down so low when you've got the heat on!"

TEACUPS (cont'd)

"Yes, Mom,"—squeezing the phone between her shoulder and ear as she rolled up one curtain, pulled the elastic from her wrist—"I've got it sorted."

I was looking for things to prove I was better than Lizzie. My hair was a bit longer. I was studying science, she was in humanities. I had three more followers on Instagram than she did. She came from a small town up north and I was from Vancouver. Her room was messier.

"Do you want some tea?" she asked.

"No," I said.

The question wrapped itself around me too slowly and I didn't acknowledge its kindness quickly enough to be polite. Lizzie sucked in the bottom corner of her lip, peered around her room as if there might have been a chair in there she hadn't seen before, and finally offered me to sit on her bed. I scooted past the doorframe, picked my way around the papers—they were study notes, lines of poems, grocery lists—and perched awkwardly on the edge of her bed.

"I don't care that you slept with him," she said once I'd stopped fidgeting.

"But —"

"And I'm not going to tell Danielle," she added, guessing my next question.

"Why not?"

There was no pause. She'd thought this through already, too.

"Fuck him. Fuck, he's the one that looks at her and says I love you. He's the one that's supposed to love her. If she finds out you had sex with him, she's not going to get mad at him. She'll only get mad at you. That's what girls always do. You're not the one telling her you love her. Sure, it was shitty for you to do it, but you were drunk. And fuck him. I want him to take the blame. Not you."

TEACUPS (cont'd)

The anger trembling her voice surprised me. This was a rant, the kind I was used to listening to over milkshakes at Dairy Queen at midnight after one of my best-friends from home had gotten in a fight with her own boyfriend. It occurred to me these words had been rolling around in Lizzie's head for a while, gathering momentum, and there had never been anyone to throw them at until I showed up at her door.

I wasn't sure what to say. I opened my mouth by default, to see if anything could crawl out on its own, but when nothing did Lizzie continued.

"Look, I don't know you that well. And I don't really fucking care. It's none of my business. If I tell Danny, I'm just going to have to deal with a bunch of stupid drama. I'm going to have to tell her you're a shitty friend and he's a shitty boyfriend, I'm going to have to tell her I hate your guts and his guts and she can do better, and I'm going to have to deal with all her debating – 'Oh but I love him so much, oh but we've been together forever, oh but it didn't mean anything,' and fuck, she'll go back to him and I'm going to have to pretend like I'm happy for her. And really I'll just be happy all the fucking drama is over, except it'll come back when there's a party we want to go to except you're going to be there and blah, blah, blah. I can't deal with that right now. Finals are coming up and I have, like, a trillion stupid papers I need to focus on."

My eyebrows had stretched their way all the way up to my hairline without my noticing. Lizzie rolled her eyes at my face and said, "Don't look at me like that. I'm not the one that fucking slept with her boyfriend," and then she laughed.

It wasn't a malicious laugh, one saying she had me in a corner, she won, was better than me – it was laughter at her own twisted joke. I didn't know I was going to, but I laughed too, shifted my weight so more of my body was on the bed and I could face her.

TEACUPS (cont'd)

She took a sip of her tea, lifted one shoulder in a bored shrug and muttered, once she'd swallowed, an unconvincing, "Whatever."

"I know being drunk can't be an excuse and blaming him can't be an excuse," I rambled quickly, choking on my guilty conscience, "The problem is, I didn't feel bad about it until I remembered you knew."

"I'm not judging you."

It was a lie every girl ever had to utter eventually, but it didn't seem like a lie walking out of her mouth. It just seemed like she was thinking of more significant things, and it made me take a deep, shuddery breath, put me into a sudden frame of perspective: Lizzie was thinking of more significant things.

Lizzie had a dozen more responsibilities to think of before she could contemplate the implications of mesleeping with her best-friend's boyfriend. And I didn't. And it was that reason, not her scholarship or perfect figure, which made Lizzie a better person than I currently could be.

Yet inexplicably, I felt this understanding shift something in my chest, smooth away some of the sharp points of loathing I felt whenever I looked at her. Lizzie seemed tired. And I remembered her in the drunken flash of memory I possessed of the party, the door opening - her eyes, darker and smaller with makeup, widening with embarrassment. She had just looked so worn out.

"If Danielle finds out about it, and finds out you knew, she'll be mad," I warned her now.

Lizzie smirked a little, then straightened her expression once more into one of impassivity.

"She'd only find out I knew if you told her." The smirk returned as she added, with warped irony in her tone, "Besides, she couldn't be mad at you and me. She'd need at least one friend."

TEACUPS (cont'd)

"Ok, well. Thanks." I managed a smile, surprised to realize it was genuine.

Lizzie rolled her shoulders back and said – "Just stay the fuck away from that guy. He's a creep."

"You don't like him?" I asked, a little surprised. I liked Andy. He was a funny guy, always took the time to say hello to you whenever you ran into him.

"He gave you a drink, didn't he?" Lizzie asked in response.

"Sure, just a beer."

"And he told you how good you looked in that shirt you were wearing?"

I pressed my eyebrows together and waited to see if Lizzie was going to make fun of me.

She didn't. Instead, she wrinkled her nose in a look of ultimate disgust and said, "He fucked my sister, at a party at home, before he was dating Danny. Then he told all his friends about it. He told them she sent him nudes – she never did. She told me to stay away from him, but Danny thought he was cute. And he's an older guy. There's always that extra attraction, you know?"

I'd never hooked up with anyone at a party before. I'd certainly never hooked up with one of my friends' boyfriends before. Knowing he was a crappy guy didn't make me feel any better. Knowing he'd pulled the same moves on other girls didn't make me feel any less guilty. I'd taken a beer from a guy I thought was cute and decided to forget who he was dating.

I was a shitty friend.

I didn't even like beer.

I pursed my lips and twisted the silver ring I wore on my thumb.

"Danielle doesn't know? About your sister?"

TEACUPS (cont'd)

"It doesn't matter," Lizzie sighed, "Danny loves him. She'll get over it eventually."

"Get over...?"

"Loving him."

"Oh."

"They'll break up."

"Oh?"

"They have to," Lizzie shrugged, "It's too on and off. Or you know, they'll get pregnant, married and divorced. But that's so cliché," and she laughed again, so viciously it was almost a snarl.

I had a strange feeling then, as if I'd rolled the next five years into a pill and swallowed it down without water. It sat tight in my throat as I imagined us, so far away from this conflict that meant so much now, which would have little impact on our lives less than a year from now. And I felt a little bit calmer. I looked around Lizzie's room, at the grocery lists and poems and all the clutter reminding us there was something bigger and better than our drunken hook-ups and relationship gossip.

For the first time I realized sleeping with Andy had nothing to do with how Danielle felt, and everything to do with how I felt. Was I ok? Had I been safe?

"Hey – " I said suddenly, and looked over at Lizzie, and she jerked her head up from her cup of tea, which she'd been sipping pensively, "– well, thanks."

Lizzie smirked again. I wondered if she ever got lonely. Somehow it seemed isolating to have such a flawless life.

"You're welcome," she said, and I tried to hate her but I couldn't anymore, and I couldn't hate myself either.

"It doesn't matter," Lizzie sighed, "Danny loves him. She'll get over it eventually."

"Get over...?"

"Loving him."

"Oh."

"They'll break up."

"Oh?"

"They have to," Lizzie shrugged, "It's too on and off. Or you know, they'll get pregnant, married and divorced. But that's so cliché," and she laughed again, so viciously it was almost a snarl.

I had a strange feeling then, as if I'd rolled the next five years into a pill and swallowed it down without water. It sat tight in my throat as I imagined us, so far away from this conflict that meant so much now, which would have little impact on our lives less than a year from now. And I felt a little bit calmer. I looked around Lizzie's room, at the grocery lists and poems and all the clutter reminding us there was something bigger and better than our drunken hook-ups and relationship gossip.

For the first time I realized sleeping with Andy had nothing to do with how Danielle felt, and everything to do with how I felt. Was I ok? Had I been safe?

"Hey – " I said suddenly, and looked over at Lizzie, and she jerked her head up from her cup of tea, which she'd been sipping pensively, " – well, thanks."

Lizzie smirked again. I wondered if she ever got lonely. Somehow it seemed isolating to have such a flawless life.

"You're welcome," she said, and I tried to hate her but I couldn't anymore, and I couldn't hate myself either. Lizzie chewed on the edge of her lip. She peered into the bottom of her teacup, now empty, and rolled back her slim shoulders.

"Um," she cleared her throat, and it was the first time throughout my entire visit she seemed uncertain of herself. "I'm going to put the kettle on again," she decided, "You – do you want some too? You could stay a bit longer, if you wanted."

So I did.

CONTRIBUTORS

DANA CARLY ANDREWS leads with her heart. She is a poet, painter, singer/songwriter, fast walking pisces who misses the ocean. After spending over a decade in Halifax, she moved to Ottawa last autumn, & has been slowly finding her footing here. She is all split ends & paperbacks.

DORIAN BELL is a musician from Ottawa, Ontario who looks to express himself in as many mediums as possible. Often choosing to talk about subjects with can be easily overlooked and appear uninteresting on the surface, Dorian finds ways of contrasting striking content with playful imagery and questionable morals and judgements.

Once ANTHONY SABOURIN dropped the electric razor he used to trim his beard on the floor and it stopped powering on. A few weeks later he thought he could fix it by dropping it on the floor a second time, but it just broke into smaller pieces.

LUNA DE SALTERAIN VALENTONE eighteen, and eventually everything will make sense the way you want it to (in the meantime, don't fall behind on your reading)

ANGELA WACHOWICH is a first-year music student at Carleton University in the singer/songwriter stream. She is closest to home when acting or writing music. She had her first short story published in a children's anthology at age 8. It was titled Cats in Underpants. You know, sounds like "Captain Underpants". She still thinks she's clever.

CONTRIBUTORS

NICOLE HELENA is a photographer based just outside of Toronto. She's currently working towards her Bachelor's Degree in her second year at Sheridan College, with a diploma in Visual Arts under her belt. You can see more of her work on Instagram at @nicolehelena.

MICHELLE DUQUETTE is an English Teacher in Seoul, South Korea. Her poetry has appeared in (parenthetical), Radix Magazine, In/Words Magazine, and issues of Gutter Review. Find her online at michelleduquette@wordpress.com

MAGGIE DEWAR writes most of her poems when it's raining and does most of her art under big trees in the park where sometimes she gets licked by cute dogs.

CHRISTINE LYONS is unsure of mostly everything, but she is sure that she likes poetry, ice-cream and autumn leaves. She invites you to ponder the certainty of everything with her, or chat with her about poetry, ice-cream and autumn leaves.

KATIE VAUTOUR read at the 2014 Sparks literary festival and the Spring Tides Reading Series (2016). She has poems published in Newfoundland Quarterly, and is the first place winner of the Sparks Poetry Competition (2016). She is also the recipient of an Arts & Letters Award (2015) and the Cox & Palmer Creative Writing Award (2016).

KELSEY MAY's poetry has recently appeared in NonBinary Review, Pine Hills Review, Barking Sycamores, and damselfly press. She has also received numerous grants and awards, including a nomination for a 2016 Pushcart Prize and a writing residency at Camp Roger. She loves eating watermelon and reading novels about Central America.

CONTRIBUTORS

HOLLY DAY has taught writing classes at the Loft Literary Center in Minnesota since 2000. Her published books include *Music Theory for Dummies*, *Music Composition for Dummies*, *Guitar All-in-One for Dummies*, *Piano All-in-One for Dummies*, *Walking Twin Cities*, *Insider's Guide to the Twin Cities*, *Northeast Minneapolis: A History*, and *The Book Of*, while her poetry has recently appeared in *New Ohio Review*, *SLAB*, and *Gargoyle*. Her newest poetry book, *Ugly Girl*, just came out from Shoe Music Press.

P.C. VANDALL is the author of three collections of poetry: *"Something from Nothing,"* (Writing Knights Press) *"Woodwinds"* (Lipstick Press) and *"Matrimonial Cake"* (Red Dashboard). Her next book of poetry debuts in spring 2017 with Oolichan Books. When Pamela is not writing, she's sleeping. She believes sleep is death without the commitment.

NICOLE BAYES-FLEMING is a fourth-year journalism student at Carleton University, with a minor in women's and gender studies. She grew up in Scarborough, Ontario and has been writing stories since she was eight years-old. She received an honourable mention in Carleton University's 2016 writing competition and is the current Opinions/Editorial editor at the *Charlatan*.

