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CONTRIBUTORS; ISSUE ONE*

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cover art: *Erin Nelson* reading in the park:
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birch: *Jessica N. Bloom*

"The Physical Impossibility of Understanding that

which Maybe Isn't Supposed to be Understood: A Story: *Andrew J. Weatherhead*

Phimy, in bed: *Trisha*

Coffee Aphorism, and It Was: *C. Hinkley*

Runner's Communion: *David Hurlow*

PEGBORD: *Connor Josey and Nick Bottomley*

The works in both the previous and current issues, that are unaccounted for were, at the artists' requests, left anonymous.

* The first issue of "her royal majesty" was anonymous in order to foster the sense of openness that I wanted to create with the magazine: anonymity encourages curiosity, and opens up the magazine as a public forum for people to inspire and be inspired.

I also wanted to look at the idea of making art solely for recognition or self-image, to consider whether or not we appreciate art differently when affected by the knowledge of who the artist is, and to explore the validity of a quote by an artist in the community who told the Globe & Mail in an interview that Halifax is "creative simply for creativity's sake."



The Leaving





THE MAGNOLIA TREE

by Barry Wood

Standing at the railing of my fifth floor apartment balcony, I look down. I watch as a man strolls along the paved pathway below. He touches the gate; he turns. He walks back and forth between the iron gate and the front entrance to the apartment. Hunched in a black coat, grey hair sprouts from beneath his cap. Smoke dances in the mid-September air; golden leaves catch the late afternoon sun. There's a faint murmur of traffic from the bridge.

His wife, confident and brisk, used to take these walks with him. Sometimes she'd stop until her husband caught up to her.

- It's that pipe, Harry. It's sucking the life out of you.

- Emily, it's my only enjoyment.

- Oh, you old fool.

Her words were loving, resigned.

Funnily, she died first. It was her heart, they said.

From the balcony, I see a skinny cat dash behind the man and into a bed of leaves. The cat does not seem to have an owner. Harry ignores the feline and continues to walk.

Next to the pathway stands a magnolia tree. It's the only one I've ever seen in Nova Scotia. In the springtime, its white flowers take several days to blossom. The blooms last only one day after opening.

Emily loved its fragrance.

- Harry, this is absolutely heaven. Just smell!

I go back into my apartment and dress for the cold day. It has been months since I've gone out. I have some canned salmon to take for that cat; something Emily would have done.

I part the drapes and look down before leaving.

Harry is gone.

Outside, I stand before the magnolia tree. It has only a few leaves now; the wind tugs at them. I shudder, one hand in my pocket, the other one holding the saucer with the warmed salmon. The afternoon tide brings the cold up from the harbour.

Caught up in the nostalgia that the salty air brings, I do not realize the cat coiling around my legs. I set the saucer down and she digs in hungrily. She is so thin. Emily would have liked that.

As I watch her eat, I light my pipe.





doll house
R. Cook





THE COCONUT

In a townhouse in the South end, the three of us – my aunt, my cousin, and I – sat around the kitchen table, on which sat the coconut. After five minutes of silence, we were still staring down the wizened green orb that had been shipped across the Atlantic from a place where it was summer; it was three weeks past its purported expiry date. I say ‘purported’ because in Rio, a green coconut that had spent weeks tumbling in crates in the basement of a cargo ship would not have the dignity of being sold at all.

The coconut was immobile, obviously, but for all of the ferocity with which we were examining it, one would think that it would at least *twitch*. Leo, my cousin, finally suggested that we crack it open despite the ominous, wrinkled patch of brown spreading from its underbelly. His mother dismissed the proposition.

On her way to the bin, she slowed, turned, and stopped: on second thought, she said, there would be no *harm* in opening it. She rummaged in the pantry and emerged with a hammer. Giving Leo and I orders, she shaped us into a formation somewhat resembling a football huddle. Heather crouched down over the coconut (with remarkable agility considering her arthritic knees), and held it firmly in place, her palms cupping the sides above the mossy brown bit. Leo stood above her, hammer raised, considering the best angle of attack. I was kneeling with a bowl at the ready to catch the promised juice of the fruit, whether it would be the sweet milk of a ripe green coconut, or the acrid powder of a rotten one. As Leo gave a countdown, raising the hammer higher and focusing on his target, I got the giggles. Heather caught them; her laughter was almost explosive. The coconut slipped from her hands as she leaned back, her body vibrant and shaking with laughter. I had never seen her like that before. Before Leo had a chance to stop his muscles from going through with their premeditated motion, the hammer came swinging down of its own accord, already victim to the pull of gravity; it caught the base of the coconut as it rolled, lumbered, along the hardwood. Despite its thick shell, the coconut cracked open at the tap of the hammer; it must have found a soft spot on the hard fruit. The juice that escaped was sticky, sweet, and fragrant: it smelled of warm leaves and salt. Quickly, instinctively, six pairs of hands fumbled for the white pieces of flesh and the half-coconut that was still intact, and from which was spilling milky sap.

We sucked the coconut dry. When all that remained was the husky, hairy shell, the hairs on the outside began to flutter as if with wind. The shell began to tremble. Gathering strength, the desiccated remains twitched and hovered, just an inch or so, above the ground. We did not look away. The fractured pieces of the coconut then moved together, reforming themselves into a whole, into what they once were. As soon as the pieces came together, a white glow shone through from within the shell: then, before we could release the sounds of astonishment that were waiting within our mouths, the glow grew to absorb the nut and the whole thing disappeared.

The only evidence of this unusual occurrence is a small dent in the wooden floor that Heather swears was not there before.





the thing
Gemma Collins





PERSONALS – AFTER C.D. WRIGHT

by Natalie Childs

Streetlights turn off when I walk under them.
My hands are always cold – good for making
pie, bad for bread. I know the tragic
love triangle between the knife, the fork and the spoon:
pity the fork, for nice guys never get the girl.
Today I learned about a snail
that spends three months searching
for the perfect rock upon which to spend
its days. When it finds this
rock, it digests its own brain.
Cross-country skiing backwards
around the lake, I saw three deer
caper across barely-frozen ice.
Joy is like this; fragile but deft
with ancient wisdom of the body –
it can circumvent dangers barely
visible to the eye.
At eight, I discovered a new constellation:
the littlest dipper. Imagine my disappointment
when I learned it had already been named.
The sky has been watching me since
then, and I can search all day
for stars no one has yet seen.





the guilty are
the suspicious





SIDE STEP

by Julia Grummitt

I was waiting above the train-tracks, leaning against the rimy seashell bridge. It wasn't anything specific - simply a pause, a moment of discontinuity.

& the woodsmoke moon on the undersides of october leaves, a sensation of empty distance, of side-stepping parallels. I was thinking of the word 'audacity.' down by the northwest arm, the water is all stillness & barnacles.

I was other places; I didn't notice the car.

are you ever made of paper-maché wings?

"Are you okay?" the woman asked, leaning out of the darkened passenger seat. She looked at me with concern. She was wary; she was full of the caution that small creatures will move suddenly & against your expectation. The man beside her had one hand on the steering wheel. He was already reaching for his phone. I smiled and said "yes," my voice too loud.

absurdity: proof becoming impossible.

When I woke up this morning, I pressed coffee and counted the tar-spots on the leaves of the maple in the backyard. I was still thinking about the strange distances of concrete.





arctic terns
Sydney Smith

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THE SENSATION OF THE SEARCH

The shafts of yellow October light fall, predicting geometry on the sidewalk, chafed with leaves. Walking the dog; not my dog, just *the* dog, some sort of fluffy spotted mutt who lives in my house (he belongs to my room-mate's ex-husband, who, upon separating, preferred to keep the cat) I thrust my hands deep into my pockets. The russet smell of a Maritime autumn – wool, soil, frost, soot, and sage – weaves through the city, up from the harbour. The dog sniffs every patch of hard earth, snubbing the ground for something, his entire body trembling with the sensation of the search. (If I said that I did not want to be this tremor, to exist in this vibration of awareness, would it be a lie?) I pull him away, and whatever it was remains unfound. The dog ignores the small-faced pansies, wild and rumpled on the side of the pavement.

The dog stops to pee against a telephone pole. From here, I can see, through a window, a man washing dishes. The man's movements are slow, full of care. He turns from his task, his neck arching, leaning to respond to a question asked of him from within the house. His wife, beyond the frame of the window, wants his attention. His neck is strong, its tendons tight with reaching, with longing. She is surely looking at him, eyes heavy-lidded, wanting to be kissed. He knows where the kiss lives. He removes his hands from the soapy water and leaves the sink, the warm bubbles left to sink into themselves. The dog pulls away.

Walnut, Chestnut, Lilac: there is a poetic simplicity (rustic, ephemeral) to this place and the names of its streets. The trees are thicker North of the city: Dublin to London, Vienna to Cork: I trick my feet into believing I'm leaving.





**IF WE WEN
T BACK TO
AN OTHER
TIME I WO
ULD LOVE
YOU OVER**

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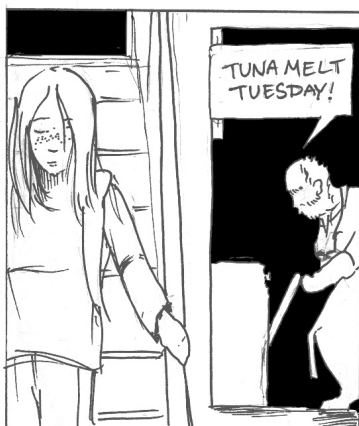
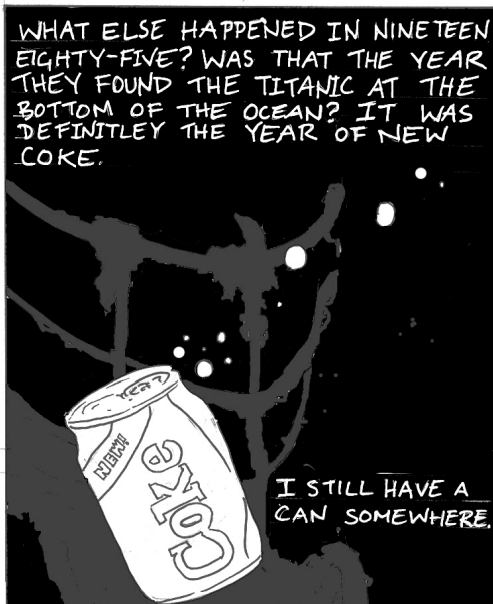




Ceratage
Joel MacLeod



PEGBOARD No. 2







POEMS, BY ANDREW JAMES WEATHERHEAD

100 Years of Lobsters

On the day
Artemis was to die,
he mourned the decision
to dine on seafood.

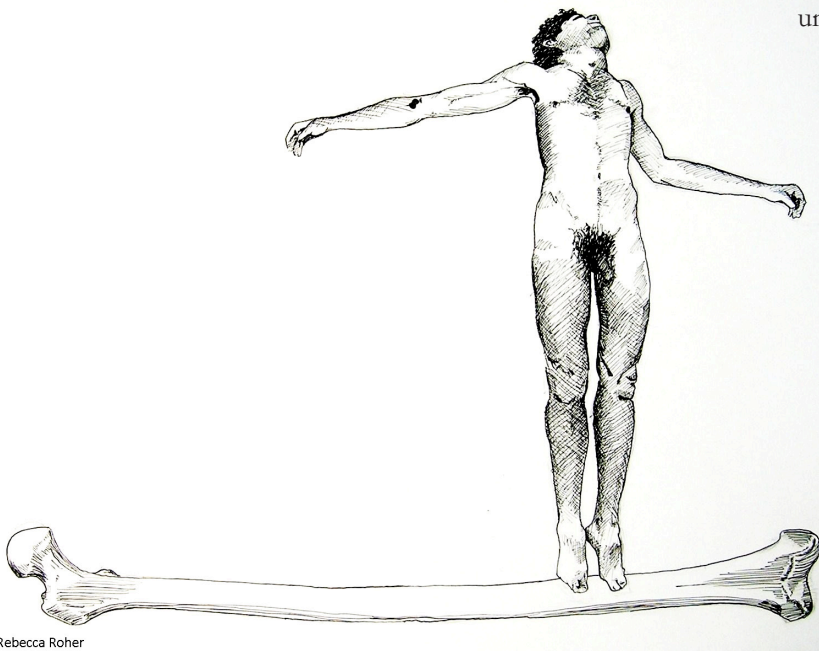
In front of the firing squad,
among the trees,
he thought about the lobster
he ate at dawn.

Untitled 10-14-08

You like elevator rides with formerly
attractive women – the silence
so tempting that you have to look
down at your hands for support.

You look out the hotel window at
nothing, it's way too dark.

You linger outside – the silence there
is unprecedented and you're
unsure if it's real.



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Rebecca Roher





JANE & RYAN

by Michelle Engel

They decided to enter the barista competition at around the time that they decided to have the wedding-themed going-away party. Ryan and Jane had, at one point, been talking about really marrying each other. They had thought it would be good for both of their travel plans; citizenship benefits would have become available for both of them. Ryan had always wanted to go to Australia. As a student – on and off for the last four years – Jane had been ridiculously happy on the east coast of Canada. The two of them felt the same weird feeling when they told people about their idea to get married: *why do I feel like I can't actually have said that?* To say it out loud left a difference.

Other people, already in awe of Jane, already aware of Dylan's tendency toward rash and irreversible decisions, did not feel the same feeling. The reactions of their friends and co-workers varied in degrees, but were invariably combinations of astonishment, anxiety and mystified acceptance. Among their friends – because their coworkers were their friends, same as their other friends – reservations focused vaguely on the assumption that probably, one day, Ryan would want to marry someone in his serious way. Equally, the idea of Jane unattached to Canada by something outside herself, something like a legal document, an allegiance, was, in an embarrassing way, part of how her friends liked to think of this girl as a free spirit -- or better, hipper, a *true artist*.

Less insanely, Jane thought that between her and Canada it was more like a love-affair and therefore not a serious relationship. A meaningful love affair. She felt so much about the time and the place and the events contained in it, in a place that was not definitively her own. What the marriage would limit for Ryan was inversely different from what it would limit for Jane. A small differentiation, the positive and the negative; it was like the blank canvas for Jane and the full backpack for Ryan. So it was a fake wedding and a real party and it was supposed to be great.

They planned the ceremony, and they planned to practice their lattes on a Friday morning while neither of them was scheduled to work. In the cafe, unpaid, each of them was working out the difference between 'mine' and 'yours.' *Your swan is beautiful. Mine looks like garbage.* They weren't trained to make coffee at the same time, not even in the same place. Each produced a good latte, but a latte definitely distinguishable from the other's. How can someone explain this kind of thing, where they both





conform to strict criteria successfully? And sometimes unsuccessfully: the milk overflowed, the coffee ran too long, and the hot jug inhibited the foaming process.

Keep in mind that there was a labelling machine at the cafe where they worked in the South End. That same morning, they took it out of the drawer where you keep that kind of thing – the top drawer – and the purple and green plastic object produced two small labels for two small metal jugs: Interro-ryan and Interro-jane. Incomprehensible?!

It's that Ryan has a sort of obsession with the absurdity of the punctuation phenomenon that takes place where a question mark and an exclamation mark are used at the end of the same sentence. Interrobang. Probably the most effective way to say something about which you are a little unsure?! It is taking a leap into certainty by expressing your uncertainty with conviction. Ask yourself what the difference is between speaking it and being able to write it. If you are already thinking that way, isn't that all that punctuation does?

Forget about the labels and concentrate on how, on that Friday, Ryan made twenty three lattes and five cappuccinos. Jane made eighteen lattes and three cappuccinos; also she made a hot caramel for Holly to drink, with caramel whipped cream floating on the top. The difference was six.

Why could Jane make less practice drinks?!

Maybe because, in a way, she's got a little something different going on? Ryan concentrated harder. She took her time on her tamping. She pressed the grinds down into the portafilter, tapping three taps on the side to shake them down and then turning the tamper round, round on the top. She thought about it every time it happened, and so it could not happen as many times for her as for Ryan, because of the people around talking and laughing and working. Ryan was not distracted by them, and neither was Jane. It was that she concentrated on the people and the practice drinks at intervals. Ryan concentrated on the people and the practice drinks both at once. Everything got accounted for either way. There was no difference.

The aesthetic side of coffee interested Ryan on its own. A beautiful drink with a very precise taste was the object of the game. Consider now that Jane performed coffee. She moved carefully and gracefully, smiling while she steamed and poured. She was like a comedian, looking for the applause, the approval from the person drinking the coffee to affirm her having made it, qualifying her next move. And so the difference between their drinks was where people fit into them.

At the wedding-themed-going-away party, they talked about the barista competition: *it's impossible to really name a best barista – coffee is art*, and they joked about their future as a couple. Ryan said: *Jane, you were supposed to bring photos*. Jane said: *But you were meant to be getting them developed!* In Australia, people say that you were meant to have done something instead of saying that you were supposed to do it. It sounds a little less self-centered. Do you agree that it means the same thing?!





Canadiana
Rebecca Roher

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2 tbs butter
2 tbs extra virgin olive oil
about 6 cups onion, sliced thinly
salt & pepper, to taste
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 tbs fresh sage
1/3 cup parmesiano-reggiano
1 1/2lbs spaghettini or spaghetti
1 small butternut squash (2lbs)
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup maple syrup

When the gray nights of November draw thicker, I like to pretend to forget that I'll have to sleep in my wool socks.

It's not fall (with its root vegetables, thick soups and hot chocolate) that I have a problem with – it's the winter that it heralds.

This maple-squash pasta may as well have a little crimson bow-tie around its skinny spaghetti-neck: it does such a perfect job ushering you from fall to winter, it might even make you forget that the sun sets at 4:30 in the afternoon.

SPAGHETTINI, WITH SMOTHERED ONIONS AND MAPLE SQUASH

Ilana Spiegel

Instructions:

- 1) Cook pasta according to package directions.
- 2) Melt butter and olive oil in large pan on very low heat. Add onions and salt, cover and cook for almost an hour or until onions are soft, stirring occasionally.
- 3) Uncover pan, raise heat to medium and cook until onions become a deep golden brown and all the liquid has cooked away.
- 4) Add pepper to taste. Add wine and stir frequently while it bubbles away. Add the sage, stir and take off heat

For the squash:

- 1) Peel and seed the squash and cut into bite sized cubes
- 2) Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat and add squash. cover and cook until tender, stirring occasionally (about 15 minutes).
- 3) Add maple syrup, toss, and cook for another few minutes
- 4) Toss cooked, drained pasta with onion mixture, squash and parmesan. serve immediately and enjoy!

