



HER
HER ROYAL MAJESTY

ISSUE NUMBER FIVE  SUMMER 2009

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I was sitting in the Trident last week reading about how Bruce Nauman, a contemporary American installation artist, made a large sign, sixty-feet long by thirty-feet wide, to hang inside his front door. The sign is made of tubes of neon lights and spells, “Honey, you’re home!” Upon reading this, I had an immediate compulsion to make a similar sign for myself: an enormous wall-hanging, ideally some sort of hooked-rug or afghan but, due to a laziness I prefer to call “efficiency,” I planned to settle for magic marker on brown craft paper instead.

The temporariness of this quickly crafted sign seems appropriate for my – now short-term – home. I will be leaving both my house and this city in a few weeks, yet I have never felt more at home here, more at ease, than now, as I wait to leave it.

Perhaps this is because Halifax is a city of longing. The large student population infuses this Maritime city with a kind of seasonal transience. Even geographically, Halifax feels impermanent, poised for relocation elsewhere. The neck of land on which we live is precariously jutting from the Eastern edge of the country; it sometimes seems like it might just snap right off the map. As both peninsula and port, Halifax belongs as imperfectly to the mainland as it does to the sea that laps at its limits. To live in Halifax is therefore, in a sense, to be already looking beyond it, along a latitude of longing that runs as far east as west. I am not exempt from this longing, and I am subject to the pull in both directions: I am going west in August, subletting an apartment in New York; come September, I’m heading eastward to Paris, where I’ll be living and working.*

Halifax, as Sean Flinn said in his article on Joel Plaskett in May 28th’s issue of *The Coast*, “is a borderland between land and sea, which is not just a geographic reality but a psychological reality too - a state of being in between (sometimes stuck, other times secure).” I too feel this tension between the desire to put down roots and the urge to transplant myself to foreign soil. After seeing a photography exhibit at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, I felt the acute emptiness that is often associated with transience: Iain BAXTER’s photographs of his road trips throughout Western North America depicted an empty, flat world unaffected by his lens. His subjects have denied him entrance into their lives and landscape, and that denial has become his subject. The title of the exhibition is, aptly, “Passing Through.”

The work featured in this issue is by artists who, while they may be just “passing through” Halifax, engage with and explore the nature of our relationship to the idea of “home.” The issue moves forward from the feeling of entrapment and confinement in the physicality of home to the idea that home is something you can either break free from or carry with you, like a tortoise and his shell. “Home” is something that we are constantly building and that, like a sandcastle, can be washed away. The fact that this is an online issue – though originally due to a lack of funds – is now a way of positively embracing this transience.

I finished the brown-paper sign and hung it in my hallway; I think I will leave it to my roommates to take down once I leave. When making this poster, I had another impulse, simultaneous and of equal strength to the first: to make a smaller version of this same insignia that I could carry around with me; a portable sign to hang in the many homes that I will inevitably inhabit. This way, wherever I go, I will be reminded that I am “home,” and that home is something we are all always in the process of making for ourselves.

Harriet Alida Lye
Editor



orphanage
clothing

cover art:	BEN STEPHENSON
copy editors:	MICHELLE ENGEL, ANDY VERBOOM JAMES CAMP JOEL MACLEOD
layout:	SIMON BLOOM, DAVID LYE

**Her Royal Majesty* will continue, though: I will work on it from abroad and one of my copy editors, Cynthia Spring, will continue it from Halifax.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the editor

Table of contents 2

I Need to Make a Sound, *photography series by Melanie Colosimo* 3

Compromise, *poem by Harriet Lye* 4

Midnight, *painting by Matthew Alamon* 4

you weren't home, *photograph by Zani Showler* 5

The Fat Lady Dances the Blues, *poem by Sandra J. Church* 6

Attic Living, *painting by Colleen MacIsaac* 7

Poems, *by J.G. Lutes* 8

Victorian Crayon, *drawings by Colleen MacIsaac* 8, 17, 20

untitled, *by Caroline Buttery* 9

Rules, *by Justin Taylor Tate and Joshua David Pereira* 10

I'm a Rocker, I Rock Out, *painting by Melanie Colosimo* 11

Pecking Order, *poem by Molly Holland Willows* 12

Suite et Fugue (detail), *drawing by Christine Comeau* 13

time share 14

untitled, *painting by Lindsay Hicks* 15

Ophie, *story by A.F. Matlock* 16

untitled, *by Caroline Buttery* 19

You Should Floss More, *poem by Vincenzo Ravina* 20

Sunspot, *poem by Andy Verboom* 21

recipes for a brunch 23

tortoise, *valentine by Ben Stephenson* 23

continental, *photograph by Julia Grummitt* 24

three examples of conversations 25

miles and days, *drawing by Sydney Smith* 26





I Need to Make a Sound
Melanie Colosimo

Compromise

by Harriet Lye

I want to invite you to dinner, but
my room is not very big –

I don't have a table.

There is room in the middle of the floor,
though;
we could spread out the blanket
and have ourselves a
jam picnic,
and then play checkers,
or read poems,
or nap.



Midnight
Matthew
Alamon



you weren't home
Zani Showler

The fat lady dances the blues

by Sandra J. Church

The fat lady dances the blues
in the middle of the smokey floor.
She holds one hand close to her face
with a smoldering cigarette.
Her eyes are closed most of the time,
but when she opens them, she sees some other place.
She's light on her feet.
People give her a wide berth on the dance floor.
She holds her beer in her other hand
but like the cigarette, ignores it.
She dances for herself and for her lover.
We see neither – they are both invisible to us.



Attic Living
Colleen MacIsaac

POEMS

by J. G. Lutes

Moving On

In celebration
of your old mattress
we're having a pizza party.

Out of:
respect
sweat
regret
get lucky?
Not yet.

Hours logged.
Saddened men,
long gone.

In celebration
of your old mattress
we're having a pizza party.
Tonight.

6:22am

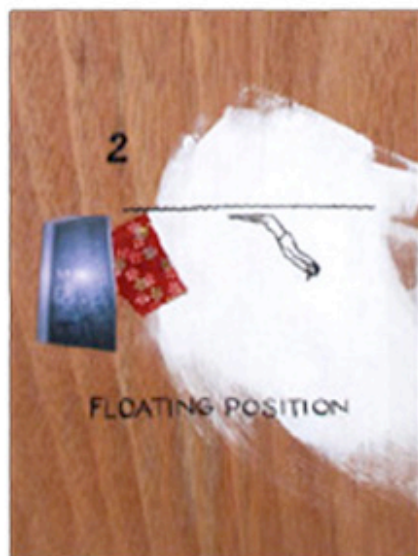
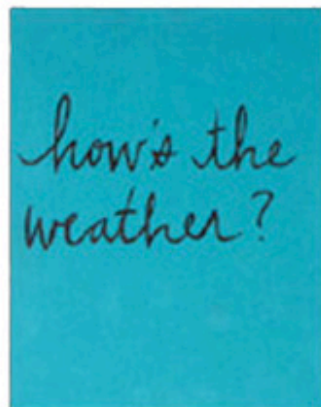
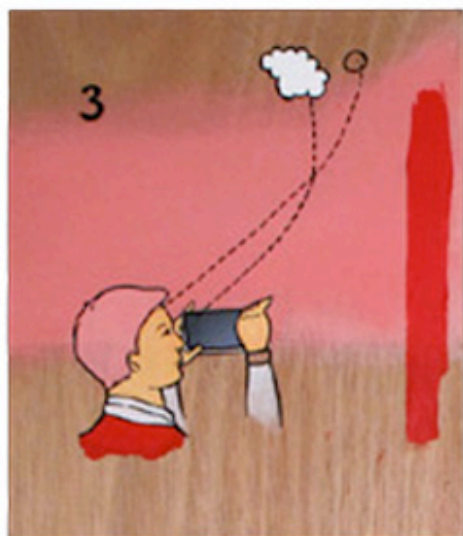
There's a fiery sunrise
being
born in front of me

If you ask yourself
too many questions
about purpose
they will
get in the way

You're better to
just perform



Colleen MacIsaac



Caroline Buttery

Rules for meeting and hanging out with **Josh (ua David Pereira)**

- 1) If you have never met Josh, but would like to, leave a small trail of Baby Bell cheeses leading to where you happen to sit. If you are on a bench Josh will sit next to you, start a conversation, unwrap a small cheese, offer you one and eventually make small wax sculptures after he has eaten.
- 2) Learn quickly how to identify when he is telling stories. It happens often and he is good at it.
- 3) If Josh needs to use the washroom and you are in public, offer to go with him. Otherwise, he will not relieve himself.
- 4) Get to know Josh's scent. It is very particular, although not malodorous, and the sooner you pick up on it the sooner you will be able to know when he is present.
- 5) Offer to partake in recreational activities with Josh, biking for example. You both will enjoy the time that you spend together but it is rare for him to do them alone.
- 6) Throw parties just because you can. They don't have to be large or extravagant, just call them a party.
- 7) Ask to see, and compliment him, on his unusual belly button, he likes that.

Rules for meeting and hanging out with **Justin (Tyler Tate)**

- 1) Be prepared to discuss what Justin likes to talk about: dinosaurs, eating dinosaur burgers, sculptors, installation art, xylophones and his first parade.
- 2) If he talks about his high IQ a lot, do not dismiss it or disregard him as being a fool with bragging rights: he is actually a few clicks away from being Mensa material.
- 3) He, like your new friend Josh, enjoys eating sugar in large quantities, so keep it around.
- 4) He likes talking about vegetarian food but is sensitive about the few times he has eaten meat and enjoyed it. Be sensitive.
- 5) He likes to joke but worries about his delivery and might sometimes look to you for approval. Give him this approval unreservedly.
- 6) He prefers being called pretty rather than handsome although he is well aware that he is a man and not a woman. (Calling him a pretty boy would be no insult.)
- 7) Upon meeting, it would not be uncommon for him to want to rub faces (he calls them fuzzy kisses) for warmth and effect; on the other hand if you were to act as though you had been present the entire time, there would be no greetings or shows of affection.



I'm a Rocker, I Rock Out
Melanie Colosimo

pecking order

by Molly Holland Willows

if dying is in life & living is in
death

then I'll while away
my time through word.

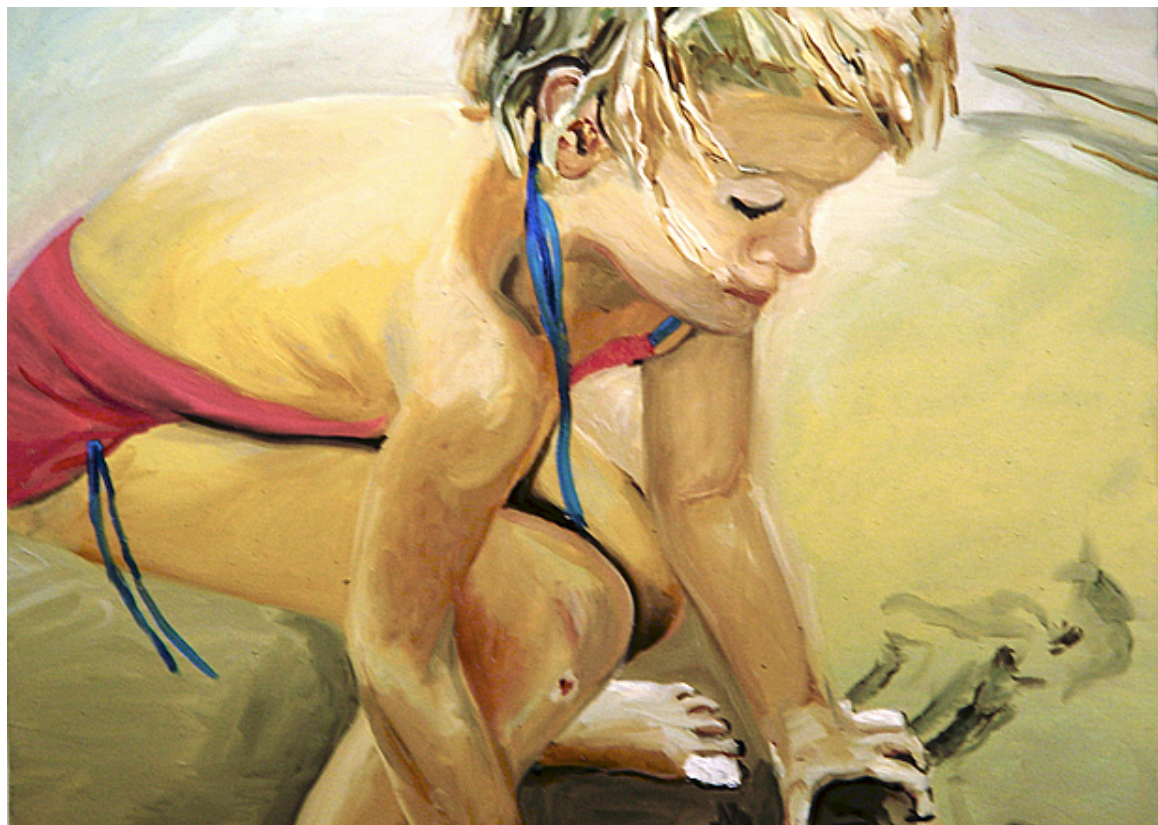
I'll marry word
give birth to bird throughword
sex & unsex & love
word.

then every shade of this sky
zoo beneath that sea (& soul)
will flutter with birds of fire
flames with beaks
tonguing death
& life



Suite et Fugue (detail)
Christine Comeau

SUMMER
IS WARM FRUIT
IN BRAZIL



Lindsay Hicks

OPHIE

by A.F. Matlock

“Adam and Eve on a raft, and wreck ‘em,” the busboy called, playfully rolling his rs, into the kitchen where Ophie was standing alone in a white t-shirt, damp in the underarms, and a floral apron tied around her waist. The heat was pervasive. She had taken off her shorts to try and cool down and nobody had noticed (even though the only person around was the busboy three years her junior). Hank, her uncle who owned the place, had been unable to reschedule his bi-weekly poker game.

Ruth, his wife, did not mention that she suspected he had not even tried. The pudges of Ophie’s inner thighs stuck together; she pried them apart with satisfaction, and sighed. Though she had resigned herself to working as a cook in a diner in the middle of the hottest summer that Gravelbourg had seen in years, she would not learn, or would at least refuse to use, diner slang. Regardless of her resolution, Ophie obeyed the commands: she cracked and scrambled the requisite eggs and popped two slices of spongy white bread into the toaster-oven with the most pained face she could fashion, for nobody’s benefit but her own.

Eliza Buvier, sitting in her usual booth, left her milkshake and fries to use the toilet that was accessible only by way of the kitchen (a flaw in the floor-plan that Hank, lazy like his sister, had never rectified). As she walked, her narrow shoulders folded forward; in profile, she looked like a question mark.

On the other side of the swinging kitchen doors, Eliza stared at the back of the brown-haired girl and felt a tremor run like static through her thigh bones. There had not been anyone new in town since the live-in nursemaid had moved into her great aunt Molly’s place. The shadows emanating from the new girl’s armpits were accompanied by the tart, vital smell of sweat. The shadows underneath her eyes were like charcoal smudges. The new girl (who was, it could not be ignored, beautiful) was wearing only red panties beneath her apron.

“Hi,”

“Hi,” the new girl replied in a voice both fierce and disinterested, eying Eliza peripherally before turning fully to the pan she was scouring.

There was a pause. Ophie tossed her dark short hair out of her face. She moved from the sink to the stove and looked from the frying pan, cradling the greying scrambled eggs, to Eliza. Ophie had fox-coloured eyes.

“You work here now.”

Eliza’s question came out as more of a statement than she had intended. She corrected: “When did you get here? I come here every day.”

Ophie was left with the unmysterious truth. “Last night. It’s my uncle that runs this place.” She slid the eggs onto the toast lying on the plate, placed the plate on the ledge looking out to the restaurant, and in the process of tapping the bell to let the busboy know that the eggs for table 11 were ready, knocked the frying pan off the counter with her elbow.

Eliza was quick to her knees, picking up the dirty pan as Ophie, standing above her, watched. As she held the pan up, crouched in a pose of reverence, Eliza could see what even the apron was modest enough to hide.

“Thanks,” Ophie said, half-smiling as she took the pan.

“Oh, you know...” Eliza bobbed her head, trying to shake the colour out of her face, and noticed a small freckle on the back of Ophie’s neck. She swallowed, then followed the hand that she had ejected from her body, jutting in the general direction of the bathroom.

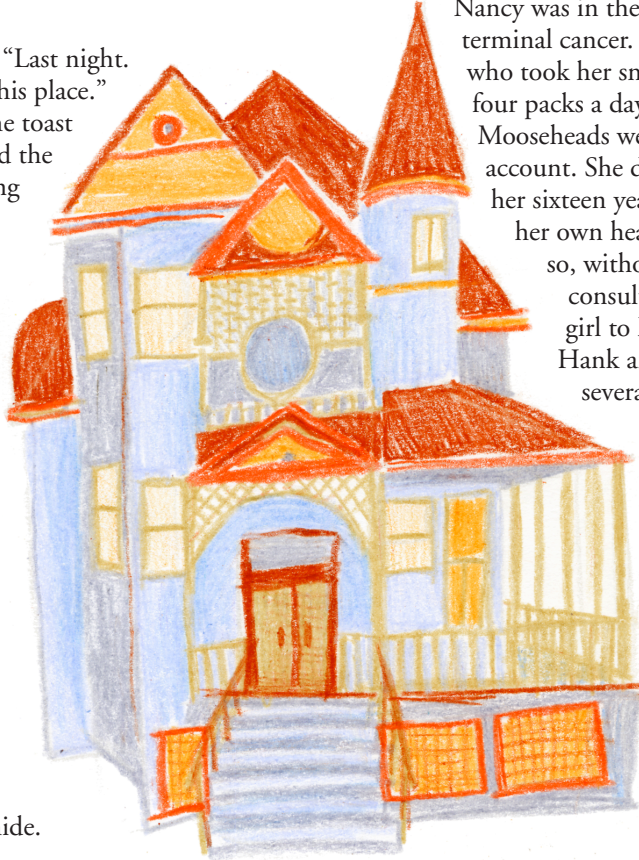
On her way out, she slid through the kitchen silently while Ophie chopped onions, her back to the door.

From her home in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Ophie had gotten on the number 1 bus in the morning, after her mother had left for work. Nancy had left her daughter a note in an envelope with some money on the hall counter; this envelope now rested, folded and re-folded, in Ophie’s jacket pocket. Nancy was in the hospital with a terminal cancer. This surprised nobody who took her smoking habit – up to four packs a day when the Halifax Mooseheads were winning – into account. She did not want to burden her sixteen year-old daughter with her own health problems and so, without discussion or consultation, she sent the girl to live with her uncle Hank and his wife Ruth, several provinces over, deep in “bald-ass prairie wasteland.” Nancy and her daughter had already said their goodbyes; both had a virulent strain of pragmatism, and the parting was tearless.

The bus left the terminal and took the bridge over the harbour.

On the Halifax side, she switched busses and took the 9A to the train station in the South End of Halifax. She checked her suitcase and took a window seat: Regina via Toronto.

Both cities were milestones, one after the other, for the farthest west she had been in her home country.



As night came and the countryside flattened out underneath the dusk, she awoke with a thirst and a cramp in her neck. She clambered over her sleeping neighbour, a youngish man who slept with his mouth open to the rattle in his throat, and shuffled to the dining cart.

"Can I have a glass of water?" she asked the man who sat at an empty table, wearing a gray ViaRail uniform with a small illegible name-tag. She didn't bother to say hello, or good evening, or excuse me, please, but.

He stood and gave her one of those attempts at a sly, conspiratorial wink that, as a pretty girl, she was sick of. He walked towards her.

"Is that your heart?" He asked her, smiling and pointing to the red plastic bauble on the necklace that she was fiddling with out of habit.

Ophie rolled her eyes to the window and shrugged; she just wanted a drink.

"I guess," she muttered.

The man came nearer, although still not close enough to touch her.

"It looks like it's in good condition

Like it's never been broken."

She replied, not bothering to keep the irritation out of her voice,

"I lost it for a month or so, but I found it in a drawer as I was packing to leave town."

In the morning on the second day of school, Ruth had prepared orange juice and buttered toast for her niece. The poor thing, she thought, hypothetically but sincere. She hadn't seen Ophelia since she was small, just a little girl at her father's funeral, and now she was quite a young woman – a near-orphan.

Ruth looked to the window to diagnose the day. The heat gave her a terrible head-ache, just terrible, but the sky was flat and cloudless as the white sun slipped up. The heat had no plans to leave. As Ophelia walked into the kitchen, Ruth felt a thrumming at her temples.

"Morning, sweetie. Did you sleep okay?"

"Yes."

Ophie rubbed the matted belly of the terrier who had rushed to her feet.

"And how was school yesterday? I'm sorry I didn't get to see you last night.

It was the town meeting, and then –"

"Fine."

Ruth leaned against the counter watching Ophie as she ate her toast, leaving the crust. After drinking the orange juice the girl rubbed her tongue along the roof of her mouth.

"Is there pulp in this?"

"Oh, yes, I'm sorry, we drink it with pulp here. Do you prefer it smooth?"

"Doesn't matter."

"And are you enjoying working at the diner? I know Hank just loves having you around. It really helps—"

"It's fine."

Ruth didn't know how not to say, "God bless you, sweetie," to this poor girl, so she said it and then turned back to the sink to cover the shame that accompanied the growing beating at her temples. She turned on the tap and began to fill the sink with hot water. She could see Hank moving wood in the shed.

Ophie looked at this woman, this woman who had made her toast and had wondered what sort of juice she might like, the woman whose face was watercoloured with yellow morning light. Ophie wanted to walk up to her and touch her shoulder, thank her for letting a stranger, a heathen, into her home, wanted to promise she would try to be nice or at least try not to be awful – Nancy always told her when she was being awful – but instead of this, instead of walking next to her and letting the lace-light wash her own face, she finished the juice, set the glass on the table, and said the most awful thing, the most hurtful thing that she didn't know how not to, under her breath. She said "I don't believe in God."



Caroline Buttery

YOU SHOULD FLOSS MORE

by Vincenzo Ravina

Yesterday, I went to the
dentist for my biannual
visit wherein she cleaned
my teeth with her shiny
and pointy metal
instruments.

Whilst poking and prodding
at my gums to make them
bleed, she said, "I love you,
but we only have fourteen
hours to save the earth."

And I said, through the
impediments,

"What?"
and she adjusted the light
above me so it would
better shine directly into
my eyes and make them
water.

She said, "Grab your sword
and ninja mask,
for blood will be spilled and
the only thing preventing
said blood from being yours
is the steeled blade."

She placed the vacuum thing
in my mouth and, with her
other hand, pulled from a drawer a
cross-bow.

Out the window, she spied an
albatross. Ignoring my protests,
she aimed and fired.
the albatross was struck and fell
down, down, down
into the parking lot and landed
on the hood of a Honda Civic.

"We are cursed, now," I said,
"Now and forever,
we are cursed."



SUNSPOT

by *Andy Verboom*

i.

Turning from the glass, he is suddenly hot and blind,
immobile, dizzied, possessed of the breed of conscious
ness mustered in dream (as a prairie dog is a breed of dog
mustered in a prairie), spinning from a lynch pin neck.
This is the order of sensations, the order he will remember
afterward. Turning from the aquarium, the glass
holding back its dark luses, its giant blue-green maws
engrossing themselves, its tubeworm corpulence
lurching over them, glandes or lipstick, the deep
room's palette of navies, shades, and venal ultramarines,
corals posed in brambles of scrap metal, of modern
ballet, —but let's not digress: he is wrapped
against spring as it rattles the streets like iron bars
turning from the window, in a word, transfixed.

ii.

Suckerpunched. The light—all blind and hot—
pokes him right in the eye. The fury of the sewer
who sucks and wets and hunches in and tries to thrust
for the twelfth time her horny string to penetration
only to miss for the twelfth time and suck and wet again
and hunch and spit and try to thrust her horny string at thirteen.
That burning of the sewer for the cool, chaste needle
smoulders in his hair. Till he turns—jabs—its grubby poker
right in his eye. But now, as the light runs him through
the heat is a friction, the rough rub of conga-line-sheep
smuggling something in a woolly rush, or sleep sheep
draped in burning pitch and rabid pain and driven demonic
into the ranks of his skin and his brain.

The sewer smiles and pulls the string taught. His feet
leave the ground.

A thousand placid sheep, on the tip of him,
graze on seaweed. Their wool quenched. Bloating
themselves, not minding the taste. Salted rubber. Or maybe—
that old washed-out sewer? quaking fingers, tart slaver?—
she's a bright, young, rosy riveter instead. Either way,
waterlogged, he rolls face-up like a gassy dead sailor
recomposing his rot.

iii.

Pinned there outside the art gallery and its enormous
fired-clay taxonomy of the ocean's mouths, through his ant eyes
he makes sense of a mountainous little boy bent over Halifax,
his lethal Sherlock glare—fixed. This bending boy,
squatting, perhaps, his whole body going into it
as a dog shivering out shit (as if a sheep dog
is a breed of sheep), and this boy's magnifying glass,
and its catapulting fistfuls of the sun—no—one long
interminable fistful of sun; boys and their flamethrowers.
Yes (he on the street screams in his head) burn me God!
But we can hear him, we with our special ears his orgiastic
thralldom. What, no one else can hear, not even her.

The God-boy strides down the narrow footpaths
between buildings, old, stone buildings wrecking balls
can't fell (they've tried), a couple of churches streets
run about awkwardly, tripping, stump roots half-buried,
big shiny towers. God-boy spots a little black mote and,
perching over the city, grins.

iv.

Lancing a boil smack in the middle of his face
the light peals at his cheeks and eyes, cracks his lips
into a little, waking mouth, a little mouth just
moist enough, a little pond of a mouth in his white face,
where she, the dark feathers of her eyes, cosmonauts
at the end of the earth's blank drift below them, finally
can splash to rest. We know, she having stood with him
at the window, peering into the sculptures in their blue gloom,
aliens salivating against a porthole, having turned from
the window, she finds him full aflame. And Archimedes's smirk,
we know, peeks from his penthouse blocks away.

The whole winter again in those three seconds
he's silent. At the thaw of his mouth, his one
lapping laugh, she splashes in
and her eyes disappear their weary wings
with the usual folding of magic, and go bright.

v.

But if we're honest with ourselves, he was transfixed
through the head: some amateur lepidopterist stuck him
to ruttled corkboard through the head. And pointing back
in a decade or two, having refined her craft, invention and
refinement in solitude, she will probably not say fucking shame.
She will laugh at her cruel narrations, at the character of
characters: happy to exist, no matter the cross. She will have you
for tea. You two will look back sleepily through lawn air
a-glut with summer afternoon and, eyes half-slit, you'll laugh
at the dumb fool locked in her yolky spray.

Who is he? My son, my son-in-vain, my in-vein son. And
who stands for a moment, his back to the sun, a building
to his back, a high-rise to the front that ricochets the spring
late-afternoon light, blasts it down into his face?

My son, who stands in that only moment, the blush
of bliss, unalloyed golden crown.

Green beans with Caramelized Onions and Garlic and Toasted Sesame Seeds

- sauté two garlic cloves and one large yellow onion with a splash of olive oil in a pan for 15 minutes. add a pound of fresh green beans and cook on medium heat for around seven minutes. sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds.

Warm Grapefruit

slice four large pink grapefruits so as to remove all of the pith. heat in a saucepan on low heat for five minutes, adding one teaspoon of cinnamon and half a cup of brown sugar (more to taste). serve warm.

RECIPE

A Canadian, a Swede, an American and two Brits met for brunch in an apartment facing rue Montorgueil, a colourful market street on the right bank in Paris (the city in which all of them were individually and collectively working to create a sense of 'home'). The apartment belonged to none of the people gathered; the Swede was house-sitting it for a Canadian who was on a business trip in Taiwan. At around half-past eleven, the Anglophones entered, one after another, through the door which was left ajar. They carried ingredients in cloth bags. They made brunch together, but independently, without following any recipes. Rather, the improvised menu came together based on foods that each person ate regularly for breakfast in their own homes, all of their homes, and all of the homes that they had had.

These recipes are based on this brunch and were all written, by the Canadian, after the fact. The servings should be enough for five.

French toast

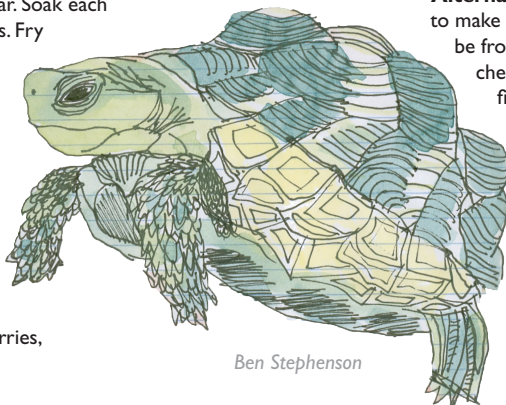
soak slices of a loaf of day-old bread (I suggest either challah or bread with seeds and raisins for added texture) in a mixture comprising of 3 eggs, ½ cup whole milk, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 tsp vanilla extract, 1 tsp orange zest and 1 tbsp sugar. Soak each side for 3-5 minutes. Fry in a pan lightly greased with butter on a medium-high heat until done, approx. 5 minutes a side. Serve warm. Suggested toppings: maple syrup, ricotta cheese, bananas, berries, dried fruit...

Plain low-fat Yogurt served with Blueberries and Fresh Figs

cut the figs length-wise into quarters. you can use dried figs if they are more readily available.

*Alternative, Coffee Yogurt:

to make your own coffee-flavoured yogurt (which can be frozen for a cold summer treat), line a sieve with cheesecloth and put the sieve on top of a bowl that fits underneath. Fill the sieve with plain whole-milk yogurt and cover with plastic-wrap. Keep in the fridge overnight, and drain the liquid that has collected in the bowl. Replace the drained liquid (noting how much was discarded) with freshly brewed coffee that has been allowed to cool to room temperature (do not use hot coffee as this will curdle the yogurt). Stir in 2 tbsp of maple syrup and serve chilled.



Ben Stephenson



continental
Julia Grummitt

three examples of conversations people may have when they are in love

1.

Standing, dizzy, they watched a man cast his line off the dock on the Northwest Arm.

“Go on, ask,” he said.

“Anything biting?” she called.

“No,” the man said; he did not turn. “Just passing time.”

2.

From the bridge, the moon rises orange over the water. “Would you say that the moon is being spat out of the land, or that it is being pulled out?” After a pause, he says “I think it is crawling out.” He throws the paper airplane they had fashioned together, clumsily. It flies through the dark and, when it reaches the ocean, is still: a white light in the inky black.

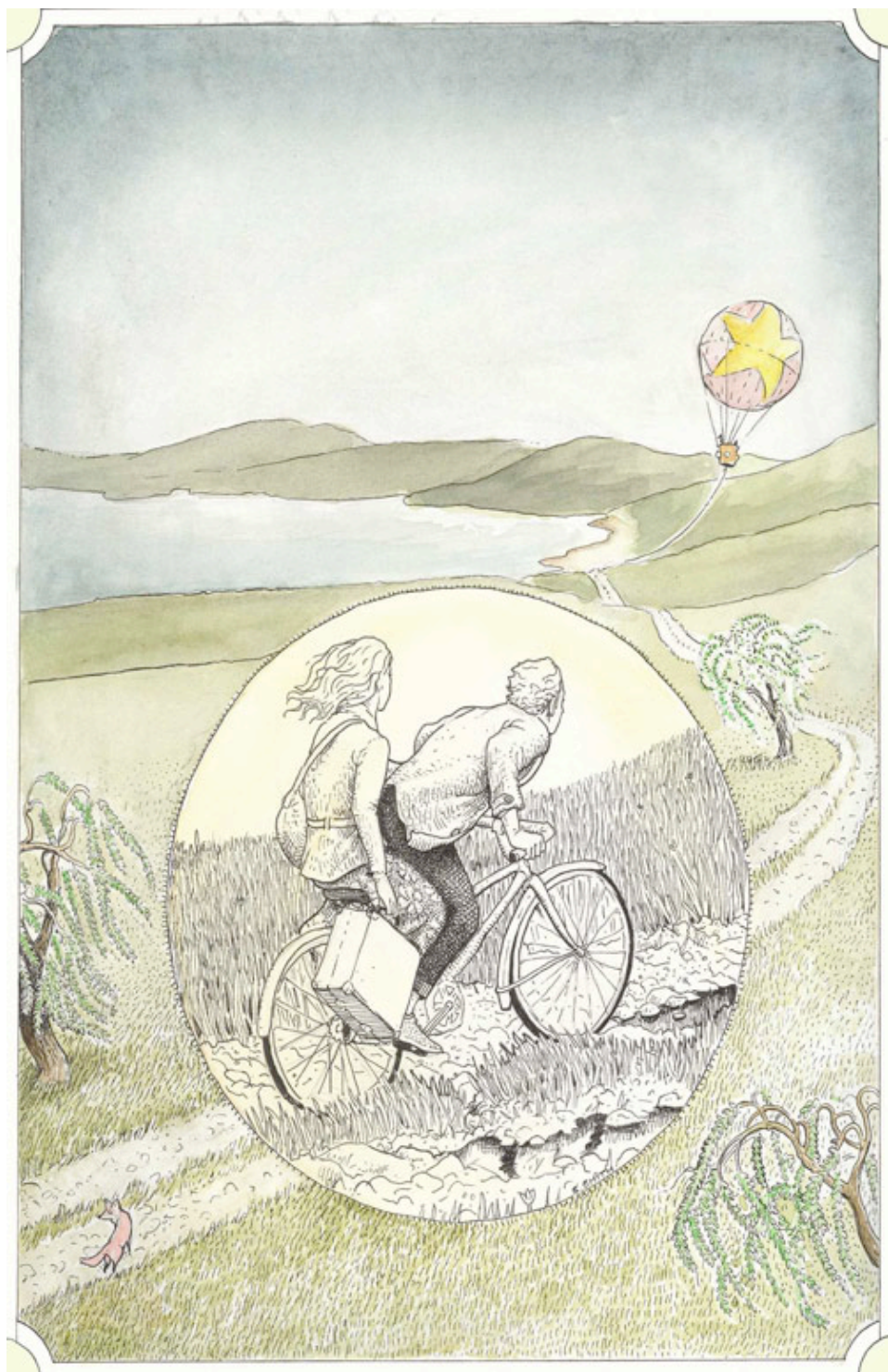
“You’re right.”

3.

“Have I changed, bean?”

“No, chip. You’re exactly the same. And me?”

“You’re the same too. Just exactly the same.”



miles and days
Sydney Smith