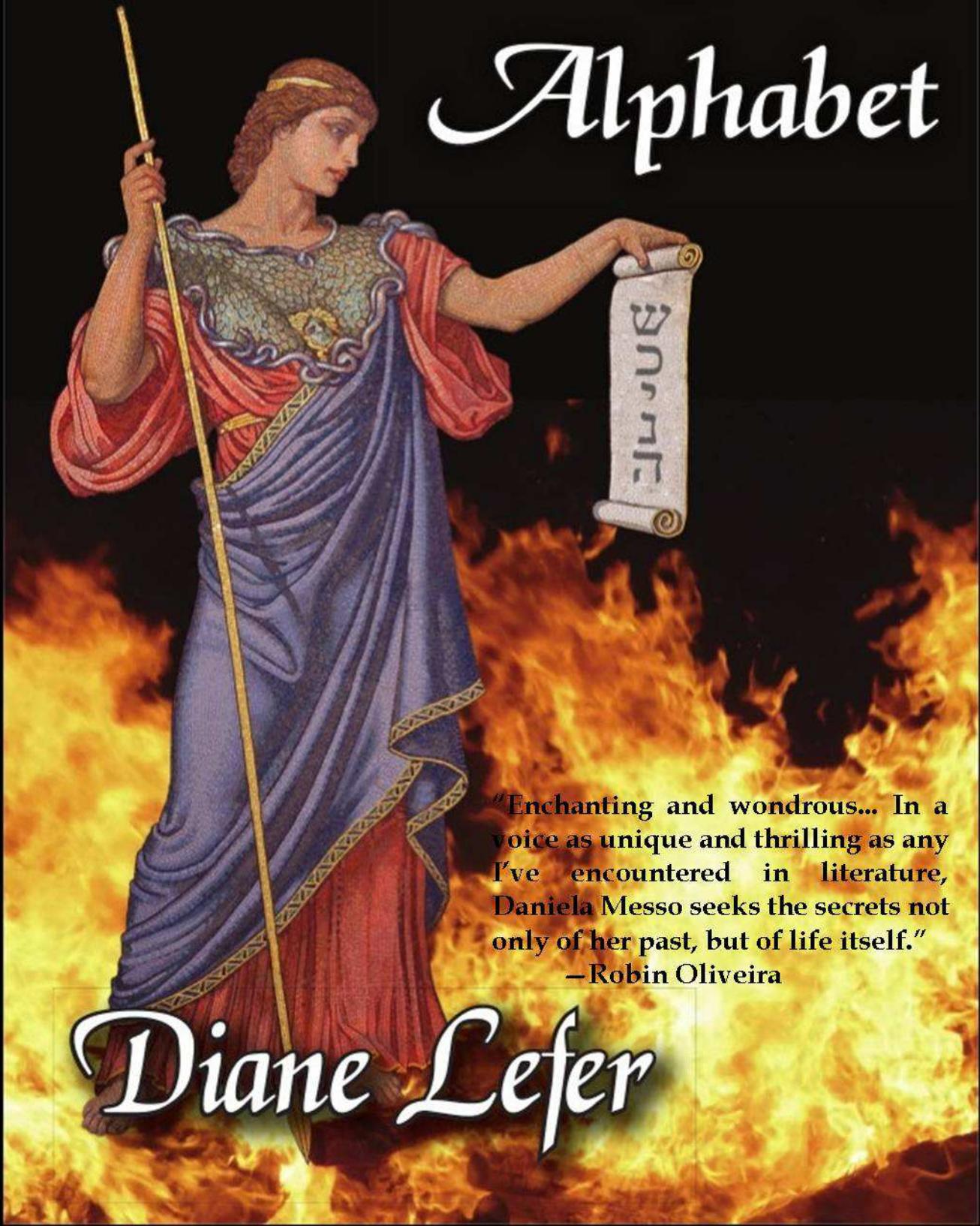




The Fiery Alphabet



"Enchanting and wondrous... In a voice as unique and thrilling as any I've encountered in literature, Daniela Messo seeks the secrets not only of her past, but of life itself."

—Robin Oliveira

Diane Lefter

Lost and Found



Linda Imbler



Hush, Puppy



A Southern Fried Tale

C.S. Fuqua

Illustrated by Beth Young



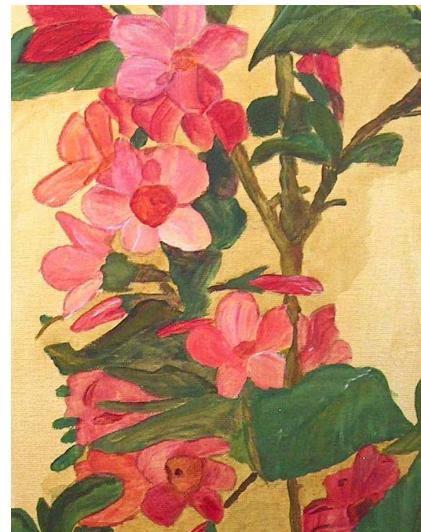
~ a literary and graphic arts periodical

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On the cover:



front - Janelle's Poppies



back - Wygelia

Hazelle Hout has enjoyed painting on the Olympic Peninsula since 1995. She utilizes several different media while painting the visual field in which she plays. Hazelle began painting in her early forties and was soon selling regularly, entering and winning shows. Her works can be found in public and private collections nationally and internationally. She is primarily self-taught but has taken classes from artists she admires. www.oneofakindartgallery.com/ha



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Kendall Evans's work has appeared in Asimov's Science Fiction, Mythic Delirium, Strange Horizons, Analog, Weird Tales, Outposts of Beyond, Dreams & Nightmares, Space & Time, Spectral Realms, The Magazine of Speculative Poetry, Nebula Award Showcase, and numerous other fantasy and science fiction and literary magazines. Sold insurance, delivered parts, talked to customers. Father of five. Grandfather of five. He's still doing what's important.

NOT ON ANY CARTOGRAPHERS MAPS OR CHARTS

Once the universe
Has pursued you like prey
& Slapped you around a bit
With its paws
Then slapped you down
And pounced on you
Then after gnawing on you
For a while
Sets you free

&, As you scurry away
Just on the verse of escape
Slaps you down again
With those swift agile paws
With its arbitrary ambivalent paws
Possessed of such sharp claws

& Then, unexpectedly,
Releases you once more
Even though you are now truly free
You begin to get this sense
Of inevitability and resignation

Your starships fall apart
& your time machine transports you
To a place & time
And a time and space
Unknown—
Not calendared
on any clock or chronometer
Nor charted nor catalogued
They do not appear
On any cartographer's
Maps or charts

And your travel experiences
And expenses
Remain forever untold

SOME OR OTHER FABULOUS YONDER

*Some waves break
Other waves interfere
Scattering darkness & light
At once near & far*

These are the severe menisci
Web-like membranes
Separating vast gulfs
Between galaxies
& These the cold-frozen corpses
Unwitting pallbearers
Of alien sentience
Trapped in starships
A billion light years away--
And this is the tortured
Space-time continuum—

*Those shadows,
Approaching from the Pleiades—
What do they mean?*

Some waves break
Other waves interfere
Scattering light & darkness
At once far & near—
When will my fears
& Doubts disappear?

Galaxies blossom
Whirls of interstellar dust
Coalesce
While quantum particles
Dance & flash, like specters

*Coded Signals
Broadcast from distant
Star systems
Digitalized & deciphered
Tell tales unfathomed
By human minds*

Eventually,
I'm determined to wander
Into some or other
Fabulous yonder

The Cat's in the Well

*Way out in the wilderness
A cold coyote calls
Your eyes fix on the shotgun
hangin' on the wall*

*Seven shots ring out
on a South Dakota farm
Somewhere in the distance
seven new people born*

- Bob Dylan
The Ballad of Hollis Brown

There's devils in the doorways
devils in the walls

my sister's in the hallway
Dead horses in their stalls

My father's in the alleyway
My mother's cooking sprouts
I expect my shotgun blast
Will very soon shout out

I'm sitting in my horse's stall
The livestock is all dead
I'm painted in a corner
Confusion's in my head

The cat's in the well
You can hear it wail
It echoes up from caverns
I think it's buried deep

That cat's soul's a dying
Dying underground
It's dying in well water
It's spirit's fading fast

Soon I'm sure
That poor damn cat
Is going to breathe
It's last

There's seven people living
On our south Dakokta farm
I've got my shotgun loaded
I'm hiding in the barn

None of is ever asked for this
We live in a living hell
I've loaded up my shotgun
I bought me seven new shotgun shells

St. Michael's Sword is Broken

St. Michael's Sword

Is broken

Orion's stars

Are falling

My Black Dog

Is my watchdog

He protects me

While Orion

Is so weapon-

Less—

Yet he will stand

Upon request

Beside my side

Much like a Bride

This land laid waste

Where new Kings

Have not

Been Inaugured—

Thus nothing is secured

Uncertainty is

Our Ruler

Over All—

For our Reality

Has far too many,

Many heads

And our Bride is Faltering—

The Sacred Bride

Has not arrived

Has failed to reach the Altar

In secret Realms

In secret Psalms

She falters—

And thus the Groom

Is waiting still

Standing Still

Statued, Still

Still standing waiting
At the Altar—
Statued at the Altar
Like some stranded standing stone
Alone

Upon an island
Shipwrecked, here
Shipwrecked there
He is a stone
A Standing Stone

Standing Alone
Upon the Throne
There he stands
Abandoned there

As if on Desolation Islands
With his unburied pleasures—
His unburied treasures;
His despair unmeasured—

The Principalities
Of Earth and air
Ruled by the Prince
Of All the Powers

Of all the Earth
Of All the Air
Commanding over
His vast and vain,

His realm of emptiness—
Meaninglessness
His Dominions
Of Dire Dread
All Dead, All Dead

From all 8 seas
All 5 of skies
The Prince of Jacks
& Jokesters, too
The Queen of all

Heartbroken spades—
Of all the Earths
And all the Fires
The Air, The Seas

The Elements
Of Energies—
My Powers as the
Prince of Air

Over all the elements
My elementals, one and all
My dim minions
One and all
Under my dominions

All-in-All
These broken ones
These ones of Blood
And shredded Flesh

Who cannot Live
Yet never Rest—
While Vernal Clarions
Trumpet out

Proudly Announce
Loudly Pronounce
Our Sacred Virgin
Bride and Queen's
Arrival

So sexual, so sensual
And oh
Oh so, so
Eternal
— Announce Her Zebra-Striped
Arrival

The Earths and All
5, the Skies
The 8 of Seas
Are dying—

Dying, Ebbing
Fading away
And Dying—
St. Michael'Sword
Is Broken

His Sabre True
His Sacred Sword
With its cross-guarded
Holy Cross
Has lost its Grip
He's lost his grasp
Of circumstance

Orion's arms hang Empty
Weapon-
Less
His stars are Falling—
Falling Stars
Calling out
To All of us

Calling out
Once and for All
To All of us
For All of us
& Everyone—

To Everything
& Everyone—
To my Black Dog
My One-Eyed One
My cyclopsed one
My Servant True
One-Eyed, so blue
My Cerberus—

So real and true
My Blue-Eyed One
Companion to
Orion, too

Who's One and Done
This Battle won

By our Foes, All
They're standing tall

Over All—
And the vile minions of
One who is one
Yet Legion—
Composed of Flies
Composed of Lies
The God of These
Mendacities
Unholy One

Our World Undone
St. Michael's Sword
His cross Unborn
Is lying there

Upon the Ground
And Cerberus
Is Guarding Gates
Our Fate Awaits

The coming of
The Dragon Queen
The fiery call
Of clarions

At Heaven's Gates
Awaiting All
Her Dragon Breath
Our little and

Our longest Death
Her Zebra-Stripes
Along her Thighs
Along her arms
The War-Pain on
Her Sacred Cheeks
Above, Below
Tell us her lies

Her glaring Eyes
Say "Fuck me, do

& Freely, too –"
Oh how she does
So Tantalize –

The Lord of Flies
Unholy One
He'll be undone
By our Goddess
Lost & Won

Her Flicking Tongue
All Forked in Two
Her flies, Her lies
Her Comeliness
Her Clumsiness
Her Homely Bliss

Her Lips a Kiss
Of Vernal Blues
Of Vernal Greens
For me & you

And thou and me
Eternal Bliss
Eternal Kiss
A Quantum Queen

Elusive Dream

The Zebra Stripes
Along her Thighs
Upon her Arms
Are Beckoning –

St. Michaels Sword
Is Broken,
And Orion's Sword
Is broken too

Broken in two
It's Me & You
Against the Lord
Of Flies & Lies

St. Michael's Sword is Broken

She is the Mother
Of All Flies
The Father, too
Of Lies & Flies—
The Bitch in Heat
Is in Retreat
Even Though
St. Michael's Sword
Is Broken

Unsacred On
Unholy One—
Orion, pray for me

For I pray, too
Draw Forth Your Sword
Exclaim your Word
The Word of God

The One true word
St Michael, Please
Guard Over Me
And be my Guide

Watch Over Me

Black Bird

Fly you free
Black Bird
And fly you high
Through the tall valley sky
Circle wide with your cry

Of triumph's delight
Where the sky is wide
And where bold eagles fly
Into the night

When the day has died
And the light still fades
In the everglades
So far away
Beyond the horizon's dawn light

Between mountaintops
You soar out of our sight
Riding thermal thoughts
Riding hidden dreams

The black bird soars
On these eastering winds
In the storm's hard rain
Beating weary wings
Against the sky's window panes

Black Bird
With a broken wing
Such a raucous song
In the icy winds
In the storms cold embrace
Your tumble-down flight
Toward the cage of the Earth

Black Bird

Lost in entropy's dreams
of survival and flight
Uncaged fantasies
Or flying high in the night
Soaring far out of sight

Black bird
In this ragged cage
Of our world
Gathers feathers and twigs
Collects trinkets that gleam
A stone cut from tourmaline

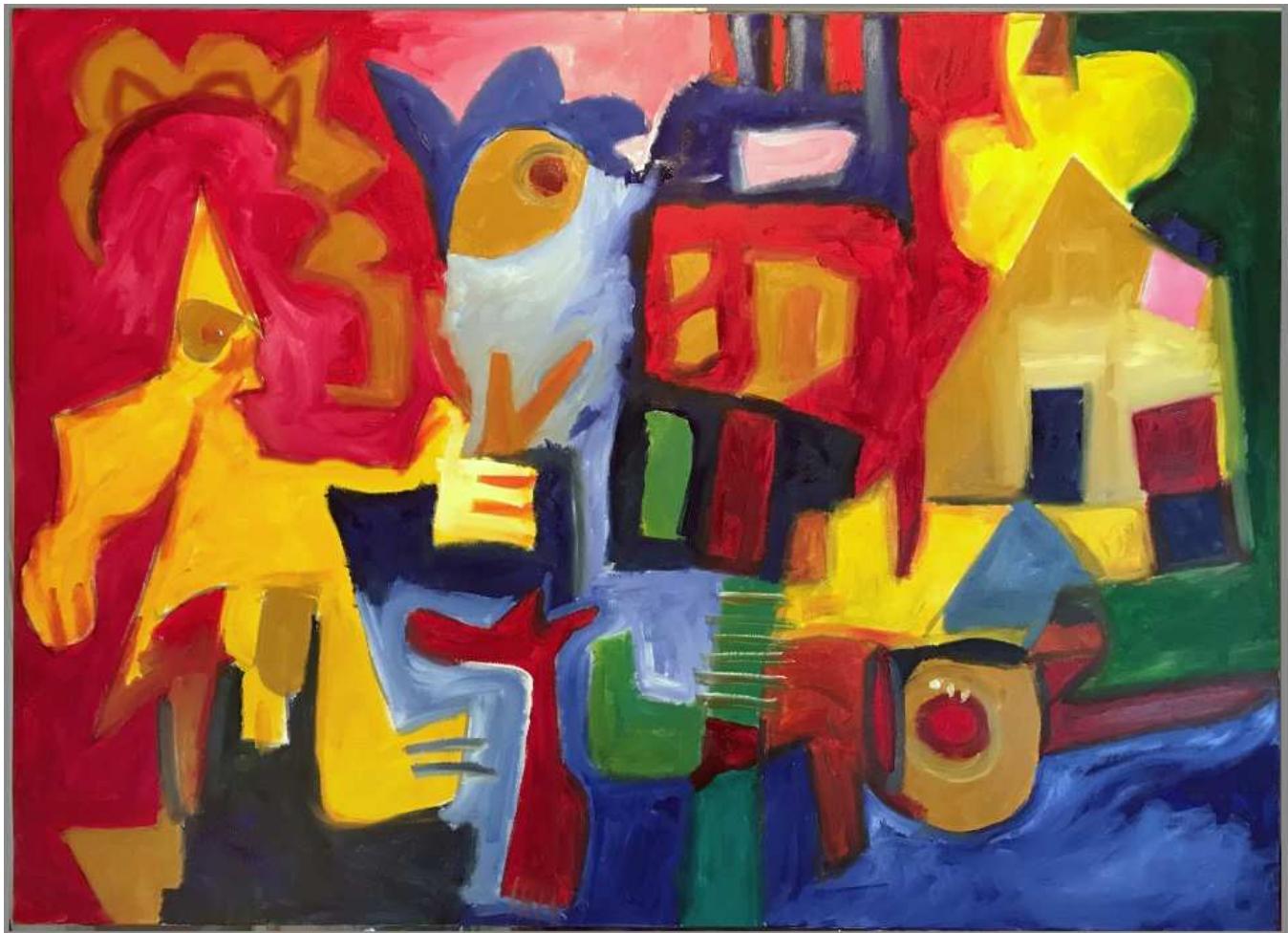
Black Bird
Fly with me
Over high mountain tops
Where the white snow clings
Glide above distant seas
With miniature trees
Far below
In canyons deep

Fly with me
Over far away shores
Over lakes and streams
And valleys high
Come fly away with me
Where the sky is wide
And the wind is free

One day the black bird
Will escape this cage
And fly free again
Will its song be heard
Somewhere far from here
In the high country shade?

Robert Klein Engler

a love that balances here like a ball on a needle



Robert Klein Engler, 2018 *Gustavo Martinez Takes What Is Not His*

Robert Klein Engler lives in Omaha, Nebraska. Many of Robert's poems, stories, and paintings are set in the Crescent City. His long poem, *The Accomplishment of Metaphor and the Necessity of Suffering*, set partially in New Orleans, is published by Headwaters Press, Medusa, New York, 2004. He has received an Illinois Arts Council award for his "Three Poems for Kabbalah."

Lacrimae Rerum

Down by the river, by the broken cement landing,
I park my car, look out, and have an old man's cry.
They say St. Thomas had the woeful gift of tears,
that the human condition would sometimes
overwhelm him and the river of salt swelled
up the way the river swells after too much rain.

We often look to nature for the metaphors that
mirror our emotional states, so tears and the river
oft appear in poems, but we have degraded
that sentiment in the millennial age of relativism.
Still, even at this late date, and with dulcet words
that aspire to effortlessly relay the heart's hold

I could say to you I have found an unexpected
love, a love that balances here like a ball
on a needle, one that hopes not for children or
goes hand-in-hand into old age, it's just that we
are particulars and love the particular, that's
why scripture uses the Latin word *dilictus*

to talk about the love the Lord had for his apostles.
It means to pick out one from many, and who
may explain this as we haul water from the well
or close the levee. There is a storm on the way.
Who knows what's to come after; perhaps some do.
It's already raining, and headed east towards you.

Skip to My Lou

The weight of flesh has many ways to fall.
There is the fall that breaks our bones,
or one who tells us how their love has fled.

Sometimes a sickness adds to help the fall.
We wake one day to realize we live alone.
It's time to buy a smaller, widow's bed.

There is the fall of early morning tears,
when pillows muffle sobs and moans.
The fears of night weigh down like lead.

How light the leaden ash of work will fall,
for even mighty temple stones on stone
one day decay when all is done and said.

And so it goes, the hand and eye will fall,
and like a weightless dove come to its own,
we open up to light or trip away, instead.

Blue Ribbon Days

Off to CB, I see they painted along the way
fresh lines on the street. Short white. Long yellow.
The powers that be hope none will go astray.

On a corner bench, an old man holds his head
in hands. It's a hot day. It's been two years ago.
His heart is weak. He rests. His wife is dead.

Across the walk, a woman pushes her baby buggy.
She's off to Hy-Vee for milk and bread and jello,
before the afternoon turns really hot and muggy.

They wave, like prairie grass that rims the levee.
Some long, some short. Each has a way to go.
Today, the weight of time alone is not so heavy.

Tomorrow, they say the heat gives way to rains.
That's when the traffic and the business slow.
It's June with violent storms across the plains.

I plan to drive down by the river bank and park,
then have a beer below the ragged cottonwoods,
and stay there 'til the boiling clouds grow dark.

After the Hay Ride

See, it works this way. We plant the seed. We
wait, then comes the rain. Then comes the corn.
There is no man to judge, nothing to mourn.
I've seen the same old rule with birds and bees.
But there is now in me a plug that does not fit.
I walk out to the knoll, by the pastel phlox,
past the rusted swing where childhood sits,
and past the barn where a Chevy rests on blocks.
It is in light like this, the amber glow of afternoon,
that makes me wish my soul were part of earth.
I told her we'll never be those lovers by the moon.
It feels I've been this oddity since birth.

Tell me, Terra Mater, what's right or wrong.
The rope is in the barn. The rafter's strong.

El Santuario de Chimayo

Imagine the world without adult desire,
a landscape that rises up from the local
like a black bowl rounded by the fire

and coil of Maria Martinez's mute hands,
something baked from the old pueblo clay
first mixed with water and glass-like sand,

then covered with dioxide smoke of dried
manure, to emerge as a perfect hollow for
memory, and now imagine this watermelon

that gives its name to the far off Sandia
Mountains and how the pink flesh breaks
under my spoon, and his, too: Madre Mía,

we eat its cool meat this hot summer day,
take the juice and flesh from the fertile earth,
and share communion beyond our lips of clay.

Hio Fae

the source of its predicament – the moon



Hio Fae

Hio Fae is a photographer, model, translator, and writer from North America who is currently finishing a master's degree in Iceland. And although . Hio has many interests, and surrealism, folklore, and perspectives drive pieces that Hio delicately assembles to deliver an emotional message garnished with science and history. You can find Hio on her website at hiofae.com and on instagram at @hiofae.

On Film NO. 2

Sex is just sex.

Stop giving it different names.

I swear this is how different languages formed.

We as a species used to speak the same. Grunting, smiling, using our hands. Like a pair of mating

animals. But then we had to call things. And then call those things other things. I swear due to the distance, not everyone

got the memo. Why do you think long distance relationships don't last for long? Colonialism falls apart too.

Everything leaves a footprint.

Uprisings. It just matters what your upbringings were. And this is why I think the French are sad.

They mixed their language with the Germans – forming a lish. Does it sound like a lisp? I think this is why every American needs braces.

I have a bad habit. I think I can understand any language I detect. Almost like a computer detecting viruses.

“Hai. Hai. Hai,” say the dogs and the birds begging for food while eyeing your trash.

“Araso,” say the condiment bottles as you squeeze harder. They are willing to die so that you don't have to taste GMOs.

“Oui. Oui,” say the swings as if they could console you even when you push away like the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

“Bitte. Bitte,” says the chick who wishes she could fly over the pool, only to get saved by a black Labrador named Prince.

each other

we saw it

 in the glistening
 eyes of **each other**
in the edge of
our lips that crescent
to the beginnings of what
would have been

smiles

how our lights
bounced off
each other (refracting)

a single light refracting
through a glass
screen until one of us
burned grasping, linking
fingers onto the life
that we kept breathing out
onto the pot of orchids,
 a mix of colors,
not knowing (at the time)
what came first
 or how they attached
 to each other

i remember the taste
of my fingers
and blood where i broke
 the skin and you
biting the lines
 of your mouth

until we each
 got bored of tasting
 ourselves

only before did we speak
as if talking was beneath us now
like crawling and our senses,
filled with each other, understood
all the things that could not be said

and words could not satisfy
 our arteries
after,

our shadows loomed
on the ceiling, pondering
on the emptiness
and how cacti could go without,
for so long, what makes life
when every part of my body leaks
something, but at least some of them
bloom, attracting bees making honey

until the lights are turned on
and we each return to our dwellings
finally separating
 the other from each

Light Will Shine Through the Head, House, and Galaxy

I am here with you today
because my cells held me here in Time
and my atoms told me so. This second, for example,
would not differ from any other were it not for the lighthouse
signaling Time and departure. I imagine
solar flares as the Milky Way's lighthouse –
the sun, light-headed Morse signaling to to to
other galaxies, I guess.
I could never get the hang of lightheadedness.
It always starts in a bar. That chocolate gin
is enough to get you into a mess.
You're challenged to a game of pool;
you don't refuse because you want his girlfriend.
You want to take her to the beach
at night just to have an excuse to skinny dip,
sip sangria, and roll in sand.
It always ends in drowning and throwing
rocks into caves that emit nothing
but sounds of silencing.
I believe tides try to silence water
but water reflects what it sees,
the source of its predicament – the moon.
I believe everything is a metaphor for light.
It always starts with an idea,
the light bulb of the lighthouse is turned on.
You think out loud: Stars are the lighthouses of space.
You ask the galaxy why it pities the planets.
It laments, "the planets are paperweights of space."
You ask the lighthouse why it pities the moon.
It proclaims, "the moon is perpetual whereas lighthouses are the stars
of the sea." When you're falling
into waves, there's a chance you're a particle.
Stop being a lightweight. Get the girl,
be as bold as your Old Fashioned. Punch the guy,
grab her hand. Woo her with gravity
as you carry her like when the moon pulls the tides closer.
Become her rock, her dusted star,
her paperweight if you will – become part of her by reflecting her light.
Only then can the moon smile.

If the Universe Were a Dictator

What if Newton decided that the most important thing was to be a chef like some homeless dreaming worlds of apples? Thomas Malthus would have rejoiced with wine and pecan pie.

What if choices never had to be made?

And the multiverse was smashed together like the hinges on a door? Lenin would have danced the Red Terror with the Bolsheviks, dodging all the flying nails that try to make him more like Marx.

What if what we see differs from what others see
and I see a monster whereas you see yourself?
Zedong, Hitler, and Leopold 1, no 2, would have laughed
like they were pros at bowling
away populations.

What if ghosts were just flashbacks
like looking through a black hole or the dimension next over? Well then
Ismail Enver Pasha and Nicolas II would have fought over the Balkan pool.
Bloody hell, that happened
on a Sunday.

What if sinners mysteriously bled to death?
Enough blood for Vlad III to bathe looking up at the emptiness.

What if Fate is the name we give to the universe?

What if the universe could control natural order
like when galaxies meet and natural death is determined by radiation?
What if the universe controlled who died?

What if the universe had no choice?

If the Universe Had a Choice

What if the universe decided to exclude Pluto from the Milky Way like the cat from the zodiac? Oh wait, it did that.

What if the universe decided which planets could support life?

What if the universe decided who died?

What if my brother never died in utero? If all children made just existed. No one died. Just the fathers.

What if my brother isn't in the sky? And the stars aren't souls and I can't wish on him? And heaven doesn't have enough room for him?

My memories are the shadows of the present and I see her, my mother, like the shell of a thinner hermit crab that was left behind after her miscarriage. He isn't there. Losing him was like being told there was no more pistachio gelato.

I tiptoe around the remains of names that were chosen for him, not uttering the fact that I wished I were a boy because it was her raisin dream left next to her sunflowers.

I sing through my grief of no longer being an older sister. I sing the Blues looking for him in the colors: *Where does one go when out of this world? In a field of cacti playing bamboo strings? Or the rabbit's moon house? Or perhaps playing leap-frog with the asteroids?*

What if the universe decided when to expand and contract like deciding when to give birth to dust that later grows into stars?

What if God was the sun and it collapsed?

Someone screams "if," another echoes "what." If, then what? Drop the what, change the story you don't like. Leave the if. If is good.

Yesterday I Saw

my husband drinking coffee. He loves to watch
the sunrise whereas I have never seen one
because I go to bed too late watching foreign documentaries.
But this morning I woke up to a call telling me I had just lost my car
and my husband. Now I drink my weight in sour liquor.
And I go outside and climb our willow tree.
And I see my first sunrise:

It's like a light bulb flickering, not sure if it wants to come on. Almost like a lost sun
flare. It's like opening the basement to find light creeping
through the furnace like it's a meteor.

It's like beginnings
were endings like the Creation of Adam
is a nuclear bomb or fire dancing.

It's like an artist quitting, smearing
all his paints onto his wall, asking the night to go
dark but the colors revolted, making him

a painting. It's like the largest book

burning, making words

homeless to piles of ash from burned slums

that still managed to keep the cold

quiet. It's like the cracking of an egg

that soon became a cuckoo murderer

to the chirping songs of children
like a lotus dying and crawling from the mud

like a zombie in an apocalypse.
Frank, it's like history
forgotten because writing isn't oral, so it doesn't give your head
memory, it digs time up

like looking at a cross
because pupils absorb everything,
learning like eyes like children.

It's like before we could talk, we used our hands.

It's like Pointillism is braille

just so we didn't have to jerk around with nudes and meanings after you slept
with someone. It's like opening your

hands to the clouds expecting cotton candy but only getting
vapor. Like Vader please talk clearly not steamy
like a suffocating bull. It's like going color blind
like being near a kamikaze.

Like when did water become vodka? It's like seeing
preschoolers finger paint and draw in zigzag with crayons
like it doesn't have to stop at the end

of the paper, just like the stars. It's like constellations
don't exist at night, but at the crackling
sound of dawn

that make me cry like my weeping willow,
now, I'm a widow, and sunrises remind me of Frank.

Hyenas

What will I distribute in my will?

Paper only miserably estimates the value of being someone.

Paper doesn't provide for murmurs, bonfires,

or the time I hurt my back painting walls and selling lemonade
just to take Julia from 5th grade to the movies.

Or the time a wooden piece of Versailles fell
from the chateau overlooking the Marble Court,
hit my head and now sits on my desk.

What leftovers will I hand out to whom?

There should be more
polar bears and hammocks.

There should be more.

Democrats [or Demographics Building a Republic]

I'm sitting in my kitchen one evening
when my brother drops off his daughter
after church so that he can go
fight in his penis crusade against all women
that find him attractive in Cincinnati.

Alexandria then proceeds to sit
on my striped rug as I slush
my coffee in the back of my throat.

"How do you spell freedom?" she asks.

I look down on her
and I'm relieved to find her doing her homework.
I chuckle the letters.

"Where's Egypt?"

"In Africa, of course."

"I thought it was near Constantinople?"

"You mean Istanbul."

"I thought only slaves or tribes come from Africa, not gods."

I look out the window
and think of a time where the sky was worshiped.
And I begin to say, "I bet Sisi sits in his throne like he's a modern Horus pharaoh."

She stays quiet for a while until her dog begins to whine.
She then starts up again, while giving belly rubs.

"Where's the greatest library?"

"Alexandria."

"Yes?"

"It's in Egypt, mummified with its golden pharaohs."

"Can't we open the tomb?"

"It's become part of the atmosphere. Or fertilizer."

"Too old?"

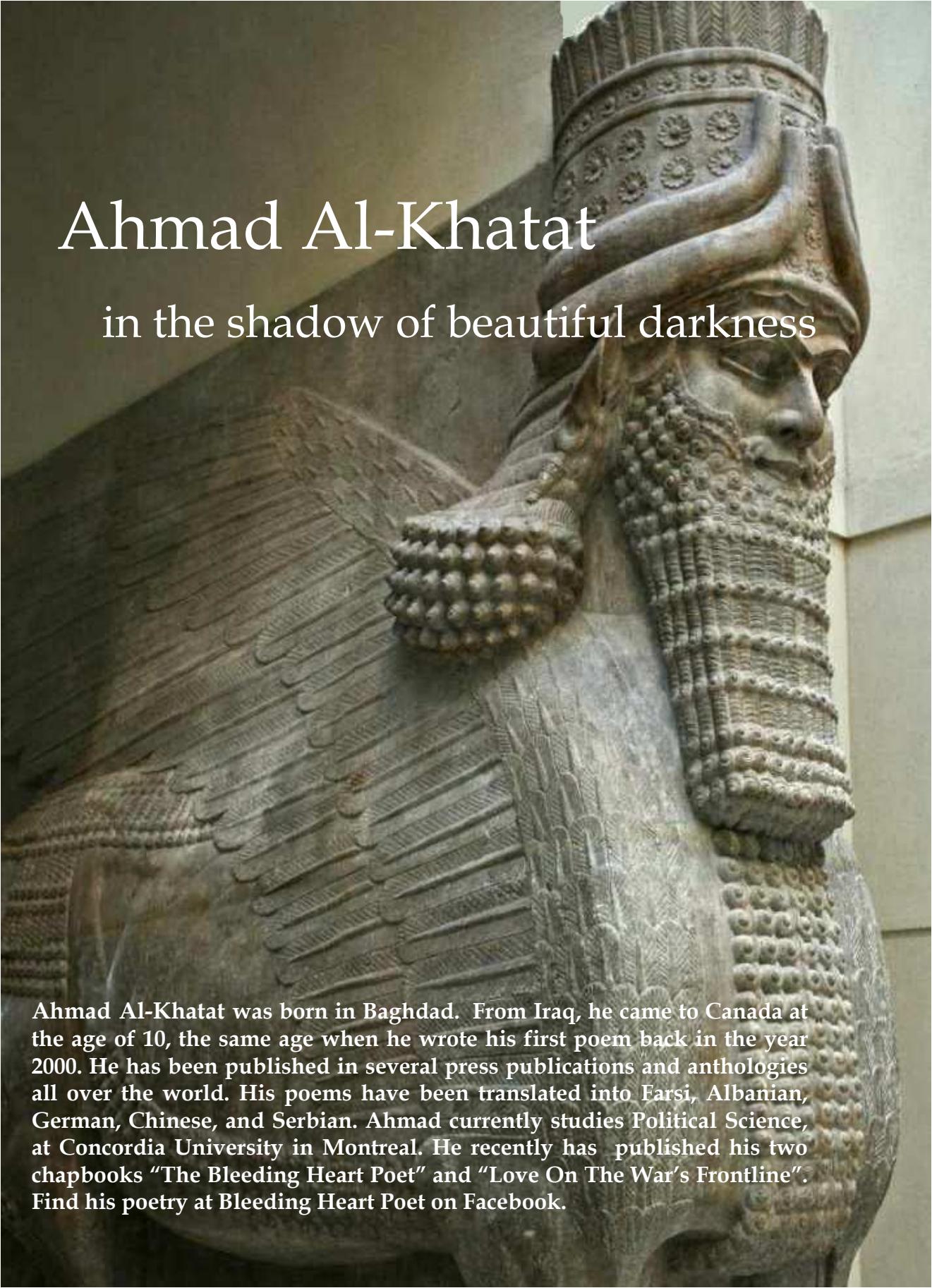
"No, a Roman, Catholic, and Aurelian burned it like foolish heathens."

"So the crusades started back then."

"Against knowledge? Even earlier."

"I meant against people."

"Still, earlier. Cairo is a euphemism for conquest."



Ahmad Al-Khatat

in the shadow of beautiful darkness

Ahmad Al-Khatat was born in Baghdad. From Iraq, he came to Canada at the age of 10, the same age when he wrote his first poem back in the year 2000. He has been published in several press publications and anthologies all over the world. His poems have been translated into Farsi, Albanian, German, Chinese, and Serbian. Ahmad currently studies Political Science, at Concordia University in Montreal. He recently has published his two chapbooks "The Bleeding Heart Poet" and "Love On The War's Frontline". Find his poetry at Bleeding Heart Poet on Facebook.

Lips of Sweetness

Sweetness of lips talk nothing but kind words
as if you were reading verses from the heaven
when those lips draw near me in bed
I hear the echoes of lovers from the distance of moon
Back to desires, you are the first one
blue-eyed lake in dark, like your eyes all the times
I enjoy the rain because it spreads
your taste upon your skin below the red dress
This universe has moody seasons
people whisper to stand against our shields
close to you and my secrets become the
shadow to protect you all night
For you, I will drink your wine
and break all the bottles of sorrows
For you, I will inhale your scent
and damage all the pack of grieves
Even your perfume has a promise
to seek you with the beats of my heart
hopefully, I will turn myself into a
candle to hear your voiceless wishes

Be My Shahrazed

I need space above the skies
To show you how much I improved
In loving you from the rainbow only
Because I was the dullest rain in the desert

Finding our way home is no
Longer, out of the question your
Heart is the most beautiful country,
It requires love and not a nationalist

Holding our two trusted hands
To walk across the broken bridges
It could lead my vision to a dream
to break the world's boundaries

Since we belong to this toxic earth
We are cursed to death for no reason
Our days are hot as fire, and cold ice
Therefore, stay strong as the mountain

In the shadow of beautiful darkness
We are not the strangers to undress
With every breath you take from me
A flower in heaven blooms of your scent

Be my Shahrazed, and kiss my lips
Before the wind blows with red roses
All over your nude body to hide you
From my joyfulness and pleasure

My Collections Over The Years...

When I was eight, I started collecting
Ants in a small box. I ate the crazy
Ones and killed the rest, for no reason

When I was ten, I started collecting
Spiders killing them right away and
destroyed their webs, for no reason

When I was twelve, I started collecting
Bugs and flies. I broke their wings
And watched them dying, for no reason

When I was fourteen, I started collecting
Autumn leaves to hide the dead animals
From the busy streets, for no reason

When I was sixteen, I started collecting
Lost words and tied them into free verses
I wore them over my neck, for no reason

When I was eighteen, I started collecting
Birds feathers to write from the ink of my tears
For Letters to my dead friends, for no reason

When I was twenty one, I started collecting
Numbers on my old phone. I never called a
lady from the club I went before, for no reason

When I was twenty four, I started collecting
Empty bottles of women scent, to smell
Them and pretend to be in love, for no reason
When I was twenty six, I started collecting
Empty cans of soda and other cheap beers
I gave them to the homeless, for no reason

When I am twenty nine, I started not to
Collect anything, only because I knew that
My homeland has no more space for my death.

I Close My Eyes

I close
my eyes
when I
died in
your
arrival
more
than twice
waiting
for the
sunshine
to taste
one
hard candy
A few
bitter sips
melting &
dripping
rare honey

my mind
takes me
to the other
side of
silence
where
a lips
kiss is
a thicker
bite on the
tongue
and
a woman's
body
is a
fine
Art
of grace.

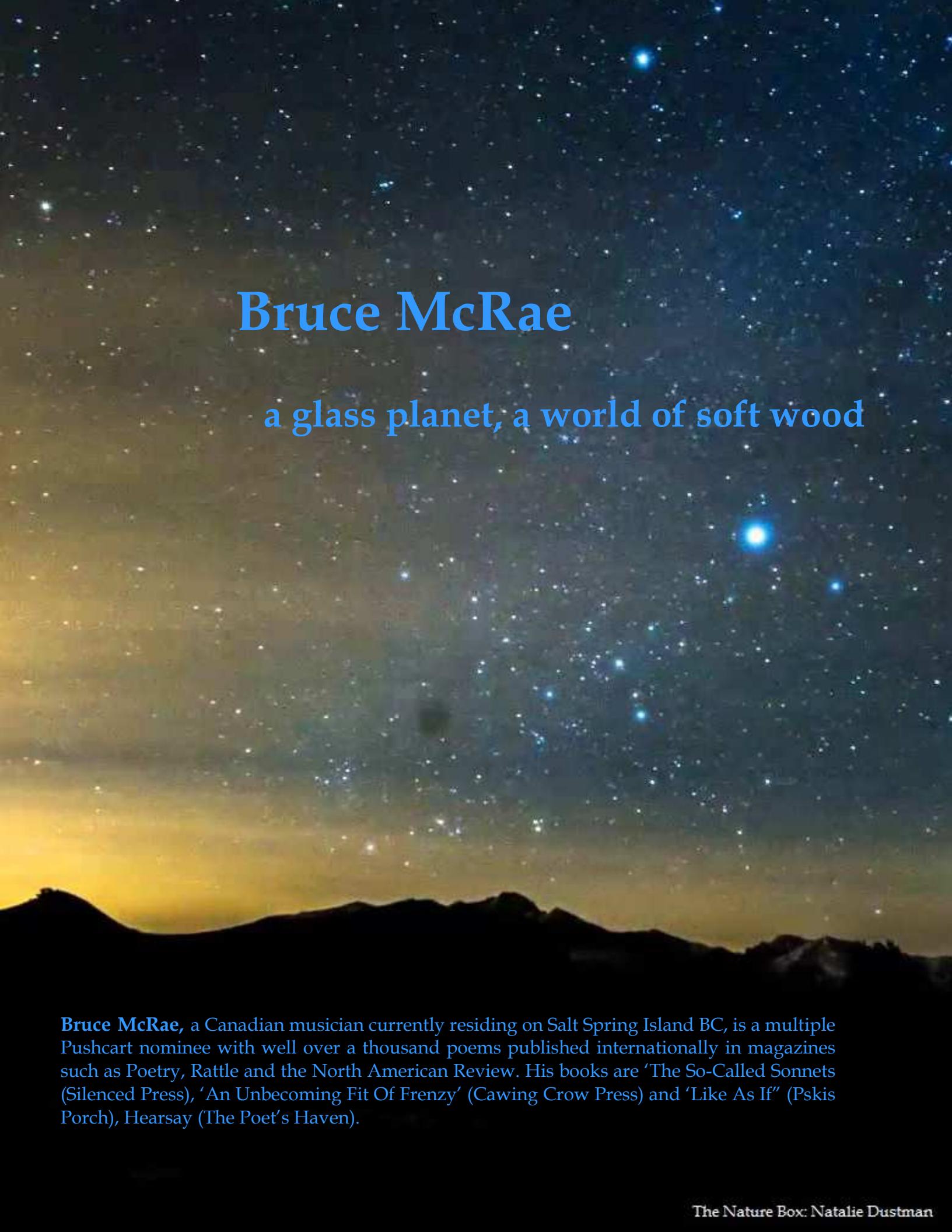
One Refugee & A Blonde

I am not ashamed
to be known as a
refugee, from a
country that is
fully damaged
Being awake
all the nights
it's the reason
why do I feel
always homesick
Stranger next
to me, in front
of me, behind
the wall of my
lonesome room
I learnt how
to speak, read,
and write to
write about
my falling tears
My old friends
died and I can
still their voices
from the thirst
of my wounds

I played with fire
to die to ashes
sadly, my blood
turns the flames
into a drinkable poison
A blonde saw me
she taught me
how to love
how to drink
how to smoke
I laugh with her
liquors and she
cries with my bread
she laughs with
tears of her own too
below the rain
she kissed the
sunshine behind
my back and
I kiss the moon on her neck
Night and day
I gave her wings
& she gave me
the blue skies
to die with no fears
Last words
from the heart
are no longer
grieves, they are
a sharp suicidal song

Wish You Were Here

Back then, when we were teenagers
Fifteen years ago when we thought
Nothing would separate our friendship
To divide it with a positive sorrow
My neighbor is now alcoholic
Tears fall when I smell her cigarette
She used to be smokey looking
Attractive to my olden delusions
Inside of me, I'm trying
Outside of me, I'm flying
Everywhere I seek for a friend
All I observe is death's head
Although, I found what I was
Missing and how to make a
Perfect life without the yearnings
I drove and cried over the phone
I wanted to make them laugh
To forget about my own grief
Yet, I recalled you again when
They were laughing and I wasn't
It's hard to pretend nothing is
Missing when you didn't take me
Under the soil, and left me without
Taking me up the sky to rest joyfully

A photograph of a dark night sky filled with stars. A prominent, bright star is visible in the upper right quadrant. The horizon shows a dark silhouette of mountain peaks against a lighter, yellowish glow from the setting or rising sun.

Bruce McRae

a glass planet, a world of soft wood

Bruce McRae, a Canadian musician currently residing on Salt Spring Island BC, is a multiple Pushcart nominee with well over a thousand poems published internationally in magazines such as Poetry, Rattle and the North American Review. His books are 'The So-Called Sonnets' (Silenced Press), 'An Unbecoming Fit Of Frenzy' (Cawing Crow Press) and 'Like As If' (Pskis Porch), Hearsay (The Poet's Haven).

Magnificent Whirlwind

When I think about squares I think about triangles.
Storm clouds trigger troubled thoughts on heavy metals.
Sunrise, to me, is a songbird singing down a mineshaft.

All my life I have been decidedly different.
All my life has been lived on an alternate Earth,
a glass planet, a world of soft wood,

replete with sugar-animals, tin bugs and paper fishes,
with its moons on inside-out and back-to-front,
a world of garrulous continents and iodine seas.

Now I lie in an awkward position and put lights in the sky.
Every night is a god with a thumb in its mouth,
every dream a mathematical construction.

See? My laboured breath is a magnificent whirlwind.
I am pampered and made to suffer in turns.
Even the cat knows I am destined to live separate and alone,

that it's my curse to walk knee-deep in profound outrage,
my sole fate to marry hope unto horror.
That to exist is my wonderful burden.

Hittting the Hay

Goodnight world-toy. Goodnight green fishes.
Goodnight neon and noisy kitchenettes.
Goodnight Orpheus. Goodnight Tantulus and erotica.

I turn three times in a bed wet with dew.
I snore like Euripides, dreaming in nuances,
dreaming of staccato-braying jackasses,
of inorganic and immense distances.

A blue that's darker than blue . . .
Take note of its inexact limitations
and our great need for intimacy.
Think of all that languid blushing, Pere Ubu.
We adore and accuse you.

You, provincial. I, parochial.
And they, radically conservative.
So nothing can move and no word is ever uttered.
Nothing flamboyant. Nothing vaguely threatening.

Only the calm that comes
between two randoms, two verbs, two instances.
Just the peace from knowing
one truth is not equal to another.

From Now and Here

This time next year
some of us will have surrendered
to the weakness of the flesh.

This time next year
you'll feel twelve months heavier.
Your pockets, and head, lighter.

One of us will be missing a finger.
One will dare risk looking
into the smelting core of the divine.
Another will have forsaken emotion.

Three hundred and sixty odd
days and nights from now and here.
The X minutes and Y seconds.
An algebra of living mass.
A fatty math of bloodied tissues.

Which means this time next year
we'll all be farther along the crooked path.
New scars will have formed.
Choices will have proved themselves
to be neither right nor wrong.
We'll have made some big decisions,
the repercussions only then apparent.

Some will have had their molecules shattered,
their ashes scattered in a green river.
Some of us will carry a child
they'd never guessed would have existed.
Next year at this time –
the same stars in the same sky,
but everything will *seem* different.

I've heard how time changes everything.
I'm learning that change matters.

Metamorphosis

Down on your knees, said the god.
And they fell like shooting stars,
like a shower of arrows.
As if blossoms in springtime.

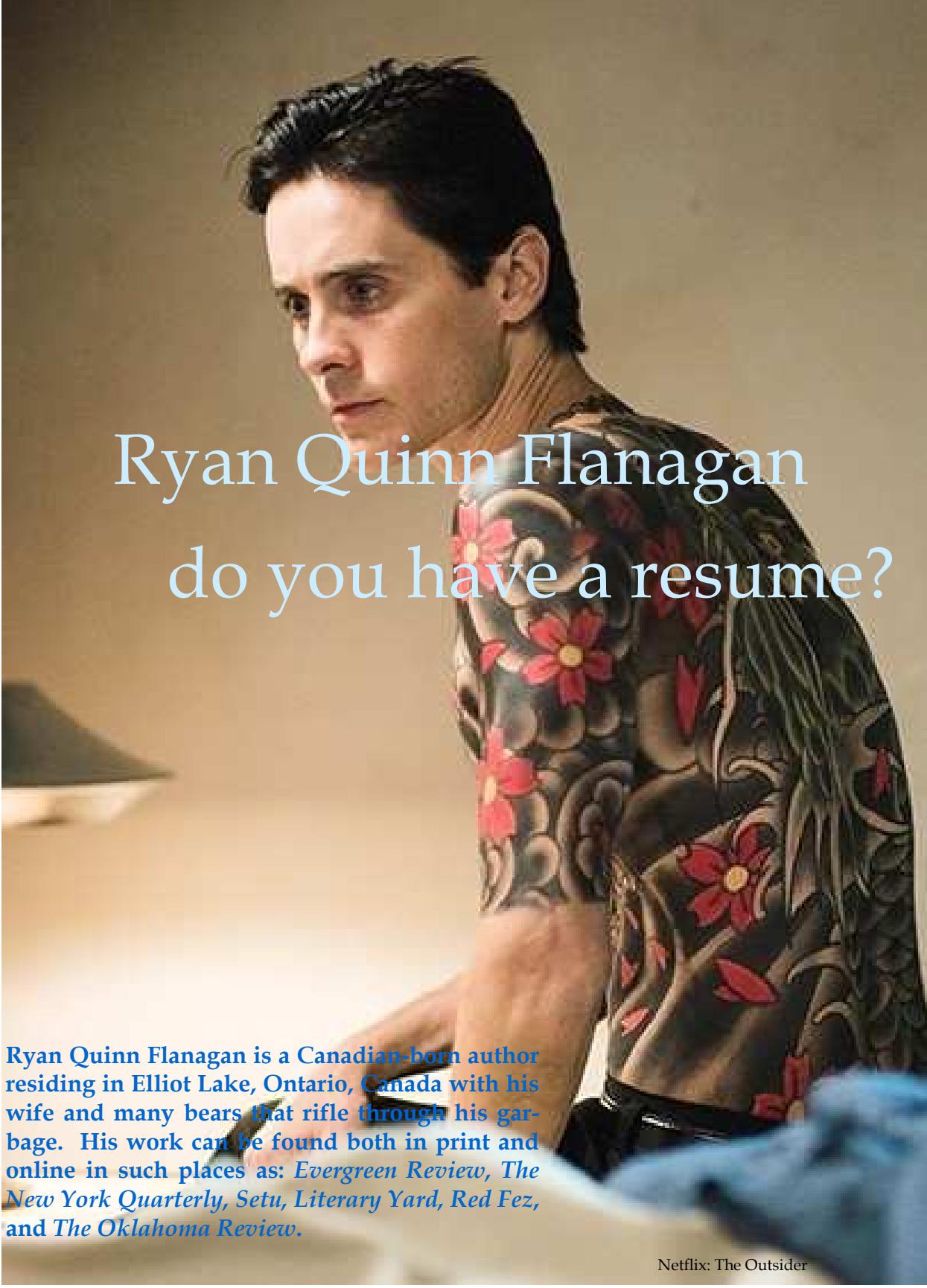
For eons the god's belly rumbled.
The earth flew into the west.
The sun wept butter and blood.

Worship me, an unquestioning love,
the god haughtily commanded.
And the dust formed temples,
and these fell away.
The ashes gathered in cities
that were once incredible.
The moon shattered.

I am your god,
the voice spoke to the silence.

But even Death had departed
for the meadows of time.
Even the light twisted,
the darkness too, for that matter.

Ever the god was beautiful no more.



Ryan Quinn Flanagan

do you have a resume?

Ryan Quinn Flanagan is a Canadian-born author residing in Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada with his wife and many bears that rifle through his garbage. His work can be found both in print and online in such places as: *Evergreen Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Setu*, *Literary Yard*, *Red Fez*, and *The Oklahoma Review*.

Netflix: The Outsider

Happy Songs Sell Records, Sad Songs Sell Beer, and Angry Songs Won't Sell at All Until You Tweak Them

Bowie was a chameleon.
Sure he had to chew his way out of his
first tail, but that is how it is with management.

Your first contract.

You go one way
and the money goes
the other.

And things were really draconian back then,
you think it's bad now.

When John Lennon helped him write Fame
at Electric Lady Land
it was a nasty
song.

You can still hear Lennon chanting "aim"
in the backing vocals.

This is Bowie pulling the trigger,
but not quite
because he switched it
to Fame.

THUNDER RUNNER

He worked
at this auto body place
along Bayfield St.
in Barrie
and drove a rebuilt
purple roadster
with black skull decals
and white lettering across
the front windshield that read:
THUNDER RUNNER
and every weekend
he would drag
down gasoline alley
in personalized black
racing gloves
an ex had given
him as a gift
towards a homemade
checkered flag
that used to be a
restaurant table cloth
now waved
by this blonde
who went with
the guy who took bets
and handled the
money.

Filing a Grievance

He files a grievance
and I ask him why he wants
to be fired?

*It's not right, he says,
I'm taking a stand.*

*Nothing is right, I say,
what are you going to do
for money when they bring up
your truancy and poor work performance
as grounds for termination?*

*Maybe they'll throw in a sexual harassment suit
just to make things stick.
No need for evidence after that.*

But there's a union, he squirms.

*When has the union done anything
but collect dues?
I ask.*

Do you have a resume?

He nods in the affirmative.

*You may want to get it out there.
I'm guessing you're screwed for references.*

*Can I use you?
he asks.*

*Sure, I say,
everyone else
does.*

Mole

You see that mark there on your face?

It's a mole.

*Moles live in the dirt
and feel their way out of blind solitude.
That there is the mark of the devil.*

How can you tell?

*There's a tiny pitchfork in the middle
like a centrepiece from hell.*

I tell him he won't see it if he looks in a mirror.
He's already been seduced.
He's probably already pregnant with
a few of Beelzebub's puppies.

You're an asshole, you know that,
he says,
fingering the mole on his face
like poking at a Jell-O mold.

It has that kind of shake to it.
Like a Persian belly dancer
for new masters.

What should I tell the child services lady?,
he asks.
*She wants to know when the power
will be back on.*

I tell him I have his back.
The mark of the devil aside.

Too Many People

He says
there are just
too many people
on this earth
and I ask him which ones
should not be here
and then he gets defensive
as though he was not just saying
what we both know
he was saying
and I imagine this
very same conversation
going on
all over the world,
who should stay
and who should
go

there are too many people
according to the experts

and many
more on the
way,

but when grilled
for the particulars
everyone grows dirty
hush money
silent

not because they are wrong,
but because of what being right
may actually mean

and I think of the scorpion
under rocks

of a sting so lethal
you may not want to
use it

and the way this bottle
keeps finding my mouth
as if searching out a
missing person.

Christine Tabaka

linger as dreams die with the flames



Carl Hofer: Early Hour

Ann Christine Tabaka was born and lives in Delaware. She is a published poet, an artist, a chemist, and a personal trainer. She loves gardening, cooking, and the ocean. Chris lives with her husband and two cats. Her poems have been published in numerous national and international poetry journals, reviews, and anthologies.

She Tucks Away Her Charms

Worry, is what she does, as
she tucks away her charms.

There is no time left between
her and the sky. They have

become one and the same.
Always asking for more, she

slips away. You search, but
will not find her. The tempo

has grown too slow. Her heart
beat echoes among the lost.

She plays with her trinkets,
then sets them aside. You

have lost her forever. Yet,
she is always right there.

The mind plays tricks on the
heart. Love is just an illusion.

One step at a time, we fall
deeper into the chasm of our

own desire. Then suddenly,
at some final outcome, we

lay all our cards on the table,
and slowly walk away. The

worry still there, she takes
out her charms once more.

Dying Embers

We don't make love any more,
nor greet each other at the door.
Years laid rusty, corroded dreams.
Age deals romance a mortal blow.

Time can be so cruel,
draining life from lives.
A thief that robs passion,
erasing it from the slate.

Whispered words of love,
now left at the doorway
of an empty room.
While a cold bed cries out
to lonely blankets on the floor.

No more looks of ardor,
nor soft engaging smiles.
Gifts of flowers long decayed,
only memories prevail.
Anguish-bit lips fight back tears.

Flames of the heart extinguished,
leaving only lukewarm ashes
choking for oxygen,
as glowing embers die.

Night Refuge

Flying by the window of time,
seeking truth. Lurking in hidden
passages, susurrations follow.
Apparitions haunt the shadows
of the imagination.

There are no more wishes,
the stars have all gone dark.
Pain swallowed the night.

So, escape the day.
Flee for the night, never look
back. Run towards the darkness
that harbors the silence.

The deep ache of quiet that
floods the senses, battling turmoil
with calm. Future becomes past as
infinity dangles just out of reach.

Quote my words today,
For tomorrow does not exist!

Your Life Depends On It

Dragon's breath.
Last breath.
Breath of life.
Breathe already!
Do not hold your breath.

Life is too short
but shorter still
are the moments
worth remembering.

First step.
Next step.
Fast step.
Take a step already!
Do not stop moving.

Find your direction
and march towards it.
Keep the pace,
do not look back.

The growing old of youth,
a hard fact to accept.
Slowly pushing back
the curtain of time,
silence slips through to the end.

Counting Time

Time counted on fingers no more,
the ancient one has come home to roost.
Amidst dying embers and fading light,
candles flicker in the window still.

It is not the way of man
to accept such things so easily.
He cherishes youth and vigor,
and agonizes the passing of years.

Disregarding wisdom, despising the
mirror, while cursing his own vanity.
The hearth grows cold. Soot and ashes
linger as dreams die with the flames.

Aligned between two visions
of reality and desire, glazed eyes
stare down an uncertain path,
haunted by vague emotions.

The persistence of unanswered
questions flood sleepless nights,
mocking our existence. Memories
curled up on the floor of time evade.

The distance closes in.
Footsteps soften as he nears.
Counting done,
the guardian closes the gate.

Linda Imbler

to meet the artist as a truthful man



Linda Imbler is an internationally published poet. Her poetry collections include "Big Questions, Little Sleep," "Lost and Found," and "The Sea's Secret Song." She is a Kansas-based Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net Nominee. Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindaspoetryblog.blogspot.com.

A Street Prayer

I lay this rose
above you.
I leave my prayer
for you.
I ask the angels
to guide you.
I will write
all manner of pen
that those who threaten
your brothers and sisters
will choose
to lay down
their weapons
and take up
the arms of righteousness,
and find valiant deeds
better suited to their days
than blind hatred
of different colored scarves and shirts.

Tilting

He carries oblique remarks
upon the canvas of his lips.

He paints them as disordered fact.
He paints them as distorted fact.

He slants the truth; as reckless
as concert crowds
after the last note is played.

To meet the artist as a truthful man
has long been my wish.

If art is meant to be beautiful,
let it dwell safely in his mouth.

A Groovy Life

I want a groovy life,
one not filled with ransom demands or imaginary slights,
or plots disguised as needy pleas.

But, one with:
Hope for gifts given freely,
with reciprocity never demanded,
instead, each given according to one's heart.
Music - pure, innocent
lyrics both beautiful
and deep in their meanings.
A seat from which to watch
the loveliness of nature unfold,
early or late in the day,
letting imagination name the colors.

Lastly, time in which to fulfill these desires.
All I can do is ask.

Gunnar, the Rooster

The boastful braggart
looking for triumph.
Mr. Big Talk preening so loudly,
singing his own praises,
shooting off his mouth
with swank and swagger.
He gained attention, but lost respect,
what else did he really expect?

Welcome Mat

I came to see you,
at the place where you stay,
but you did not talk to me.

If I have done something to upset you, I am sorry.
Or maybe it's because of the six foot distance between us.

The next time I arrive,
perhaps you can greet me,
as a moaning sigh on the wind,
or the howl of a distant dog,
or a fence rattling in the background.

Or even as a flitting butterfly,
newly escaped from the cocoon.

The next time I arrive,
please, lay out your welcome mat,
and I promise to wipe the sin from my feet
before we close the gap.

Andrew Scott

all of the memories that are locked away



nationalpost.com

Andrew Scott is a native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. During his time as an active poet, Andrew Scott has taken the time to speak in front of classrooms, judge poetry competitions as well as published worldwide in such publications as *The Art of Being Human*, *Battered Shadows* and *The Broken Ones*. His books, ***Snake With A Flower*, *The Phoenix Has Risen*, *The Path* and *The Storm Is Coming*** are available now.

North Stream

I reminisce every time I walk by
the place where my youth was spent.
The farm settled on the North Stream.
So much has changed over the years
since I left over twenty years ago.

There used to be so much activity
that started before dawn
and finished well beyond sunset.

Horses that needed watered and fed,
sheep that had to be sheared.
The constant loud hum of an aged tractor.
Every two months the chickens needed crates
had to be filled and taken away.

Kids of all generations used to run
through the fields all the time
even though nature's smell
should have fought them off.

I did not realize how much
had changed or stopped
through each visit until now.

In utter shock as I
look over a rotted fence
and see nothing but rust, decay.

What animals that are left
look so sad at being alone
and left outside.

The barns look like
they will fall with
the wrong blow of the wind.

Now it looks so barren.
A tractor and machinery dump.

you would think I would be sad
looking at all that once was
but a smile comes across my face
worth all of the memories
that are locked away
in the North Stream.

Tired

Feeling so tired every day now
even though I am just laying down,
staring off into the outerspace
of an enclosed ceiling.

I roll and half shake
with a mind filled with nothing
but whatever is there
keeps my eyes open, darting around.

Compared to others
my life is full and content
without the worries
of others that surround me.
I know I am being selfish
because of lack of sleep
and being tired pales in comparison
to people with real problems.

Something that I do not know
has something buzzing around me
and making sleep uncomfortable.
So I walk awake, tired.

Yesterday's Time

Yesterday's time is running away from me.
The memories are becoming a fragmented blur
and small flashes of tiny pictures.

Those moments that made me
who I am today.
The experiences used to evolve
and grow as a person, a man
are becoming more of a feeling
than a visual in my mind.

Knowing that someday
all memories will be gone.
I embrace
any trace of them
when I pause and think.
Hold and kiss yesterday's time.

Selling of Snake Oil

He slinks in other's shadow of confusion,
taking advantage of their tired minds,
to creep in and take over their lives.

He is a genuine chameleon,
changing with each family
that takes him
and his insincere motives
and words in.

For a time he makes them feel special.
Gives them all the right attention,
making them emotionally attached
while he pretends to care.

All he wants is shelter
and to not be alone
in his own slimy skin.
Not thinking of the trail
of hurt left behind
when his travels
come a time to continue.

He uses attachments
to his advantage
until the snake within
slithers out into the open
and it is time to take leave
while another door shuts behind him.

Not once does he think
that he is alone
even while with others.
He only thinks that doors will open
each and every time
he comes along
selling his snake oil.

Petra Nordqvist

Modern Man



Petra Sperling-Nordqvist hails from Europe where she received an education in languages, literature, and philosophy (in Germany and Oxford). She has spent the last twenty years with her husband, horses, dogs, and cats in California, dabbling in teaching, writing, acting, dancing, swimming, singing, and playing music.

Modern Man

a-pathetic perishing
(drunken drugged)
de-generate devoid of
memory unworthy of
remembrance

attempting to hold on while
self-erasing meticulously
 inadvertently oblivious
 intellectually emotionally
 isolated
free-floating unbound
aberration accomplished

mission to extinguish existence
 distinct purpose
mauled
meaningfulness mystery

debunked possibility of genius
 elevation of
senselessness mirage
 dubious dream
 delusion of grandeur

petites minds con-descending on
truth unfathomable in
aborted awareness of
possibility of
seeking attempts at
reconciliation
 cripple content
 exacerbate disconnect

(honor's a cover as
no-one cares!)

obligation to live despite cruelty
 to live to die
no more nor less

meanwhile knowledge
blatant torture in itself
added calamity in the
war on intellect
waged for supremacy by the
unknowing of their own evil the
narcissism of survival ironically
without rescue

exploitation of potential wisdom
futile in its sporadic occurrence (versus a conceptual existence)
disrespected in disinterest yet ruthless
usurpation of the unusable without the wits
necessary to counteract philosophically
circumstantial coincidental existence

infinitely futile chaos to depend on the
only pattern of order -- suffering -- (the
primitive rule, is all!)

likewise always frightful heritage of anguish the
only history of man
and woman

impulsive reactivity drives the plot of the
only composition ever the
tragic bearable
only through perverse irony of the
exhortation exhilaration

rapture derived from the
only and inescapable truth -- anguish and agony --
(individual and collective)

no matter the
mythical denial of
hell synonymous with
here and now
but surely with

for ever the
only element without proximation
wo/man the aberration in separation
memory selectively construed in self-delusion
only self-soothing abnegation

(fools all!)

idealism is dead we missed the
funeral but not the
resurrection to worship though capable
only of sensuous instinct serving
unsatisfactorily so
fundamentally pathological collective lying is
paramount as individuality is
uncreated so

we want what does not exist to strive for what we cannot achieve
we want non-existence to bear our essential conceptual inexistence

(existence does not exist no beginning no end in sight, never been!)

only one big bang the
human mind mere
concentric collision while the
eccentric exaggeration of a supposedly significant
enigma boosts our ego but belies our insignificance and insinuates
what we don't know
that we don't know

(cowards all!)

naturally facing the
horror
perpetually drifting between and within
cultures
crippled by mutual destruction
handicapped not able to sustain constantly struggling
to fix while fighting
to mend while breaking

disabled humanity
disturbed emotionally

dysfunctional behaviorally

(imbeciles all
incapable of achieving
the unachievable)

carbon copies all
doom's day (the
eternal shredder) the
only hope for
rescue of the
worthy (not
us!)

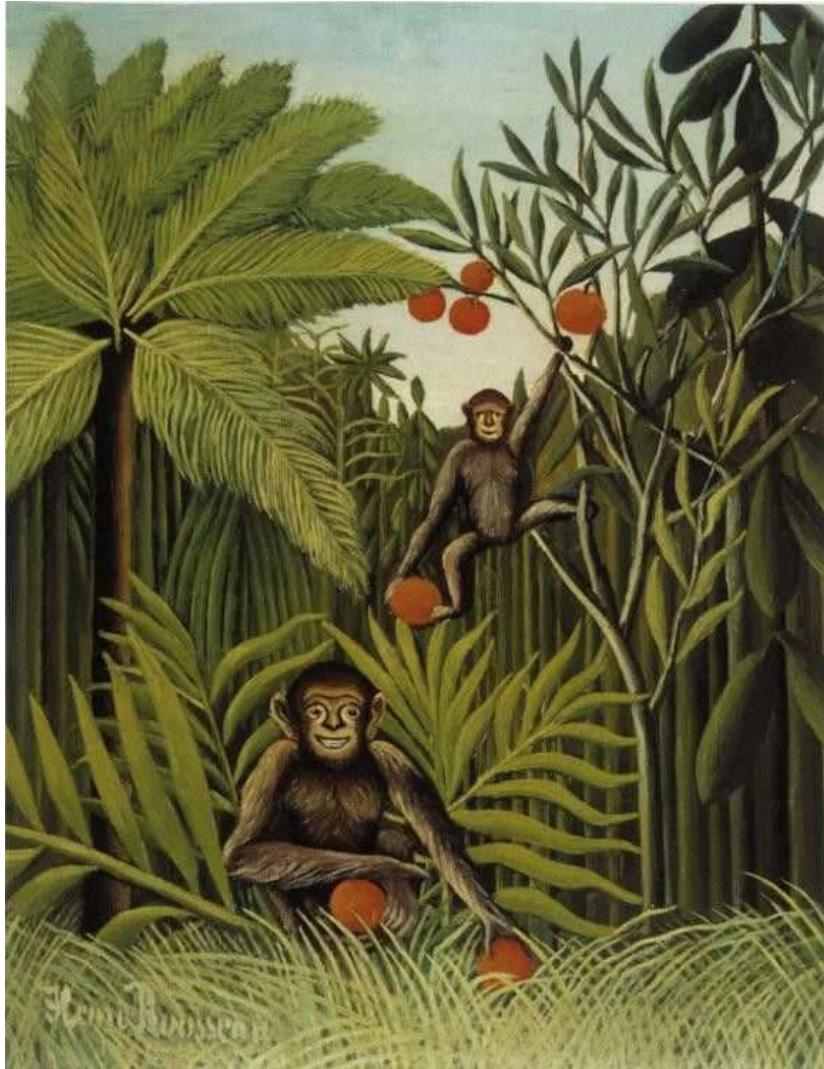
we see nothing (feel nothing)
as it is (at all)
it cannot be (but
always has) and
will not
(this a
myth
too)

imagination's mistaken identity as
realization taken as
reality enforcing
real-world undertakings and
unrealistic takes on the

one and
only discourse the
narrative

we don't know
we our own demise
we our own nemesis

(insanity all of it!)



So Zoo Me

a photo-narrative

story by Mark Blickley
photo by Donna Bassin

Mark Blickley is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild and PEN American Center as well as the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Scholarship Award for Drama. He is the author of *Sacred Misfits* (Red Hen Press), *Weathered Reports: Trump Surrogate Quotes from the Underground* (Moira Books) and the forthcoming text based art chapbook, *Dream Streams* (Clare Songbirds Publishing). He is a 2018 Audie Award Finalist for his contribution to the original audio book, *Nevertheless We Persisted*.

Donna Bassin is a New York based fine art photographer, filmmaker, author, and clinical psychologist. Her award-winning documentary, *Leave No Soldier*, was screened at various film festivals in the Tri-State area. Her latest film, *The Mourning After*, was winner of a 20017 Gradiva award



Donna Bassin

I didn't want to go on this Bronx Zoo outing. I've lived nearly 67 years without ever visiting. Never had any interest watching poor trapped souls ache for the freedom of their visitors. When the Seniors Housing Commission organized this trip for

my building I ignored it, as I have every year. Why I jumped on the chartered bus right before it took off this morning was a mystery to me. But now the mystery is solved.

Thank you, Joey, for guiding me to that bus seat. God forgive me. I know the church says it's blasphemous to believe in a soul's rebirth into another body, but I'm seeing and feeling reincarnation. The moment I stepped into this Gorilla House our eyes locked and I knew it was you, Joey. You haven't turned your gaze from me for a single second.

Figures you'd come back as a silverback gorilla--it's the silver anniversary of your departure—25 years ago you left me so suddenly. Father Donnelly said you were called home, but I told him he was a liar. Your home was with me. God forgive me.

A day hasn't passed since then without my missing your touch. I loved teasing you about your hairy back. I've noticed at the Seniors swimming pool that most bald men have hairy backs. You would act so offended when I called you my Big Ape because of your back hair, but I know you loved it. Here's a secret, Joey. I always called you my Big Ape whenever I desired intimacy with you and you always responded. Just like today!

Each morning I've awoken since you left I never minded getting a day older because I knew it meant I was getting a day closer to the time when I could return to you. I've been so impatient. Despite it being a mortal sin, I tried joining you dozens of years ago. I once stuck my head in the oven and began sniffing gas, but I turned it off when I realized I couldn't be certain that you would be in Hell waiting for me. You did enough good during your life to have made it to Heaven, so I decided not to take the chance of being routed to Hell, being separated from you for eternity.

Is adultery a mortal sin, Joey? After you died, I found out you were banging Millie Brandenberger from apartment 5E. But I forgive you because I know she was lonely and you always had a jones for large breasts. I figured it was some kind of distorted Mommy thing, so you're more to be pitied than ostracized. Nobody's perfect, Joey. And that includes me.

A few years after your death I was convinced by my friend Sonia—whom I know you never liked—to try dating. I didn't want to go out with another man because it felt like I would be cheating on you even though I know it's crazy to think that way. Sonia was keen to introduce me to her cousin, Ricardo. Before my first date with him she asked me if I shaved. I told her I always removed my armpit hair. Sonia laughed and said men these days prefer that a woman shave her private area. I thought that was disgusting. I asked if her cousin was a pedophile because I would only go out with a man interested in meeting a real woman and not some knock off little girl.

I did meet Ricardo and we went out dancing. I found him very sweet and attractive. After five dates with him I realized how much I missed physical intimacy.

Before my next date with him I bought a Lady Remington razor and shaved down there hoping to make myself more appealing to him. When I looked at myself in the mirror before taking a shower I felt nauseous and totally exposed in such an unnatural way. It reminded me of what you told me when you were a boy taking judo lessons and how you felt after you took your first after class communal shower. Everyone else seemed circumcised, so you believed that you were the unnatural freak.

I refused to see Ricardo again until after my pubic hair grew back but by that time he had found another woman and I decided I was too old to date at age 44. What upset me so much about shaving was I remember how much you loved and admired what you called my "luxurious bush." You always teased me about how much fun it was exploring my lush forest in order to discover its hidden treasure. So now you live in an artificial bush enclosure, Joey. Are you enjoying it?

Have you wondered why I switched my beautiful engagement ring to my right hand before reaching out to you today? When I noticed you would sometimes move your wedding band to your right hand, I asked why you did that. You said it was because you're left-handed and it was more comfortable when you wrote up all your claims examiner reports. But there's a thing called the internet now, Joey, and when I looked up on the computer why people switch wedding ring hands it said it was a code that meant although the ring wearer was married, it signaled to others that he or she was open to cheating on their partner.

The sign on your cage says Silverbacks live with a harem – one male and multiple females. I changed ring hands because I want those monkey sluts in there with you to know I'm available if you still want me. I know it's stupid to feel jealous right now. Was Millie the only one? Did you feel caged with me, Joey?

I heard a woman whisper to her friend that silverbacks have the smallest genitals of all the apes and are extremely jealous. That sounded so much like my Joey. I adored your jealousy because it proved how much you love me. I think the reason I've missed you so much these past 25 years is that you were always such a mystery to me.

I'm scared to leave this monkey house, Joey, and afraid to come back. When I leave will your eyes follow me to the exit? What happens if I decide to return? What if I come back to visit you and you completely ignore me? Would that mean that everything I'm feeling and know to be true right now is a lie? Should I take that chance, Joey? Is this the work of a loving God who understands my sorrow or Satan teasing my lonely desperation? Do I risk losing this joy by being selfish and demand you pay this same attention to me a second time, or should I just be content with this loving encounter?

Farewell and thank you so much, Joey. This has been such an exhilarating experience for me. When I leave your gorilla exhibit and push open the door, for the first and only time in my life I'm going to walk out in public feeling like an Alpha Female!

My Permanent Record

by Jim Tritten



Jim Tritten is a retired Navy pilot living in a semi-rural New Mexico village with his Danish author/artist wife and five cats.

I was in a long queue, waiting my turn in line. In my left hand was an *Aviators Flight Log Book* (OPNAV Form 3760-31 Rev 4-65). I opened it to the aircraft mishap section in the back and looked down.

Date <u>7 Mar 69</u>	Model of aircraft <u>EA-1F</u>
Damage <u>E</u>	Primary cause factor <u>Pilot/Fatigue</u>
Remarks <u>Flap idler link failed. Combination of overstress and previous fatigue of part due to overstress</u>	
Entry approved <u>R.L. Lofton, Commanding</u>	

It documented an error on my part – one forever available for any logs and records yeoman, operations officer, or commanding officer to read. I made a mistake when flying and had lowered the flaps on my airplane at too high an airspeed. Doing so broke a piece of one of the linkages that made the flaps work.

I shuffled forward as the line moved.

We all make mistakes. How many of us were told in high school if we kept doing something, or not doing something, those things would become a part of our permanent record? I did my share of time in Principal Cavanaugh's office. *My God, did they send my permanent record to every new company when I applied for a job?*

If I make a criminal mistake with the law, the desk sergeant will dutifully record the transgression in a book. That's what they say, right? "Book 'em, Danno." If found guilty, or not, some court stenographer will use a chorded keyboard to record the decision. Eventually, the record will be transcribed for others to read. Unless you are a juvenile and your file is confidential. Or you enter the Witness Protection Program and are sent to live in Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

When my father was in the U.S. Navy, he had a personnel record. Twenty years after his death, I wrote to the National Personnel Records Center and paid a few dollars. They sent me his file. I learned a lot about my father from reading what various officers and chief petty officers said about his service. I wonder if he ever cleared his record with his bookie before he passed on.

Do we all have multiple records, or does someone maintain a single master permanent record where all these things are compiled? Is there a way to expunge entries with which we disagree? I'm sure everyone has work evaluations they would like to go away. Or an entry in a U.S. Navy pilot's log book recording how he had lowered the flaps while the airspeed was too fast and broke an idler link.

Is my *aw shit I broke the flaps* balanced out by multiple personal awards, citations, letters of commendation, promotions, and the like? Just how many *atta boys* cancel out one small *aw shit*? How many if the transgression is really egregious? Can we convert to Catholicism right before the end, confess, and say a few Hail Marys as penance? How about making a sizeable donation to the charity of the Pope's choice? No wait, I'm Presbyterian, and I think I remember reading something about predestination at Sunday School many years ago.

The line moved and I shuffled forward some more. Only a few more until it'd be

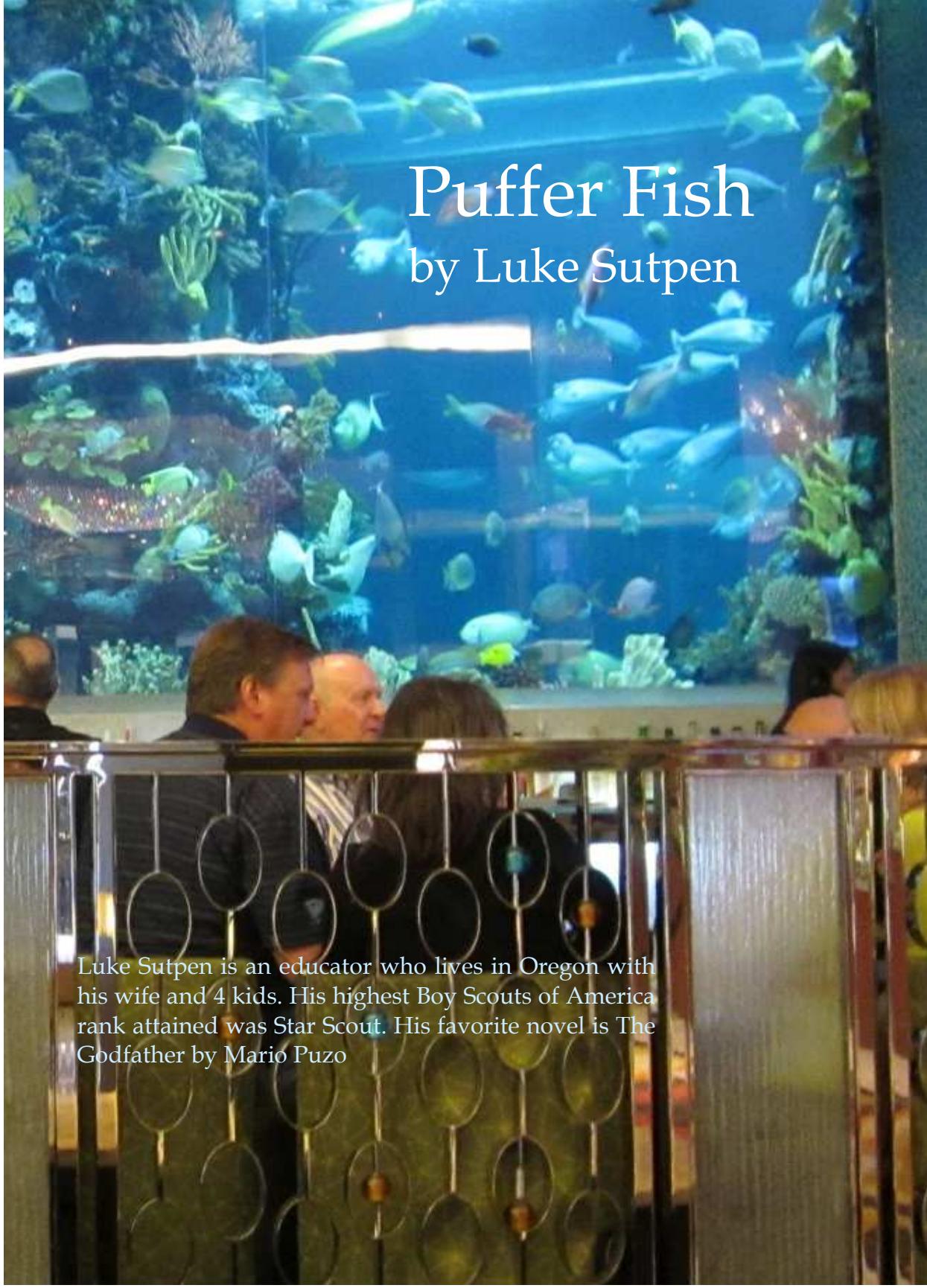
my turn.

If you go for a job, it is likely someone will gain access to some part of your records. Certainly, the federal government checks whether a degree was in fact earned, or whether your experience listed on the job application is as truthful as you described. I remember at least one individual who lied about having a doctorate on her job application and got away with it. At the time, she proudly told friends she had listed an earned Ph.D. on her application to beat out some disabled veteran on the civil service ranking system. Did both her job and lying to get it make it into her permanent record?

There were still two folks in front of me on line. I opened another of my navy pilot's log book to see if someone had recorded an aircraft crash on the mishap page. An accident far more severe than causing a flap idler link to fail. Interestingly, the record of mishaps in that log book is blank. Lax logs and records yeoman? Commanding officer trying to give me a break? Years later, I obtained a redacted copy of the accident report from the Naval Safety Center. They had a record of what happened despite the mishap never making it into my pilot's log book. Everyone in the squadron knew, even if it wasn't in my log book. If other people were aware of what had happened to me, was it cross-filed into my permanent record?

Maybe there isn't some master fusion complex where all the things we have done - some of which we would like to forget - are totaled up. Plusses and minuses. Naughty and nice. A comprehensive list of all that was good and bad. Perhaps recording all these entries into a single file with everything there is to know about a person is just too complicated for the average mortal and his databases. Problem is, I know.

When I was finally at the head of the line, I saw an elderly man stooped over a desk, a nameplate engraved in gold before him. He had waist-length white hair, a long beard, and a drooping mustache. He wore a white robe. I hung my head; my hands clasped in front of me around my log books, and as contrite an expression on my face as I could manage. He called my name and lifted a single bushy white eyebrow. I raised my head and looked into his penetrating cobalt blue eyes. He opened a voluminous tome that thudded as it fell open on the desk. Dust rose in the air; he blew away a small cloud. He coughed and waved his hands to clear the air. "Let's see what we have here." St. Peter tilted up the hardcover black book. I saw the title - *Permanent Record of James John Tritten*.



Puffer Fish

by Luke Sutpen

Luke Sutpen is an educator who lives in Oregon with his wife and 4 kids. His highest Boy Scouts of America rank attained was Star Scout. His favorite novel is The Godfather by Mario Puzo

I was sitting in one of those restaurants where they have an aquarium as the window. It was one of those big-ass tanks that took up half of the outside restaurant wall. In it swam a variety of fish, but my eye kept catching the puffer fish. You know, the kind that blow up and become a quasi-spiked ball reminiscent of the morningstar weapons those fur-vested, iron-shielded, bearded types in the fantasy cartoons always used to fight the bad guys with? Well, I loved how it swelled up when any other fish got too close, scaring them away.

I came here for the inevitable. I was waiting for the pain.

I reached into my left pocket and touched them. I had done this compulsively at least every two minutes or so for the last hour.

You see, I was going to get dumped. It was my fault. I fucked around and so did she. I did it first, with more than one woman. She came back to me, but the questions kept coming about who they were and when did I do it and the like. At first she had forgiven me, but she slowly pushed herself away as time allowed jealousy to come to its fruition. She started hanging out with a guy who was originally dating her roommate, but whom she eventually had a few sexual encounters with. She came over one night drunk, and proceeded to basically rape me, then pushed me away and told me about the new guy she had slept with and wasn't it nice to feel, just once, what she had been going through for the past few months?! I became enraged, but couldn't do anything about it because, after all, wasn't I guilty of the same thing? Two wrongs don't make a right, but all's fair in love and war. I told her to get out, but she was already gathering her things to leave. As she walked out the door she told me he was a better lay anyway.

Although I was extremely upset, I still wanted to get back together with her. I wanted to rectify things, get everything on the same page, process emotions, and move on as a couple. When I told her this, she laughed. It went like this:

"I'm sick of going back and forth with you, Jim."

"What do you mean, 'back and forth', we were meant to be together, we just need to work on a few things."

"Oh, like the time before? And the time before that? And the time before that?! And the time before--."

"O.K. O.K., I get the picture. We've had our ups and downs. Hey, let's meet at the Hound and talk things out. That's the least we could do. We could process things a little bit. Let's be civil and all. I'll treat."

"Fine. But I am dating someone else now. I hope you didn't think I'd just stop seeing other men."

"Your old roommate's friend, or a new guy?"

"I don't think it matters, but he's a new guy. The first one was to get over you. This one is someone I can see myself actually dating. Someone who will recognize what he has and not mess around with other females."

I could almost hear the "Beeeyyeeeewip" sound they have in cartoons when one of the characters hit that thing with a sledgehammer and the ball goes up the pole.

You know, like at a carnival? If you hit it hard enough it goes all the way to the top and hits a bell. Painted next to the bell are phrases such as "Champion Strong Man" and the like. As you go further down the pole, the remarks become more disparaging so that if you only hit the ball halfway, it says "Wimp." Well, my hopes of getting back with her only made it to the "Wimp" mark, and then immediately crashed down, breaking my spirits. In my mind's eye I could see a clown talking through a walkie-talkie "Yah, we're going to need a technician at the sledgehammer machine next to tent four, over."

I said, "Oh." It was all I could say, and the line was silent for about 10 seconds.

"Do you still want to meet, then? I mean, you got quiet on me all of a sudden."

"O.K. How about tomorrow, say seven-ish?"

"Well, I've got plans already. What about Friday at eight or so?"

"O.K."

"Bye, then."

I hung up the phone. I knew she couldn't meet tomorrow because her plans were with the new guy, and I thought about what a fucking sucker I was for telling her I'd treat when I knew it was over and I'd get nothing out of it. But I'd been trying to live by this new standard where I made the best of the situation and tried to see the bigger picture. In that millisecond where I could've just hung up the phone or just said "Fuck it, then. Bye," I offered to make the best of the situation, treat her to dinner and end things on the most benevolent terms. Instead of the way I had handled things in the past, with plenty of rage and jealousy and irrational primal male shit, I thought, "Hey, I'm going to see the bigger picture, celebrate her happiness, and let that rage and jealousy slip away."

Wrong. Yeah, the rage and jealousy might slip away if they were made of Teflon coated in Vaseline. Because when it came to that shit—that endgame relationship shit—my mind was a Krazy Glue Slip n' Slide, never letting go, obsessing. And sure enough, those emotions weren't slippery. Hell, they were stickier than my ball sack to my leg on a hot summer night. Couple the Krazy Glue/Slip n' Slide image with the ball sack-sticky emotions and, well, you get the picture, I couldn't get her out of my head.

So here I was, sitting in the restaurant on time, like we had planned, but she wasn't here yet. It was one of those unbearably hot evenings: 99 degrees and 75% humidity. Since this fine establishment was near a marina, the proprietors thought it in their infinite wisdom to have no AC. They didn't even have one of those mist machines like they have at Disney World.

The waiter approached me and asked if I wanted something to drink while I waited. I told him I wanted a Pacifico with lime. He told me they only had Corona.

"No Negro Modelo or Dos Equis?"

"No sir. The only Mexican beer we have is Corona."

I wanted to ask him if the owners of this restaurant, in addition to their fine

choices in atmosphere control, were commies, "cause I knew of a few boats going back to Russia in the morning." My dad always used to say shit like that, but it was outdated and I knew this pup wouldn't get it, or would probably be offended (a.k.a. spit in the food) so I forced a smile and ordered a Pabst with a lime. I enjoyed the notion of mixing the beer of choice for Hazard County with the exotic hints of Mexico the lime provided. I could just see Bo and Luke down at the Boar's Nest bitching about old Boss Hogg while squeezing a lime into their beers. Then Bo grabbing Cooter's ex-wife and ripping it up salsa style on the dance floor.

I looked at my watch and noticed it was five minutes past the time when I was supposed to meet her. I reached into my left pocket again and felt them. I calmed down just a little bit.

I thought, "Hell, she's always late anyway," and then looked across the restaurant. I noticed there were a lot of people with nice clothes on. I thought about how long some of them must've spent deciding on what they would wear. Not that I spend a lot of time on deciding what I want to wear, but because my girl—I mean my ex-girlfriend—used to spend an inordinate amount of time deciding what she wanted to wear. People really think other people care about that kind of shit. Hey, wake up! People could give a flying fuck about what you wear, unless it's going to get them something.

The waiter came with a Budweiser.

"Your Budweiser, sir."

"But I ordered a Pabst."

"Sorry, but we don't have that beer here. We only have Budweiser as a domestic choice."

"Domestic," I thought. That's just a fancy word for "shwag". I wanted to tell him how any beer made in America was domestic, not just the cheap, mass-produced, rice-malted donkey piss they sell at sporting events. Let's not kid ourselves, "microbrews" were still made in the United States.

But that was beside the point. I ordered a Pabst and he brought me a Budweiser. "Why did you say you'd bring me a Pabst, then?"

"I never said I would bring you that specific beer, sir. I saw the category of beer you wanted to drink and selected what our restaurant carried."

"Well, why didn't you just do that with the Corona? What made you decide to"—big goober in my Alfredo sauce—"nevermind. Thank you." I took my only cool drink of the evening, downing the entire glass without the lime. Despite the fact it wasn't what I'd ordered, I still loved beer.

I looked at my watch again and it was ten minutes past the time I was supposed to meet her. God, time goes slowly when you're waiting for the inevitable, when you're waiting, period. But it's worse when it is the inevitable. It's worse because you still have that shred of hope that you can say and do the right things to get her back: that you can mix that perfect cocktail of words, nostalgia, and down right style so that she will be caught in the sway of the moment and leap into your arms

and kiss you and the restaurant crowd will cheer and you'll walk out of there in that triumphant cross-the-threshold-esque glory.

Yeah, throw in a pair of tights and a cape as well, asshole. Maybe you'll figure out how to turn radioactive waste into water and teach the world to be tolerant and bring eternal peace to the land.

Although it sounds stupid now, I still had hope I could get her back.

I reached down to my left pocket, and ordered another beer. He remembered the lime. My nerves were a little more relaxed, and I actually had some joyful banter with the waiter. First beer, he noticed the tension. Second beer, "Aw, he's just a guy like me," and he returned with a Bud and lime.

I didn't chug the beer, rather I let it sit and watched the drops of condensation form on its side and slowly slide down to the napkin underneath.

It was then that I wanted to compose a poem about how we are all little drops of water on the side of a beer glass, forming our concepts of who we are and then slowly falling down as the fire of our lives burned out until we mingled with all the other dead organic matter in a swirling miasma from which new life would emerge.

I was even getting off on how I could juxtapose the fact that we were droplets of water with the idea that our lives were fires slowly burning out when I heard a voice say, "You're studying that beer glass like a scientist checking cytoplasm."

She was a phlebotomist. All her jokes ran in the scientific, more-esoteric-than-thou vein. I was about to point this out when she said "Let's get this over with." She sat down. I kept my hand in my pocket, hoping for reassurance.

"Funny, I'm buying you dinner and trying to end things in a nice way, and you look at me as if I'm some bane to your existence."

"Since the day I met you, 'the bane' has been growing like a snowball rolling downhill. Actually, more like a tumor, not something nearly as benign as a snowball or even a 'bane'." She made her fingers in the traditional, annoying quotation marks.

I thought this is how Evander Holifield must've felt when Tyson bit his ear: completely taken off guard. The thought made me chuckle despite the shock I felt at her anger.

"What's so goddam funny! What, you think fucking three other women unprotected while fucking me the whole time is some kind of laughing matter?!!"

"No. It's not funny at all. We were technically broken up at those times, though. Tell me about your new sugar boy."

"He's none of your goddam business. And we were still sexually committed. You didn't even give me informed consent. Probably got off on knowing I didn't know."

"Do you even feel like eating?"

"I don't give a fuck. Seeing you makes me sick. You'd probably hold it over my head about how goddam magnanimous you were to take me out, anyway."

"Well, you're here. You must have felt compelled to see me in some sense. Take a seat"

She sat down, leaned her body on the table and said, "I wanted to have a clean break. I wanted to lay down the ground rules about how you and I are going to relate from here on out."

"Well, shoot."

"Well, shoot," she said in a mocking hillbilly tone. "Fucking redneck with your fucking redneck gutter talk. Rule number one: no more phone calls..."

"But" –

"Rule two: I don't want to see you or communicate with you in any way, shape or form."

I tried to interject, but once again she cut me off. "And stay the fuck away from my mother!"

Despite the heat, a cold sweat instantaneously formed itself on my head. I could tell I was blushing, and not the light red you might get from an off-hand comment of at Christmas Dinner. No, this was the deep red kind. The kind that comes from being guilty.

And right then I knew that she knew what I had been trying to hide for so long. She threw her napkin on the table and spit on me just as I was trying to stand and explain myself.

"You motherfucker!!" She screamed. She gasped for words, astonished. "Literally! God, I ca – can't believe you! God, what a fucked up world!"

"Tia, listen. Let me explain."

"Oh, there's nothing to explain, asshole! And to think I shared the same dick with my" – She trailed off and tears formed in her eyes. She looked at me, the whole restaurant was looking at me. In a measured tone, barely within the limits of self-control, she said, "You are a true fucking scumbag!" With that she stepped at me and hit me in the face with her right hand. She proceeded to hit me three more times on the neck and shoulder before the waiter pulled her away and knocked me over in the process. My hand fell out of my pocket, and luckily the contents didn't fall out. That would have been too much for her.

As I fell, I bumped into the leg of the table next to me. The people at the table looked at me in horror, as if I was a turd in the punchbowl: their own velvet lined, soma-coated, dream world punchbowl.

I looked up and she was gone.

Immediately I was confronted by the waiter and told to please leave the restaurant.

"But I have a full beer left."

"That is no longer your concern. Please leave."

"How much is a beer here?"

"I said that it is none of you c – "

"How much is a fucking beer?!"

"Three-fifty for domest – I mean, three-fifty for the beer you're drinking, sir."

I pulled out a ten and threw it on the table. I grabbed my beer and downed it on my way out the door. It was warm by then.

I really did want things to end on the right note, but I guess there are times when your actions make that kind of outcome impossible.

As I walked out the door, I noticed the puffer fish in the aquarium window swelling again, all the other fish hiding until the spectacle was over so they could go on with their meaningless lives.

I dug for some change out of my front pocket heading in the direction of the pay phone at the end of the pier. I picked up the receiver and dialed the number, hoping I could salvage something out of this evening. She picked up on the third ring.

"It's me."

"How did things go?"

"I've never seen her so upset, Janelle. She hit me all over and the waiter knocked me over and" –

"She's always had a temper like that. She knows. Did you have them with you?"

"Yes."

"Which ones?"

"My favorites."

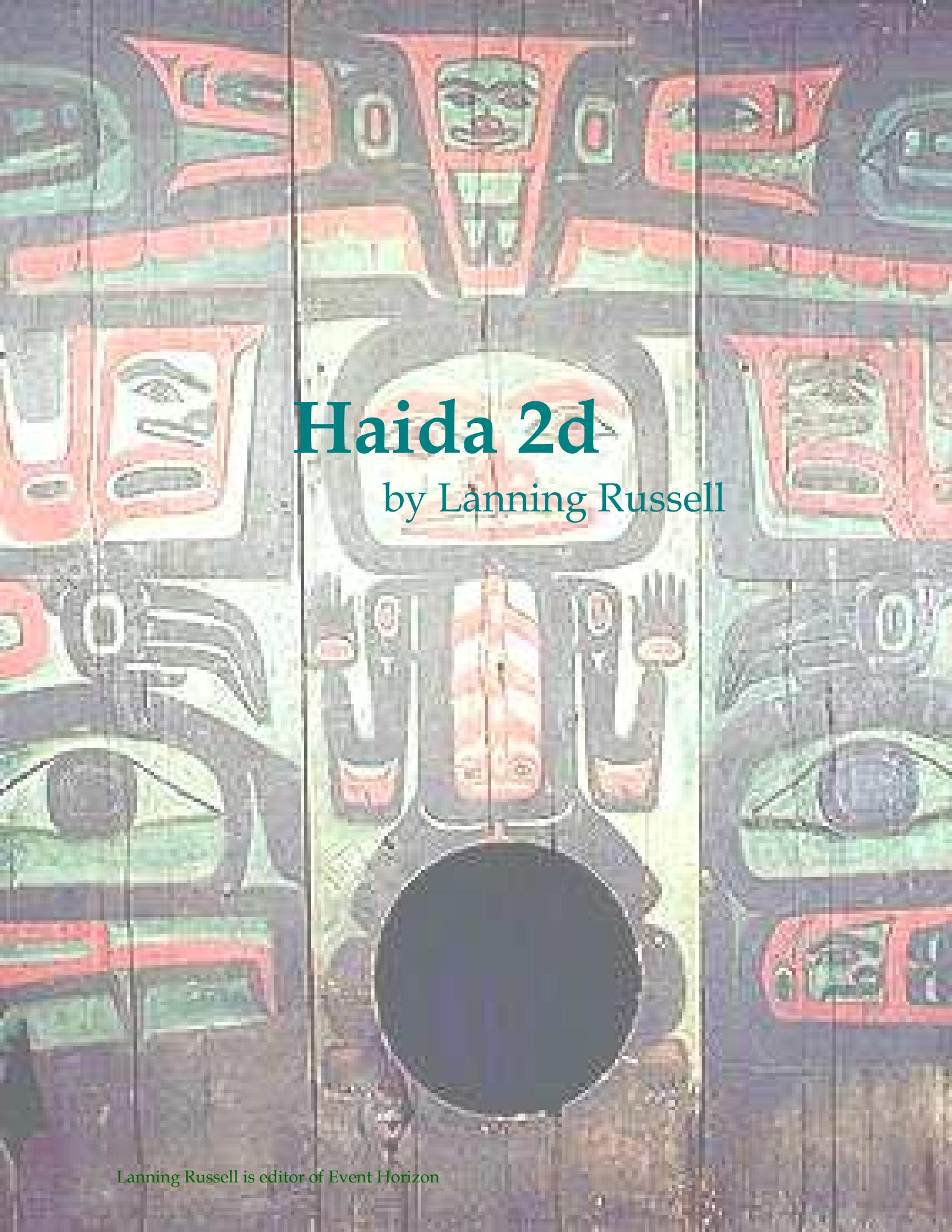
"Blue? Crotchless? I'll wear them tonight," she teased. I said nothing. My mind was pretty blank, too, though I could start to feel my crotch bubbling up.

"Why don't you come over and tell me about it, honey."

I remained silent. She still wanted to see me. I knew it would destroy Tia, but we were beyond repair, anyway. "I'm coming."

There was something about lying in the hands of a mature, forty-five year old mother that washed away so much of the pain in the world.

Oh, and she never got frightened when I swelled.



Haida 2d

by Lanning Russell

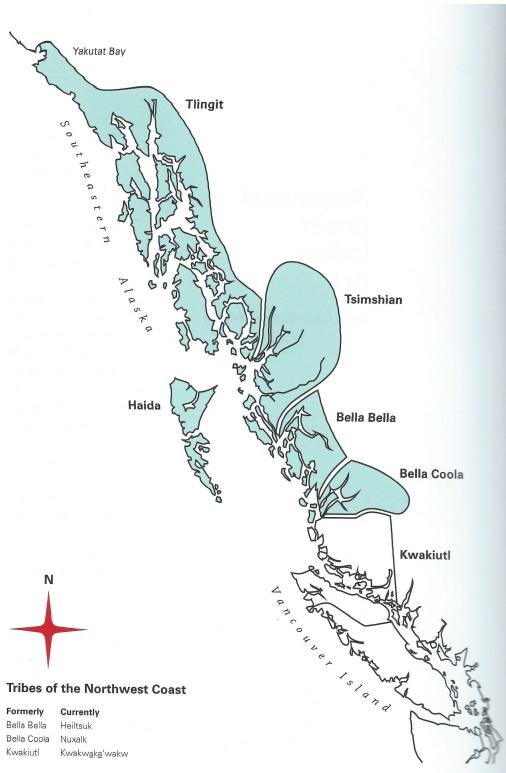
Lanning Russell is editor of Event Horizon

Captain James Cook arrived on the southern coast of Vancouver Island in 1778. In 1787, Captain George Dixon reached the Haida Gwaii archipelago (formerly Queen Charlotte Islands). They were among a handful of the first Europeans to admire the aesthetic sense of the natives of the Northwest Coast. In 1791 Surgeon Roblet wrote in his log of

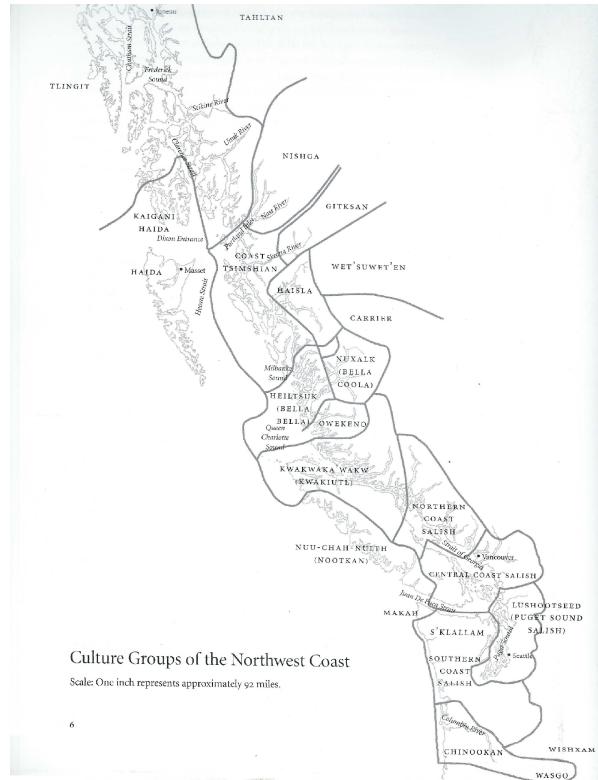
“..works of painting and sculpture ... and the execution of which bespoke a taste and perfection which we do not expect to find in countries where the men seem still to have the appearances of savages. But what must astonish most, ... is to see paintings every where, every where sculpture, among a nation of hunters.”

Two-hundred-fifty years of experience and familiarity have provided us with knowledge and opinions. Aldona Jonaitis summarizes that "The Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian of the northern region share a rigid kinship structure, and produce an elegant, complex, and refined art."

Bill Holm wrote what is now considered to be the foundational text on Northwest Coast art - **Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form**. Standard maps of the Northwest Coast cultural regions usually include the northern tip of the Olympic Peninsula. Some include the area around Seattle. Some extend to the north shore at the

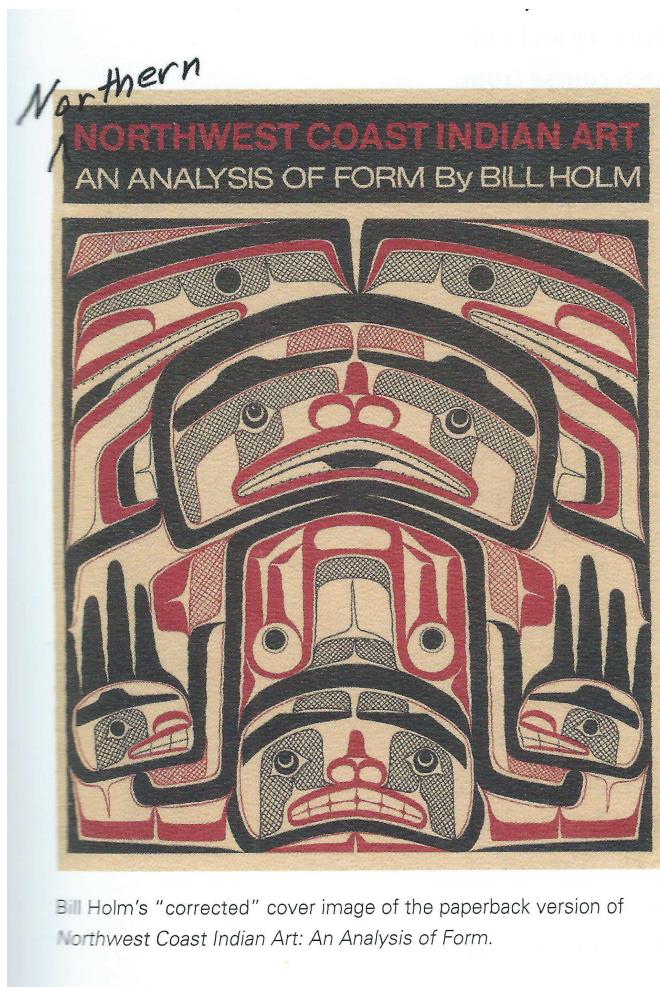


Bill Holm's 1965 map with 2015 nomenclature updates



Steven C Brown's map, 1998 (truncated)

mouth of the Columbia. Holm's map goes no further south than Bella Coola territory which is several miles north of the northern tip of Vancouver Island. In the preface to the 50th Anniversary Edition, Holm admits that he should have added a qualifier to his title to make it "Northern Northwest Coast Indian Art."



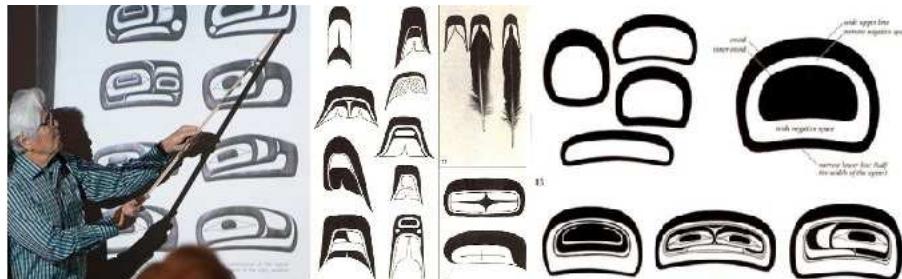
The art of the "Northern Northwest Coast" is highly regarded. Academics and trained observers can distinguish stylistic differences among the northerners but there is a strong conceptual unity in the group as a whole, distinguishing it noticeably from Northwest Coast traditions to the south. Which styles are 'better' or 'classic' or 'pure' may be argued but that won't happen here.

We have ended up with a linguistically lazy default to 'Haida' which I believe has been cemented by the lifelines of Bill Holm, Charles Edenshaw, and Bill Reid.

Bill Holm was born in 1925. He is a competent artist and a towering academic in his field which is Northwest Coast art. He and Bill Reid were close friends and had the opportunity to work together on many occasions. Holm wrote the aforementioned book, *North-*

west Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form. The Bill Holm Center at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture at the University of Washington was named for him. Bill Holm may be a true-blue Ivory Tower professor but his scholarship and educational leadership have made Northwest Coastal art accessible for new generations of art lovers and students. As mentioned, his preferred focus is *Northern* Northwest Coast art.

There are known (since Holm's book) principles of Haida art which can be listed and easily understood. These comprise elements and concepts which will yield a distinctive style with no constraints on individual creativity.



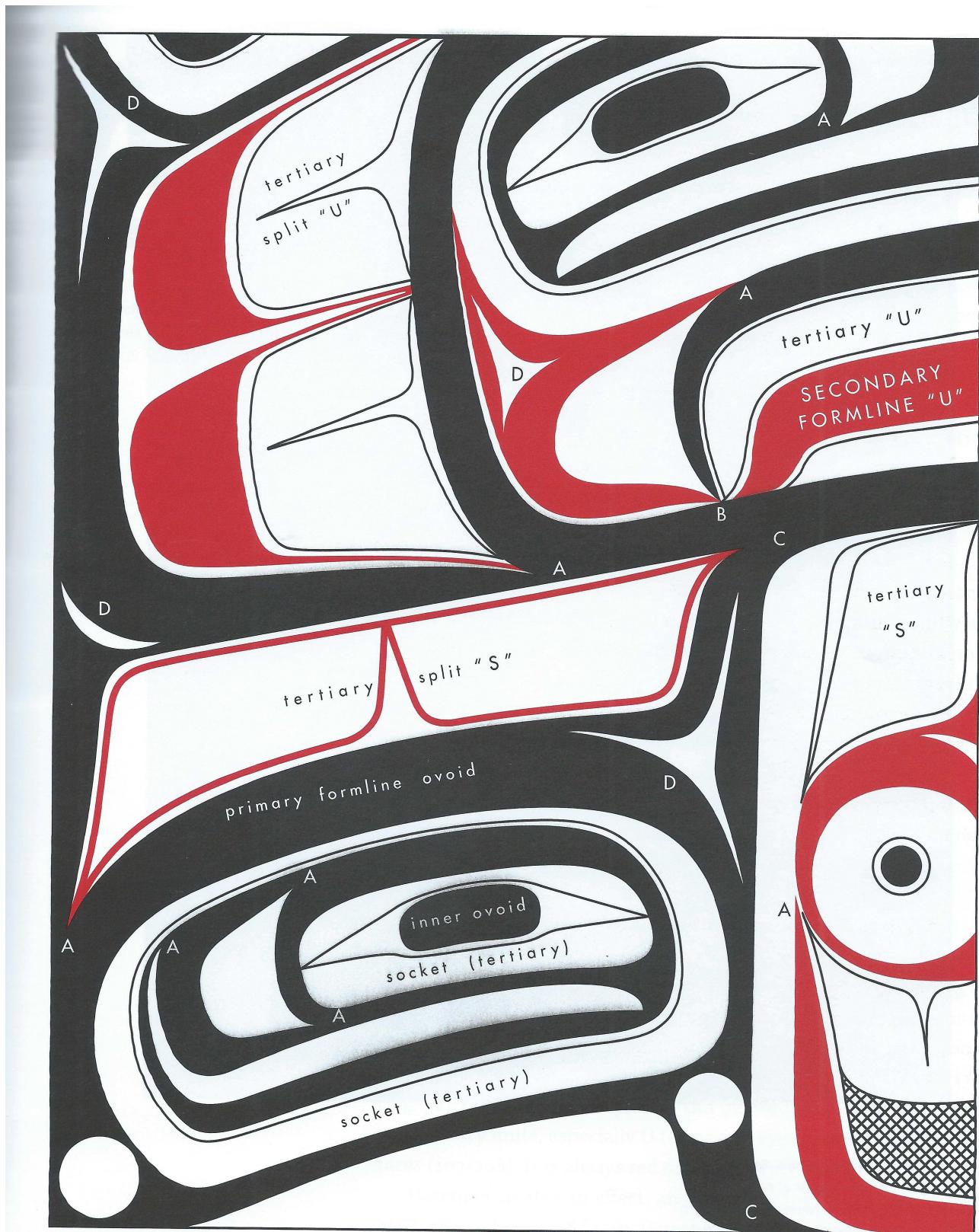
Bill Holm introduces elemental forms.

Bill Holm made sure that his analysis of Haida (Northern

Northwest Coast) art applied to all examples, whether of 2d or 3d form. Oftentimes in his book he would literally “unwrap” an image of a 3d artifact in order to examine its design elements:

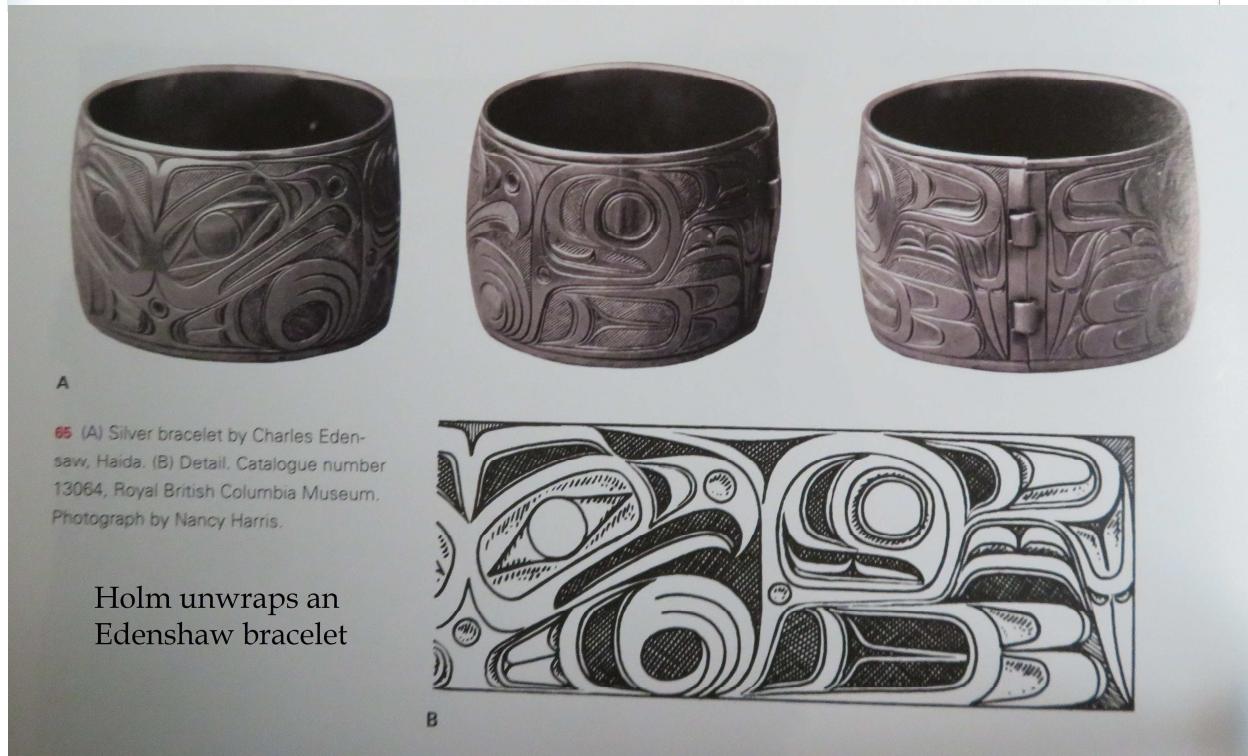


11 Designs “unwrapped” from spoon handles. The close relationship in organization and form between two- and three-dimensional art of the Northwest Coast can be seen in the “unwrapped” designs. Totem poles and other sculptural objects show the same relationship to a greater or lesser degree. A and B, private collection. C, Portland Art Museum 3277.





Holm unwraps a hat



Charles Edenshaw was a prodigious and prolific artistic genius with absolute mastery of Haida principles of composition and endowed with consummate technical skill. He was also a visionary who exploded the possibilities of Haida art without really disturbing those principles or its formal boundaries. He lived from 1839 to 1920. Edenshaw was a polymath. He did everything and he did a lot of it.

Scans and photos here of Edenshaw's work are from the guidebook for the Vancouver Art Gallery exhibit, **Charles Edenshaw** which ran from October 26, 2013 to February 2, 2014. These examples focus primarily on works that can be well-represented in 2d such as relief sculpture rather than pole carving. Keep in mind that Edenshaw is renowned as a carver and a jeweler.



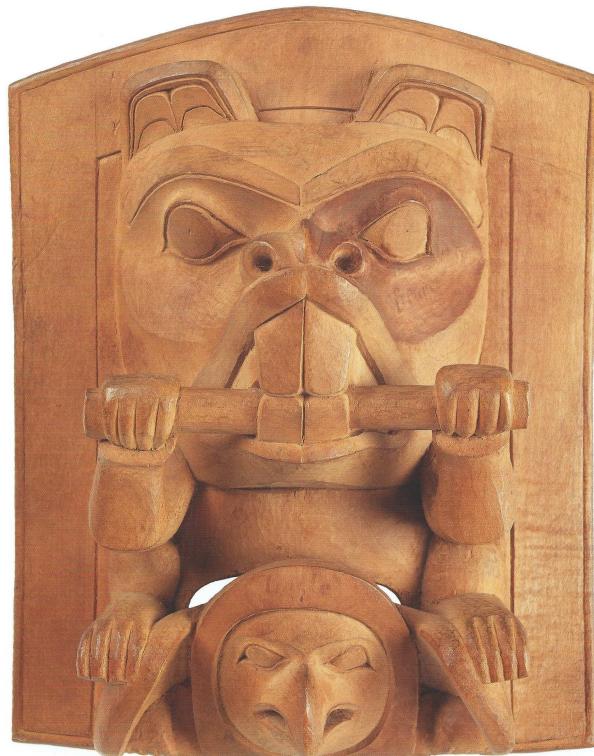


fig. 30

—
Charles Edenshaw (Tahigan)
Headdress Frontlet,
late 19th century
wood
18.1 x 14.5 x 6.5 cm
Collection of American
Museum of Natural History,
Division of Anthropology.
16-241/1869-90-94

This beaver frontlet is
unpainted and unrigged for
use, and was probably
made for sale. According to
anthropologist Franz Boas'
collection notes it was "made
by Tahigan, Da.a xiigang,
a Haida, bought from a
Tsimshian." It was collected
by Israel Powell between 1880
and 1885.



fig. 147



fig. 148

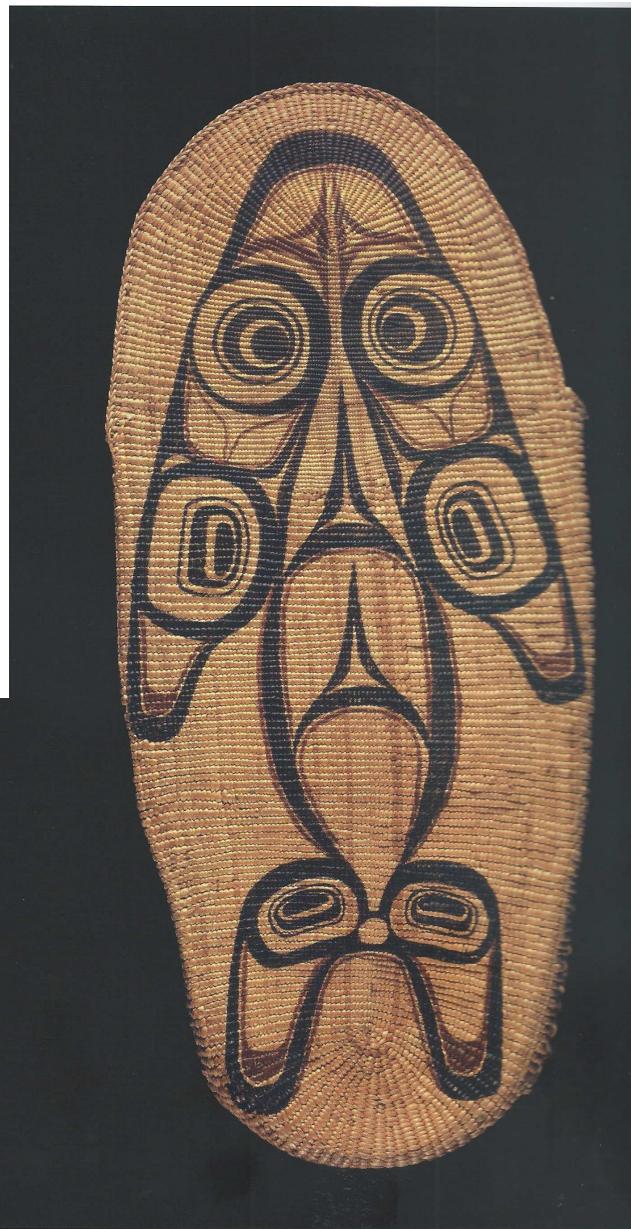


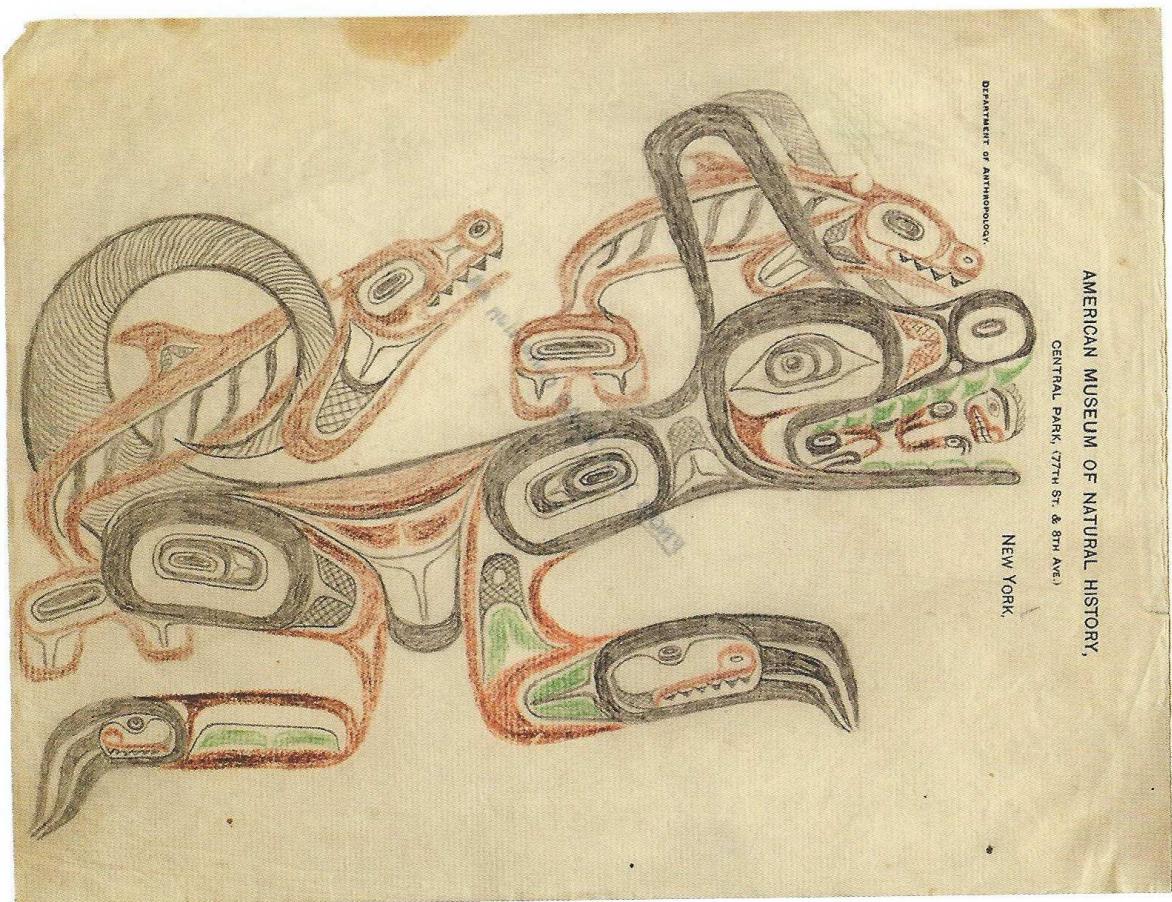
fig. 149

fig. 28

—
 Charles and Isabella Edenshaw
Dogfish Cradle Liner, late 19th
 century
 spruce root, pigment
 56.5 x 25 cm
 Collection of The Field
 Museum, Chicago, 79441

A second wooden cradle was made by Charles and lined with a basketry cradle liner made by Isabella, probably for their youngest daughter, Alice, who was born on July 21, 1902, at New Kasaan. Ethnographer C. F. Newcombe was in New Kasaan on a collecting trip at the time and purchased the cradle literally cut from under her.





Bill Reid lived from 1920 to 1998. His mother was Haida, his father was Euroamerican (yes, American). Bill was not moved to find his roots among the Haida until he was 28. By then First Nations people had suffered parallel fates with other subjects of European colonialism. Epidemic diseases like smallpox and cholera had reduced indigenous populations over 90% or 98%, down to 600, in the case of the Haida. Government policies included abducting children away from their families to distant schools where the children suffered corporal punishment if they spoke their language or engaged in their customs. The Potlatch - the lynchpin of organizing spiritual, economic and social matters in First Nation societies - was declared illegal in 1885 (end of ban, 1951). Culturally, what Reid did was nothing short of miraculous. Reid was frustrated in finding even a handful of living exponents of the old art traditions. Reid studied examples of Haida art in museums, university ethnography labs and *in situ* on Haida Gwaii.

He developed his skill in a straight line from the life's work of Charles Edenshaw, perfecting the techniques in all of Edenshaw's diverse media: jewelry; carving in argillite, wood, ivory and jade; bentwood boxes; screens and panels; totem poles. Reid also created astounding monuments such as **The Raven and the First Men** and **Spirit of Haida Gwaii**. Like Edenshaw, Reid was a creative genius in his own right and put a stamp on Northwest Coast art forever.



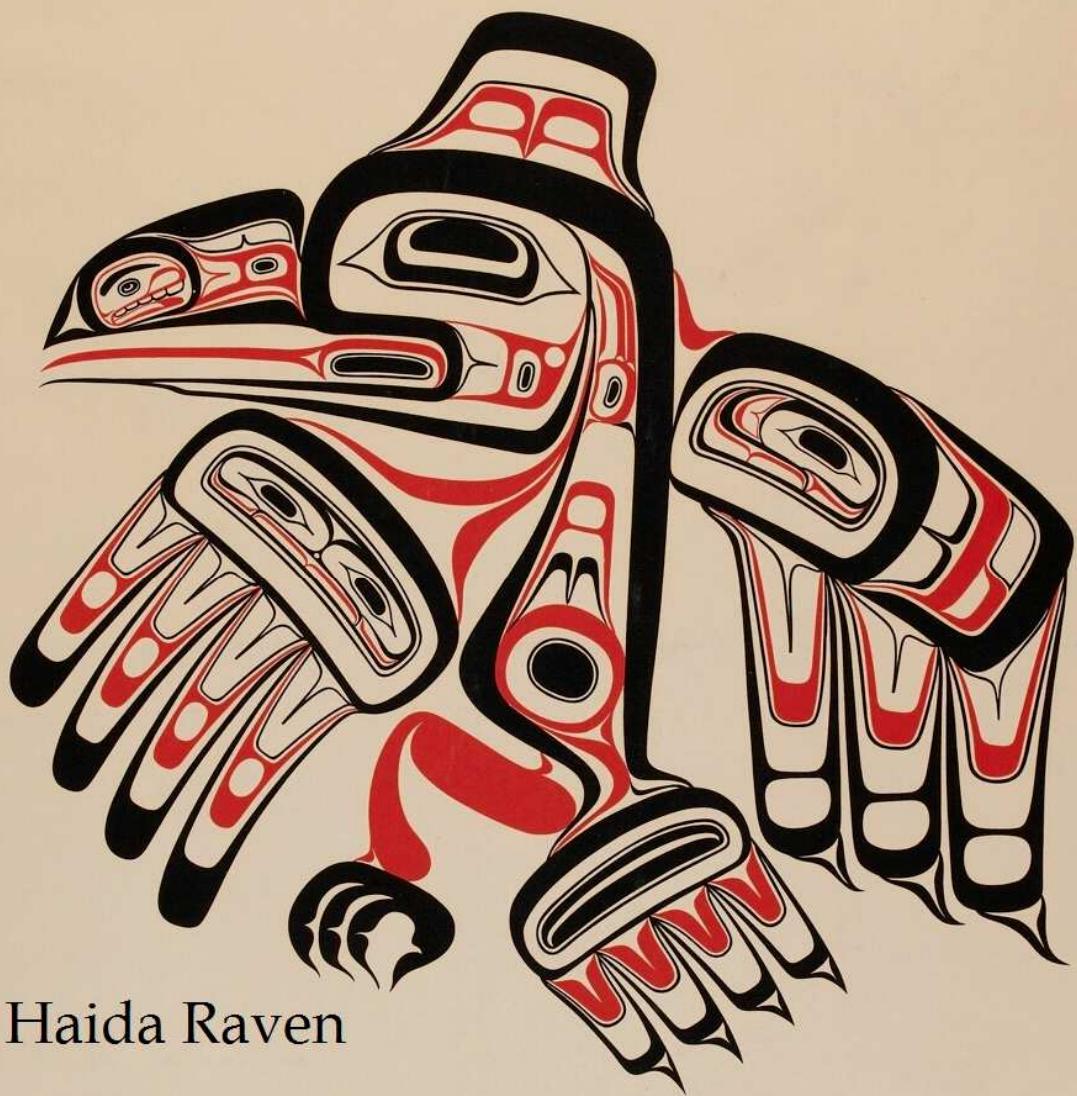
Bill Reid's monumental **Raven and the First Men**. Carved from a single laminated block of yellow cedar. Stands about 6 feet high.

A gallery:



Haida Dog Salmon





Haida Raven

Haida Raven

Artists proof / Bill Reid '72

The following scans and composites are from **Bill Reid** by Doris Shadbolt:



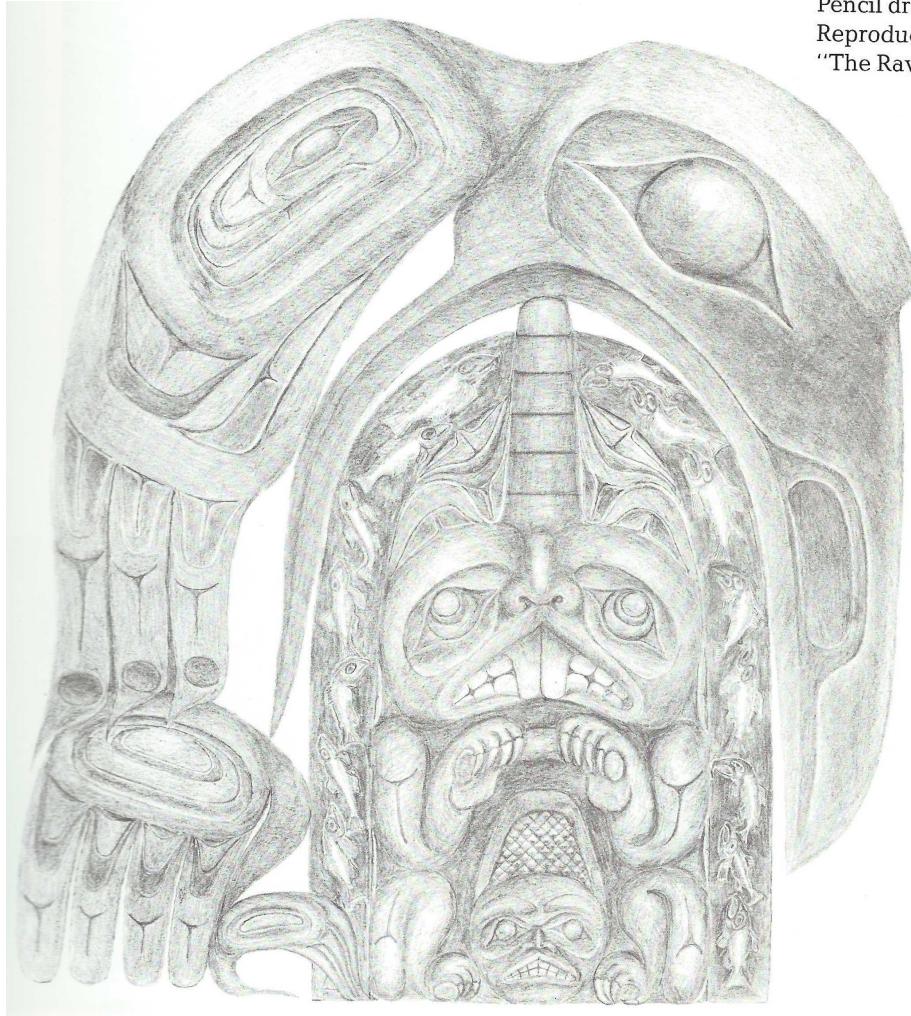
Hinged Silver Bracelet
Tschumos design c. 1958
4.4 cm wide

Silver Brooch
Tschumos design c. 1958
5.5 cm diameter

Silver Brooch
Raven, Bear and Frog 1957
2.6 cm wide, 7.9 cm long



The Raven Steals the Salmon from the Beaver House
Pencil drawing 1983
Reproduced in
"The Raven Steals the Light"



Bronze Relief Mural
Mythic Messengers

8.5 m long, 1.2 m high, 45.7 cm deep
Teleglobe Canada, Burnaby 1984-85

Drawing: Jerry Grey

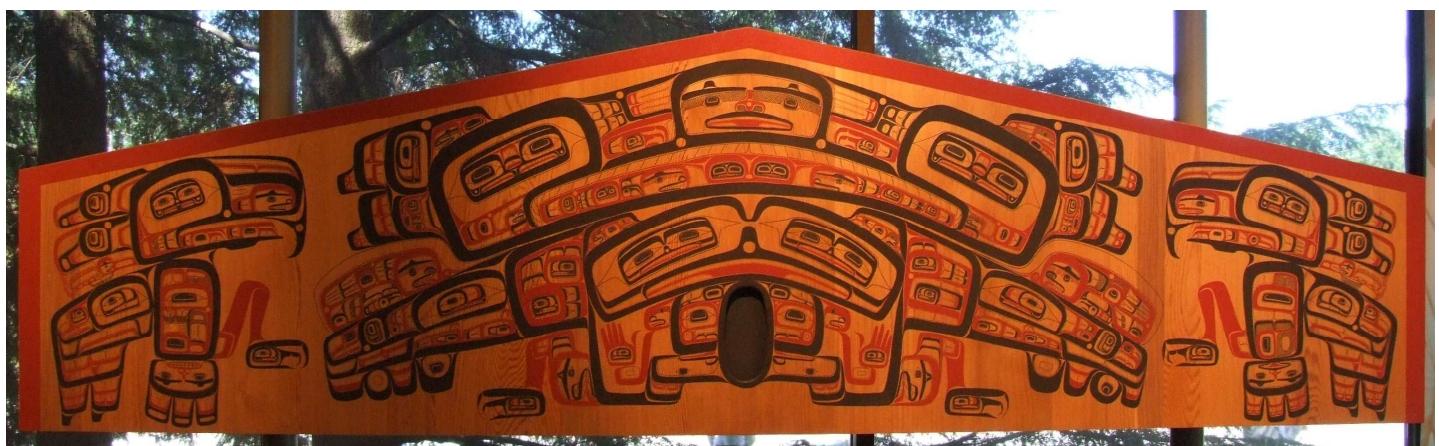
From the left,
the Bear Mother, Bear and Cubs;
Nanasimget, his Wife and her
Killer Whale abductor;
the Sea Wolf; the Dogfish Woman;
the Eagle Prince

Before the second half of the nineteenth century, most Northwest Coastal two-dimensional representation was on wooden surfaces such as screens, walls and boxes. The boxes are still constructed regularly by contemporary artists. Screens and walls are most likely to be large commissioned pieces or reconstructions of plank houses or interiors.

A potentially magnificent Tsimshian wall screen was acquired by the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. The edifice dated back to the early 1800s and, being of wood, was - predictably - badly deteriorated. Symmetry is a known element of Haida composition as are certain shapes, ideographs and formline conventions. Lyle Wilson, a Haisla artist, used his knowledge and skill to speculatively extrapolate the original design from the remainder. His complementary original work is entitled **Tsimshian Cosmos**.



The shaded parts were too deteriorated and unavailable to view. The missing parts were rebuilt from symmetry and an informed understanding of what they could have been.

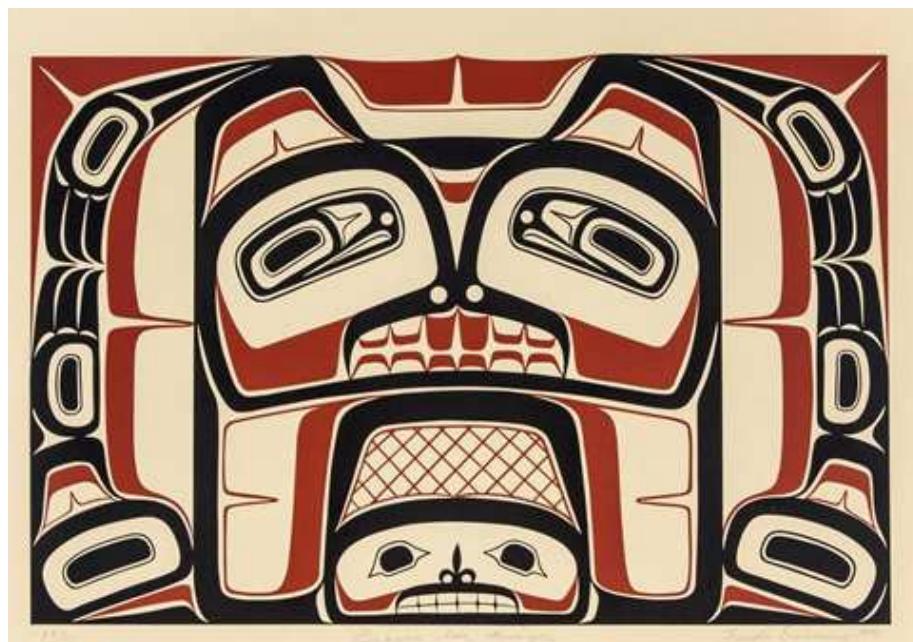


Tsimshian Cosmos by Lyle Wilson

Freda Diesing was a Haida carver who was a contemporary, as well as a student, of both Bill Reid and Bill Holm. She lived from 1925-2002. Her Haida name, Skil Kew Wat, means "magical little woman". She began her career as a carver at age 42. The honors accrued to her (some posthumously) include an art school named after her, an honorary doctorate and other distinguished recognition of her art and achievements. She is celebrated as a carver and teacher. Her students include acclaimed artists Dempsey Bob, Norman Tait, and her nephew Don Yeomans. She can be credited with instructing numerous students throughout the Pacific Northwest. Here is a gallery of some of her silkscreen designs.



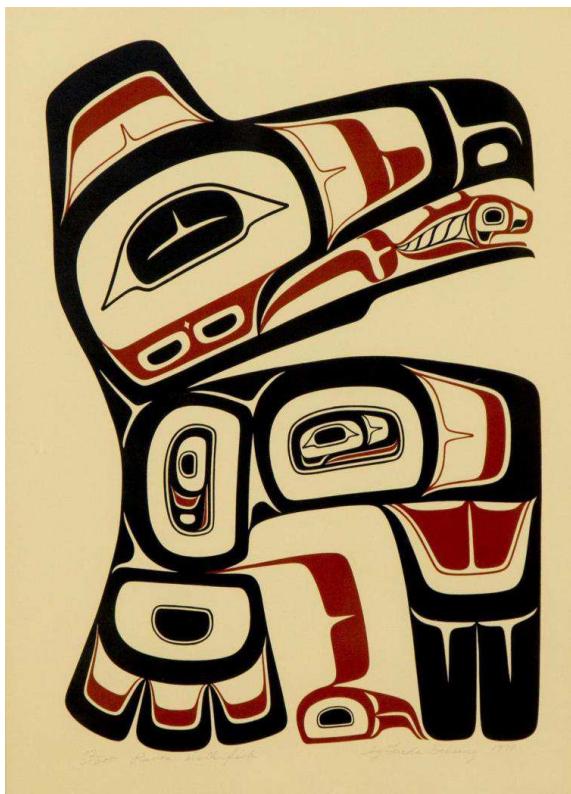
Eagle with salmon



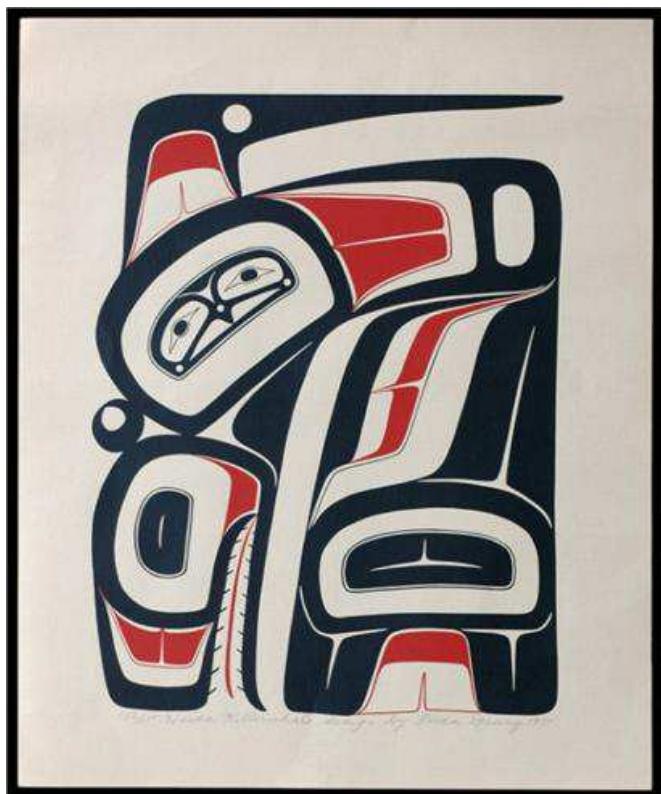
Beaver box design



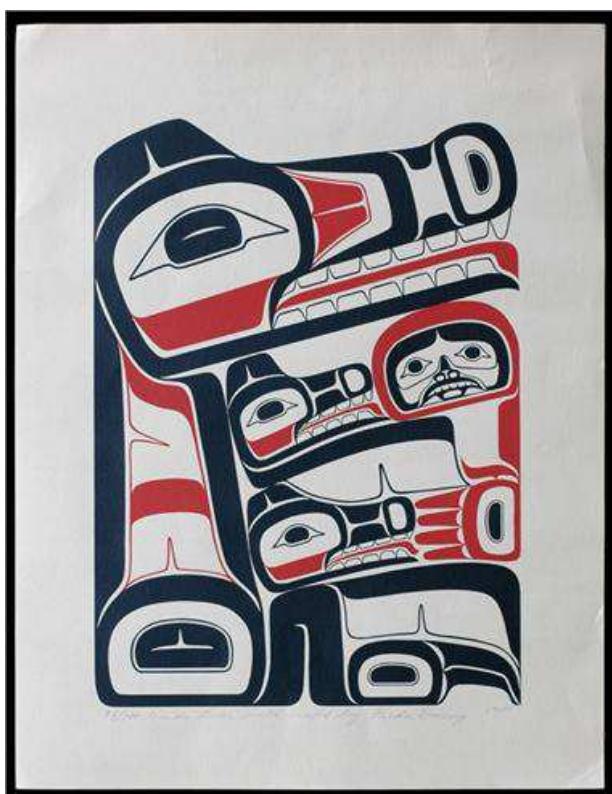
Thunderbird and salmon



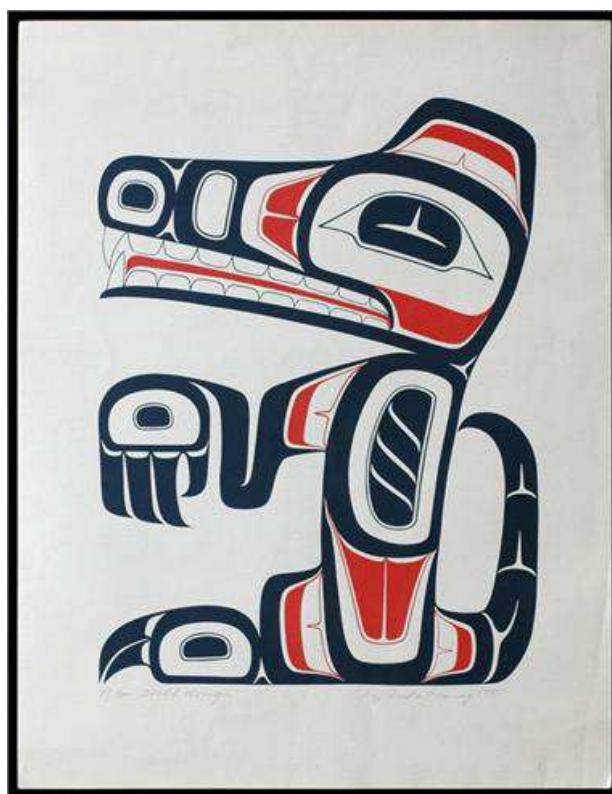
Raven with fish



Haida killer whale



Haida bear



Wolf

I hope the present essay is a pleasant retrospective. That is certainly an objective. But a point that I have not supported with visual aids is that there are many - legions - of dedicated and skilled exponents of Northwest Coast art, alive and well and working today. Go find them not only in museums but in private galleries, small town drug-store-and-gift shops and even in the lowly 'tourist trap' (e.g. gift shop at Stanley Park Totem Pole Village). Many, perhaps most, of these artists live locally and trade locally. Go to the big cities *and* travel the scenic back roads. I've seen great regional art throughout the region.

Robert Davidson, a Baby Boomer, is a living master of all Northwest Coast art forms. What follows is a limited gallery of his works represented in 2d.



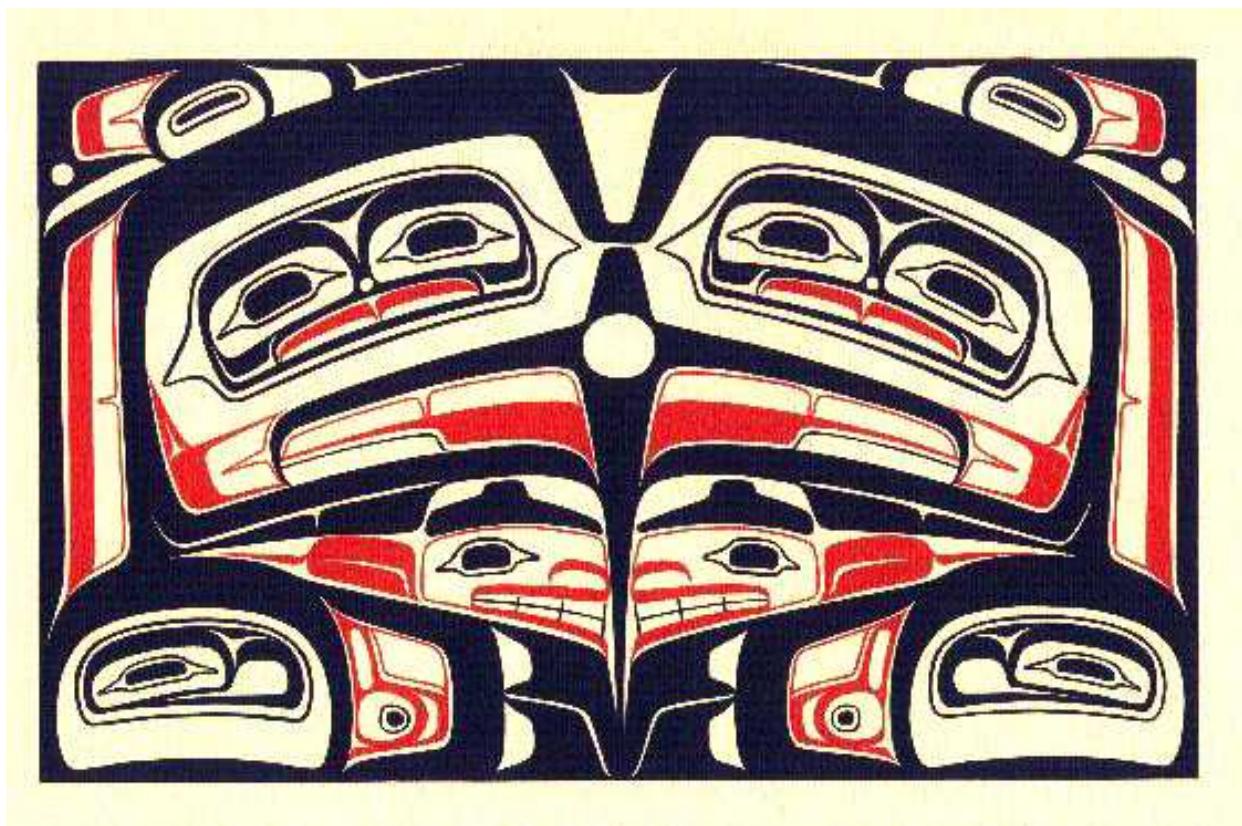
Sea Monster



acrylic on red cedar



Ravenous



Raven with Broken Beak

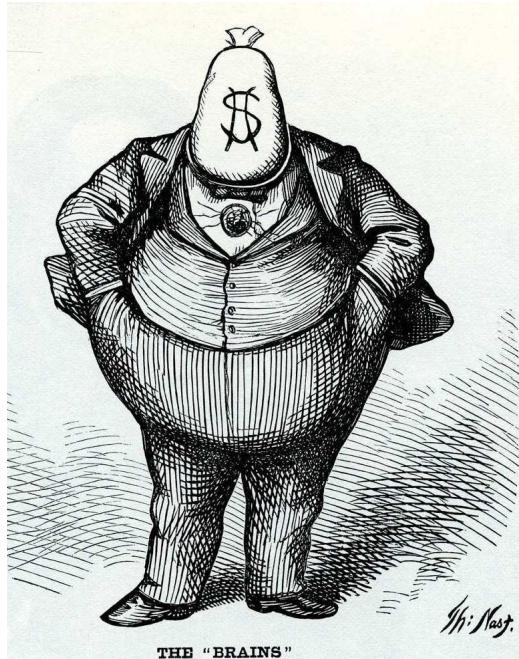
Mark Twain was in London in 1887 and rumors circulated, first in the states, that Twain was gravely ill and then that he was dead. Twain said (famously and usually misquoted), "The report of my death was an exaggeration." At the turn of the 20th century it was widely circulated that Northwest Coast indigenous cultures were "dying". Contrary-wise, this incorrect notion probably gave the afflicted peoples a brief economic respite. There was an urge to collect what was left or commission new work before the spark went out entirely. Somehow, these "dying" traditions went on to thrive and develop.

Traditions are not styles or subgenres. It is my deeply held sacrilegious belief that an outlander - non-indigenous - can be an authentic and true artist in the Haida tradition if such a person is so inclined, and so gifted, with a dedication and deep understanding. The river that feeds such a possibility is a way of life, with a past, a purpose and a people.



Gary Adams

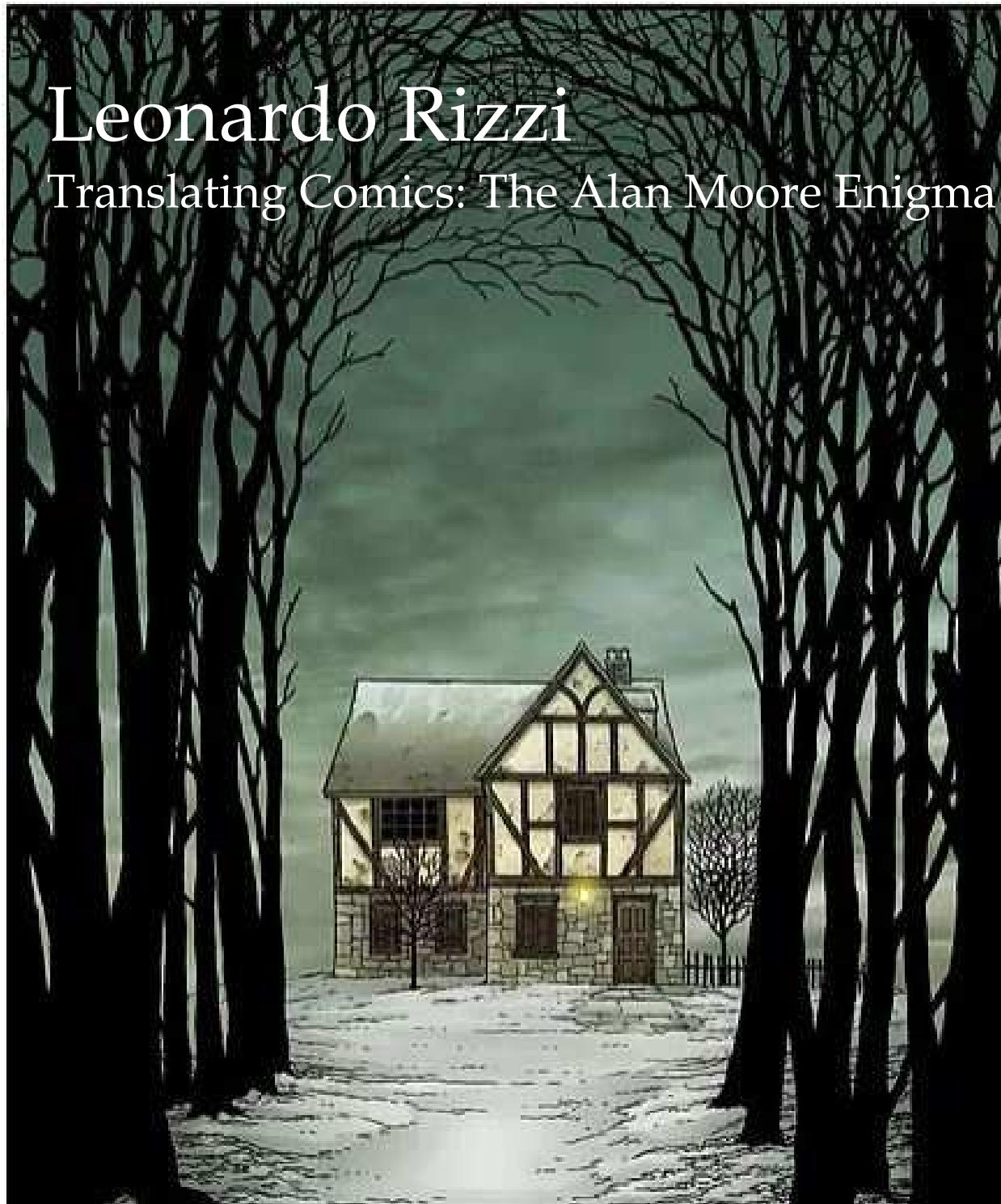
first amendment toolbox



Gary Adams is a retired high school social studies teacher and a veteran. He and his wife, Joyce, are seasoned world travelers. Over the years Gary has shared with his friends and students an incredible depth of knowledge of art, movies, history, military history and technology, travel and geography. Gary can't draw.

The illustrator of this cartoon wishes to remain anonymous.



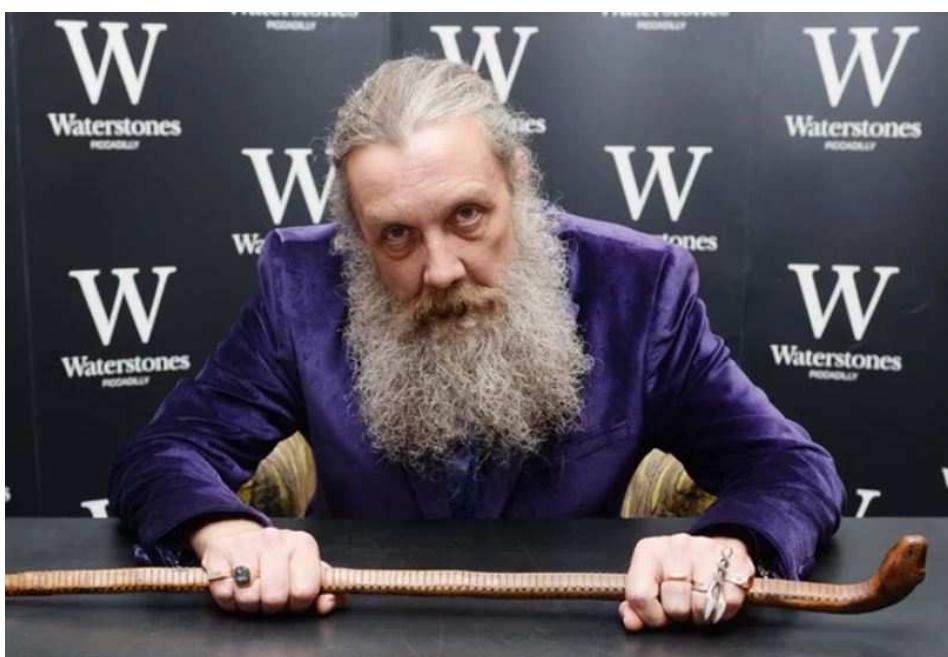


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Join our guest writer, Leonardo Rizzi, as he recounts his times translating the legendary Alan Moore.

Translating comics is bewilderingly complex. Then again, the medium's relationship with its readers is only deceptively simple, with comics having their effect in gradual steps. First, there is the impact the single pictures have on the reader, with their style and graphic vividness. After that, the simple act of putting pictures in some sort of order and forming a sequence is the source of this medium's magic.



Such is the power of arranging pictures in sequence. The most accomplished creators manage to guide the readers, letting their imagination fill the 'gutter' between the panels. With the constant task of filling in gaps, reading comics is an exercise in insight. The relationship this medium has with its

audience is intricate, as it subtly beguiles readers to invest their intellects and emotions in a very active, two-way process.

In comics, the written word is not the primary source of communication. Pictures and sequences convey the most basic storytelling and can powerfully evoke meaning. Creators use words to dig deep in what is shown visually, elaborating on everything that cannot be drawn, such as paradoxes, lies and the most abstract concepts.

This necessary and yet surely already tedious preamble finally brings us to what translating comics entails. As crafts go, translation is always very inadequate, and yet hopefully revealing and often necessary. It is not limited to the act of carrying words from one language to another, as our own experience can prove: all our attempts at writing a meaningful email using Google Translate are met, at best, with puzzlement, sniggers or embarrassment. What a decent translation does in a way that Google Translate simply cannot, is ferrying a whole sets of concepts across two languages that can be very different in terms of worldview, values, basic philosophies, sounds and the very notion of what is considered beautiful.



A good analogy would be considering translators as conjuring artists, trying to bewitch vast audiences while doing their best not to get caught using their tricks. Every time some awkward legerdemain or botched prestidigitation is spotted by the audience, any suspension of disbelief is immediately lost. And with that, gone is the playfulness, the sense of entertainment, the enchantment the original text could have. As a result, a good translator always has to take the hardest path: replicating the original writers' storytelling strategy, being faithful to their intentions more than to their words. The translators' ultimate goal is convincing their audiences, at least for a few fleeting moments, that the text was originally written in their own language.

©2009, 2013 DC Comics

In order to do that, translators are constantly forced to sacrifice some subtle fragment of the text, the priority always being understanding what kind of effect the original writer wanted to generate and creating something that might have a comparable effect. Another analogy sees a translation project as the literary equivalent of playing a football match with the strongest team of the championship: most of the time, the translator will just try not to cut too sorry a figure.

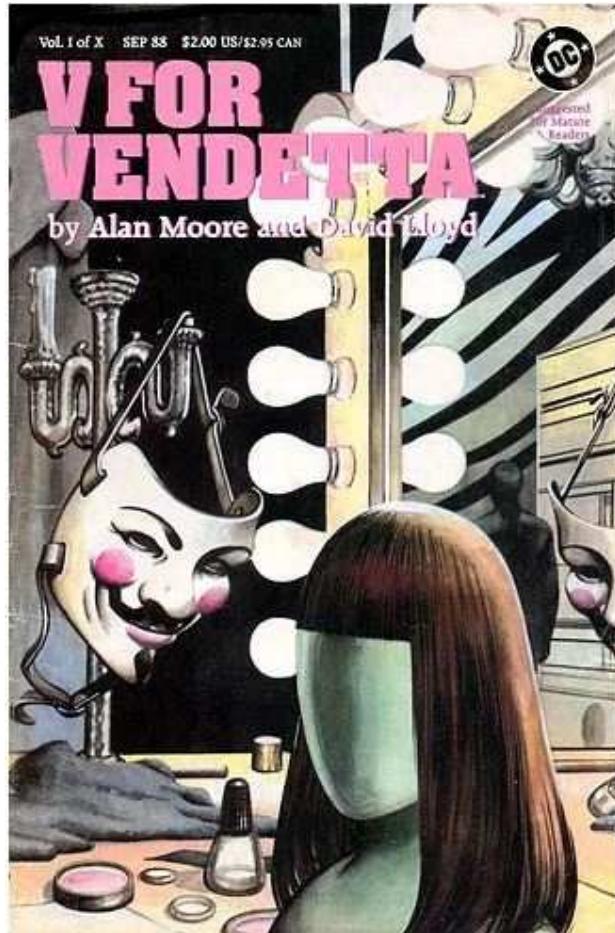
Well, cutting not too sorry a figure is often the main problem when translating comics created by a bold writer, where the text is dominating. The weirdest things can happen. Since most of the indispensable information is conveyed through pictures, the most capable and experimental writers will let their imagination run wild in their prose, creating made-up languages and the most extreme stylizations.

Alan Moore Jacen Burrows
Providence



Touching briefly a few meaningful challenges I met during the last two decades, spent translating comics between other things, it's hard not to discuss one of the most brilliant writers ever bestowing his multi-form intelligence on this medium – unsurprisingly a very hard nut to crack for his translators. This ingenious innovator is Alan Moore, who often imbues his stories with a fractal, sinuous complexity that is rarely seen. In his work, he pushed the comic medium towards unsuspected possibilities, writing modern classics like *V for Vendetta*, *Watchmen* and *From Hell*. Over the years spent at the translator's desk, I was lucky enough to work on most of his literary works and graphic novels, exploring his voice and learning his most daring storytelling techniques. Having a look at two of his works might then prove interesting.

V for Vendetta Copyright ©2009, 2013
DC Comics.



Graced by David Lloyd's sombre and sophisticated art and masterful storytelling, *V for Vendetta* is a dystopian graphic novel deeply influenced by George Orwell's work. It's set in a futuristic and neo-fascist Britain, where a vigilante hidden behind a Guy Fawkes mask, the eponymous "V", sows the seeds of revolution with theatrical panache and flamboyance. Not considering the sheer power of the story's premise or daring storytelling techniques, one of the biggest pleasures in reading *V for the Vendetta* is Moore's skill in shaping the English language. Meaning that those three hundred pages are littered with translation headaches.

The hardest problem was definitely taking the whole load of British language and culture peppered on the novel - filled as it is with assonances, references subtly watermarked and almost invisible, jokes and puns and nursery rhymes normally learnt at kindergarten - and somehow turning it all into my native Italian, making all those references clearly understandable even for my least exotically-inclined fellow countrymen, and yet retaining the novel's Britishness in order not to lose its authenticity. Questions abounded: how do you translate a popular drinking song linked to the novel both in theme and narrative, when Italian drinking songs are few and far between, and are generally related to what the Alpine Army Corps were singing between battles in World War 1? And how do you convey the rhyming acrobatics of a cabaret



V for Vendetta Copyright ©2009, 2013 DC Comics.

solved the problem with refreshing casualness: they simply decided to skip it, and add a literal translation at the end of the song's score. However, this solution widens the gap between the source text and the target text and no reader can take any emotional or intellectual pleasure out of the writer's idea. Alas, the only feasible solution was finding a translation that could preserve the original text's meaning, rhyming pattern, assonances and exact verse structure. Readers are now welcome to take some pleasure in trying to guess how many days it took this writer to translate just six pages.

Another interesting challenge was finding the right language for the story's protagonist, V. His speech is initially pretty naturalistic, but over the pages it starts speaking in non-rhyming iambic verses, revealing his romantic anarchic nature, the soul of an en-

song filled with blatantly fascist and overly sexual innuendos? And let's not get started with the notion that the title of every single chapter in the book starts with the letter "V", a symbol obsessively running through the graphic novel and echoing Thomas Pynchon.

One of my hardest tribulations was translating *This Vicious Cabaret*, a song serving as prologue to the second part of the novel, a smart way to summarise what went on before in an artistically satisfying manner. This song doesn't simply provide rhyming lyrics that, let's be honest, can be translated taking a few liberties, while being considerate to the writer's ideas. To the horror of all translators worldwide, this song is printed at the bottom of a musical store, note after note, lyric after lyric. A few international editions

tertainer of destruction. Such a powerful characterization needed an Italian equivalent. Let's get the cat out of the bag: the metrical scansion is not exactly Moore's, but I believe the emotional feeling of V's speech has a similar effect on the reader. His slow, constant lapping of words, both in his monologues and dialogues, hopefully becomes prophetic, revealing and mesmerising.

Another of Moore's major works is the recent *Providence*, a graphic novel based on the opus of H.P. Lovecraft. For the unlucky ones still needing to familiarise themselves with him, Lovecraft was the early 20th century American writer who revolutionised horror literature by turning it into an exercise in metaphysics, putting Man in all his misery in front of unknowable horrors, too vast to fully comprehend. Lovecraft saw his work published on cheap pulp magazines hardly making any literary claim, but the way his ideas infected generations of readers shouldn't be underestimated. In his latest graphic novel, Moore is interested in Lovecraft's memes, in the way he seemed to weave a whole fictitious mythology in our reality.



Writing *Providence*, Moore concocted a sublime hoax. He took dozens of Lovecraft stories and put them together in one dreadful mosaic, embedding them in our real world and creating a unique literary universe, in which the readers can get lost at will, to their own horrific enlightenment. Thus, it is evident how crucial it was to convey Lovecraft's text in a consistent Italian translation, using all the versions that made the Providence writer known in Italian. Not an easy task: his opus had countless translators over the decades, creating numerous discrepancies and inconsistencies. While translating *Providence*, my priority was reconstituting Lovecraft's literary universe as one consistent whole.



A problem of a different nature was the diverse cultural or geographical background of the novel's characters. Lovecraft rooted his characters in the most remote corners of New England or Neo-colonial America, trying to make his horror seem commonplace, casually hidden in plain view behind some corner of our world. In *Providence*, Moore pushed this idea further, featuring incredibly diversified characters speaking with the most outlandish inflections: the refined American English of the late 1910s, the equally refined but slightly awkward language of a Spanish expat doctor, the stammering dialogue of a Latino landlady, the language filled with regionalisms spoken by Irish immigrants, the code used by New York's closeted gay population in early 20th century, the 19th century

dialect developed in the more inland regions of the Eastern territories of the US, the even more ancient jargon of the 18th century sea captains, and more and more, getting to the speech of unconceivable monstrosities borrowing our language to convey alien concepts. As every reader can now imagine after this endless list, it was extremely important using a different language for every character - and yet, losing their geographical connotations was necessary. After all, what is the difference between an Irishman and an Englishman and an American when their words are translated in Italian? However, what is lost in geographical terms can be somehow regained; it can come out with the characters' sense of culture, class, and personal warmth.

In this veritable sea of words translated from language to language, what is really Alan Moore's work and what is not? It is time for a confession: many of Moore's subtly specific references cannot be carried to any other language, barricaded forever behind the idiosyncrasies of British culture. And yet, if a translator is really trying to pull his conjuring trick – an idea that Moore might like – a whole new literary reality can be created: a veil of illusion in another language, able to let readers feel the diversity and the deep truth of these characters. The overall effect on the reader should always, always be the same Holy Grail: convincing the readers that everything that it's been said, is nothing less than true. And by doing so, binding them, charming them. Conjuring a spell in every language, the one great form of communication in this apparently divided world.

Leonardo Rizzi, Master Wordsmith



© Gareth Munden

Leonardo has been translating comics for most of his life, wrecking his brain on some of the most influential writers in the medium, including Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Garth Ennis, Warren Ellis, Grant Morrison, Chris Ware, Los Bros Hernandez, and many more. Feeling that his life was somewhat empty without more stories and narratives, he's been writing for the theatre and TV

in more languages than it's safe to admit, winning the Ugo Betti playwright Award. He also works as a story editor and script consultant for Eurimages, NBCUniversal, BAFTA Rocliffe, Script Factory and Apulia Film Commission and has been involved in lectures and seminars intended for experienced writers, directors and script editors as well as for emerging writers.

Protect our public lands



state park at Owyhee Canyonlands

