

March 2020



A COVID-19 Anthology

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845 Press acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron (Neutral), and Wendat peoples.

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Preface

This collection grew out of a private Twitter conversation with Andy Verboom, the editor of *long con magazine* and Collusion Books. We were wondering how we could do something small to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our decision: to put out a call for submissions to two pandemic-related chapbooks, this one and the one produced by Collusion Books. We created the following call:

845 Press and Collusion Books are joining forces to produce a pair of digital poetry anthologies for our viral times. Both chapbooks will be available for free to anyone who supports writers, artists, booksellers, or vulnerable communities during this period of social isolation and economic uncertainty. To receive your digital anthologies, simply email either press a recent purchase receipt or charitable receipt demonstrating your support of an independent bookstore, a small press, an artist-support fund, a food bank, or a crisis fund for a disadvantaged or marginalized community. There is no minimum contribution amount.

845 Press chapbook anthology: open to poetry that is in some way about COVID-19.

Collusion Books chapbook anthology: open to collaborative poetry created during quarantine or social distancing (or under conditions which prevent social distancing).

Writers had the week of March 21-28, 2020, to submit for these calls. Both chapbooks generated an incredible amount of interest, which is a testament to the desire of the literary community more generally to support each other and everyone else as much as we possibly can. In fact, 845 Press' "chapbook" soon ballooned into a book-length project.

The poems in this collection are all loosely related to COVID-19 and reflect the experiences of ordinary people from around the world during this unprecedented event. We don't yet know how bad it will get, or if we will succeed in keeping deaths to a minimum. Everyone is unnerved, unmoored, and, in many cases, insecure because of lost income. There is despair in these poems, alongside hope and stoicism. All of these poems are profoundly human and resonant; they are also beautiful.

This anthology would not have been possible without the dedication of our assistant editors Elizabeth Sak and Katrina Younes, who helped us sort through the dozens and dozens of submissions in record time. We would also like to thank Síle Englert for her poem and for the gorgeous cover image she created for this collection, again in record time. Finally, we would like to thank the online poetry and literary communities, whose art, caring and enthusiasm made this project possible, and who widely disseminated and responded to our calls.

The New Normal

The New Normal

By Colin Dardis

—Belfast, Northern Ireland

A masked women enters a taxi
wearing latex gloves.
All the fashion houses have shut down:
disease defies seasonal wear.

A masked women enters a taxi
because the driver still has bills.
Been heard coughing all week;
brick can't distance the virus of sound.

A masked women enters a taxi
as the driver lowers his window.
First time her door has opened in days,
first time I've seen the new neighbour.

A masked women enters a taxi
and this is the new normal
seen from behind a ward of glass.
I'll need to disinfect our front yard.

The day Earth healed – 22nd March 2020

By Rachel Bari

—*Shimoga, Karnataka, India*

The chirping of birds woke me up
The sound of my feet was alien to me
It felt as though I was stomping around
But it was just me tiptoeing to open the lock
To the outside world
It was quiet ... too quiet
The blades of grass under my feet were moist
With the morning dew
As I bent to touch it, a grasshopper whizzed past
The wind whistled in my ear
I turned to catch that whistle and that whizz

The rustle of the layers of the onions
As I cut them startled me
I had forgotten the rustle
As I switched on the stove
To pour the oil for seasoning
I heard the sputter of mustard
Smelt the garnish
Felt I was in my mother's kitchen
Learning to cook
Learning to smell and taste

The day the earth breathed
I breathed, too
I learned to smell, feel, belong
I learned to be quiet
I listened to the water flowing
And the mew of cats
I had not listened to cats for a long time
I heard a faraway whine of a puppy
And a gate opening somewhere
I heard a leaf fall
I heard someone trudging along
I learned to stop and listen
I learned to sit and savour

The day Earth healed
We hoped ... again

evening on a loop

By Carlie Blume

—near Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

small square of light next door
supplies comfort
visual provision
for night.

reminders that there are people
who flicker and pace like me

who sleep folded and rudimentary
between familiar sheets

who wait for all this time
all this hollow to pass hands

like new currency,

for the flint of dusk to shift its raging pattern
exchange sky for television song

for the ice in our drinks to chime
and wane down
to slim crescents.

tomorrow I will open the closet
yank thrift store sweaters off hangers

inhale the wake of strangers.

so many smiles I have never known.

Contact

By Lindsay Crudele

—*Boston, Massachusetts, USA*

When you think about it
which I do
danger marked our bodies
then just as now

The difference being
in the beginning
I feared other
invisible materials

What should we call it
Kingdom, phylum and so on
What use has a name
when this is our shape

We are still here
You, the only body I trust
What do you hear
inside all this quiet?

What matters less
than the what is the how
and there is only one question now

How will you keep me safe?

Don't Tell the Dog Things You Don't Know

By Samantha DeFlicht

—*Portsmouth, New Hampshire, USA*

Last night dog laid awake,
stared me down. I think
she wanted to know how
long forever was but she
didn't know how to ask me.
I'm glad she didn't ask
because I don't want to
tell her that I don't know.

Really, I don't know anything
but there's no good way to
tell your dog you're just
winging it. All I know is
the dog's got to go out
a couple of times a day,
eat twice - and not those bees
been buzzing around our place.
Other than that, I don't know.

I remember what it felt like
to know everything, like a
heel firmly planted on the
crack-less tiled floor. But
I grew up and I question
even my sureties; I am a
woman made up of perhaps.
Maybe the dog will see wide
Colorado someday. Maybe a car
will come for her in the morning.
Don't know. It's a narrow life.
Dog's long gone to sleep,
legs twitching along the sheets.

Food Shortage

By Ryan Gibbs

—*London, Ontario, Canada*

corralled by crates
till inside number
reaches fifty

signal given
carts driven
on great race
to gather up
troves in bulk

new lineup
new panic
did I purchase enough?
return tomorrow
to replenished shelves

When I wake, the world

By Halle Gulbrandsen

—Ladner, *British Columbia, Canada*

could almost be normal -
families bumble around the block on bikes, birds
carry spring, warm from the oven. Mid-March,
so far cloudless and dry. Through our open windows fly
conversations, casual as insects. As any other day
I rearrange the plants on the sill. Let coffee fill
still hours. Make the bed. Make hello's and
how are you's from safe distances
while walking across petals of morning
sun - here, it blooms bright on the sky's left shin
and I am allowed to feel it.
Unlike you, you haven't been
outside in weeks. Like socks
or glasses, time is something you keep
misplacing. Tell me, you say on the phone,
what is it like where you are? I don't know
how to tell you everything
I love is in morning, and it could almost be normal.

That's When I Get Sick

By Liz Harmer

—Riverside, California, USA

The news contains little poetry today. I'm tired of the word *tremendous*. Certain faces, mouths. At the grocery store I am the only one gloved, and the cashier tells me—touching, breathing, talking, within three feet, within two feet, touching—that fear is the real concern. *People are acting crazy*, she says. She means me, with my loose bandana tied around my mouth, my gloves. *Soon as I believe the hype that's when I get sick.* Well, I say, weakly. *It is a scary time.* But no one here knows that, no one else has gloved or even gelled their hands. Everyone just breathes the air. On the phone my bookseller friend tells me we need to be ready for what Jeff Bezos does. A villain of the kind I've never believed in. The students in Florida flushed and drunk in the middle of the day, chillin with other kids in the Airbnb. Slurred, doughy. Fighting for a right to party. *We have got to keep partying.* That does not seem true. The mouth of the president, his sneer: it makes me murderous.

Distancing

By Douglas Herasymuik

—*Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada*

night-sky corridors
kitchen saints, lightbulb halos
stained-glass quarantine

Antimicrobial

By Sophie Kearing

—*Chicago, Illinois, USA*

Wash your hands.

Wear your mask.

No, don't; a mask won't matter.

Oh, yes it will; it will keep you from touching your mouth, fingers teeming with germs.

And remember: You still have to scrub your hands.

Scalding water.

Antibacterial soap.

Wait, how would antibac soap help?

Covid's a virus, not a bacteria. Will antibac soap really help?

It's *antimicrobial*, they say, it kills everything. Just slop that shit on if you're lucky enough to have it.

But if we're all doing that, won't we create a superbug?

Covid-1000: Newer. Bigger. Badder.

Completely resistant to our heaps of Dial soap and Lysol spray and Clorox wipes.

No, they say, only bacteria and fungi can go rogue like that.

But I don't know. I just don't know.

I hope my dish soap does the job. All the *antimicrobial* hand soap's sold out.

Pandemic Pretty

By Thandiwe Mccarthy

—Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

At night the cracked cup sat smug 'top the counter.
For this mug is always dreaming, you see. Look
Routinely left, upside down, right next to the kettle.
Its cruel curves again waiting for sunlight. Waiting
To be filled up, hot, poured into caring hands.
Sipped carefully,
Loved.

Covid Calibration

By Kirsten Pendreigh

—*Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*

I hung a nest box on the hydro pole
should have googled if it's legal

but I'm following enough rules. Bars now deliver
booze in one-litre jars with bonus rolls of toilet paper.

I would not let my own mother in my house.
Made her sit in a lawn chair, ten feet away,

and used a broom handle to slide over
a sanitized tea mug on a tray.

Around us, grape hyacinths opened
in miniature joy. We talked

about things we've never talked about.
Our human brains recalibrating.

Ten minutes after I hung the box
a chickadee moved in.

Covid-19, March 2020

By Emma Rhodes

—Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

When the world was sick
we fucked

with clean hands and
fresh sheets and
lysol
febreze
kisses,

don't sneeze.

Shut down everything— schools, airports, restaurants— all but essential services.

Me too. Shut down.

from everything— friends, family, connection, physicality ... Shut out

everything.

But you.

When six feet separates me from
everyone else, I touch

you

only.

So here,
we fuck,
and kiss,
touch

and sanitize.

Or don't touch at all.

And for the love of God don't
touch your face it could kill
my grandmother.

But grandma isn't here.

she won't be coming
here and I

am across the country.

Six feet to 4,290km.

Either way.

You are here.

Six feet becomes over 4,000 kilometers
and there is
no one.

Nothing.

I am so small

and there is so much space.

And yet

love is still too much
too pervasive
infectious
makes us
all sick.

We love too many people and
those people love
too many people

and the space is filled.
The sickness is in our homes now.
We opened our doors,
invited it in for coffee
and it pushed us apart.

But not
you.

You are here.
And I
need
to touch
you.

Only you.

I love everyone
else so much it
has to be *only*

you.

Grief in Many Forms

Grief in Many Forms

By Ashley Stennett

—Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

We met in wrinkled bed sheets. Before then it was over coffee. And now I open the window to hear what's no longer there for me. Now I meet it in the dawn of light, creeping into an empty bedroom.

And here you are with the wind that pushes my hair back. You've arrived and made a home in my only shelter. You came from outside my window and you leave me just as fast as the flurries move through my town. You come lovingly and afraid just like me.

Grief, you cause pain for me in distant sounds. Why do you stay and make a home when this isn't your house? You think you're a pillar in my living room? You're a shadow in my bed.

What room would you have me in? You only stay because I keep inviting you in. I need you because you make me see that honey is taken from bees. I know the flowers you choose. They will stay in a vase on my nightstand, unwatered.

Closing the windows to step outside. This is where the wild weeds and lavender grow. My hair swirls around my neck and over my mouth. I push it away to walk in the garden of flowers below my bedroom.

Soft Wool Past

By Thekla Martina Altmann

—*Merigomish, Nova Scotia, Canada*

Worry unravels the
last strands of structure
I have left.
It's like combing hair and
getting all the tangles out.
Winter hat hair in the spring,
after a solitary walk.

My wife declutters her closet. Discards
a large knitted blanket
given to us as comfort
when times were truly hard.

We made it through those.
We made it through worse.

This
is different
yet again.

I itch to unravel
the blanket -
seems a pity just to throw it out.
I never liked it.
I am torn.

Want not,
waste not.

Save the thread, save the wool?
I could make a pussy hat,
pull it over my eyes.

From old make new
create a whole new world
out of old unwanted structures

Do we save what routines we have?
Do we save society?
Capitalism?
The patriarchy?

And I leave the blanket where it is,
in the giveaway bag.

Life is Movement

By Bill Crumplin

—Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

The need for air
And space
Like a piston
At the top of its stroke
Drove me
Out of doors
Onto the frozen water
The only sounds
Rhythmic crunching of boots
Serving as a beat
For thoughts
Memories
Of the past four years

Rise up
 Crunch
Linger
 Crunch
Replaced
 Crunch
What if
 Crunch
Why
 Crunch

The need for air
And space
And living
 Crunch
Fuels the next
 Crunch
And the next

Breakfast Invitation in the Time of COVID

By Lauren Davis

—Port Townsend, Washington, USA

I cannot cross your mother's doorstep.
If something dwells on me—my hands
like knives. For her you slice melon, butter bread.
I walk the block, a single circle.
The neighbor's dog throws the alarm.

What is it to be, possibly, unclean? I do not tell
your mother she has done good work raising you to be
the man I will love in my imperfect ways. I save that for
a safer day. My hands without. My hands almost certainly
diseased. For the love of your mother, their edges sheathed.

Letter to a Quarantined Lover

By Margaryta Golovchenko

—*Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

I.

I begin

as one does

with a saying

the way you greet the year is how you'll spend it

a bejewelled grain of knowledge

a handful of rubles' worth in cultural heritage

I have been handed

and told to hold onto

or not

the contents clearer

than the instructions

II.

When the decade dawned
I greeted the stroke of midnight

mid-breath
submerged

somewhere
between thought and colour

while my body reoriented itself
to the sound of you

as we filled up each minute
its own sort of eternity

III.

How far we've come in these three months

one small step onto wet tile

one giant jump halfway across the city

same walls

same rooms

one less body

in occupational capacity

IV.

In these times

I think of Io

Danae

their bodies wrapped

in rich candy-like palettes

and of how much I'd give

to be a gaseous

distributed

cognition

gold grey or otherwise

a study in form

that begins from the inside

We'd write the myths better

this time around

consent and passion

two old souls on the same page

You know me

I'm all for role reversals

and a stickler for consistency

addicted to the single shade

of celestial blue
that haunts me in your stead

from the depths
of every corner
I find myself in

Lost baggage

By Jessica Martinez

—*Hartford, Connecticut, USA*

I had to google the meaning of
serenity tonight
because somewhere while
preparing the gondola of the hot air balloon
that will hold my family for this
let's call it adventure
things got lost
not only my daughter's online homework
but also my favorite teacup
comfort from an unthreatened life

They say it's hard to travel with excess weight
so I threw everything overboard
that anchored me
my calm
my peace
my freshly ironed logic

Thankfully I remembered to pause
and look down at the
tiny parcels of land
each separated from its neighbor
and no cars traveling the connecting veins

While we are floating in the forced quiet
I wonder how and where
we are going to land
and
if we will ever retrieve all that we lost

Maintenance

By Mackenzie Moore

—Los Angeles, California, USA

Lying on the floor again
most nights
Most people
say “Okay”
Check the glossary,
could fall under
meaningless
exhaustion
Both. Yes, and:

Prostrate?
On laminate?
Sounds like that yellow light
fixed atop the dash is
on

Grinding?
Yes
Ticking?
Yes
Trouble starting?
Yes
Trouble stopping?
Yes

Hood tap, heavy sigh
I hear the jumper cables
before I see them
This ‘93 transmission
got problems

You park it
in the garage every night?
So what.
My friend, you need maintenance.

Essential Service

By Cindy Arlette Orellana

—Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Feverish is how he says he's been feeling
for weeks, although I know he's been fevered

from the end of us before the world buckled
from the exhaustion of the unknown.

We weren't supposed to be on *this* long a break,
he reminds me over the phone:

maybe a break is a wake-up call from which
I ought to recognize what it's like to look

at the swelling headlines and memorize the faces
of those who, tried as they might have

to social-distance long before they were had—
they now find themselves lumped together

shoulder-to-shoulder, one name after another:
I guess they didn't die alone after all ...

Don't you think, he continues over
the strumming of his Fender, the staccato of lungs,

that we ought to consider whether *forever*
means to us now as it did then, before the world

stumbled out from behind its trustless curtain
and muffled the sounds of roaring seas?

before we knew a broken vase thrown at one's head
is not nearly as satisfying as putting it all back together?

Can you take that risk, or will you go up
Moses' mountain to plead with an existence

that has turned us inside out [*you give me fever*]
and made our fields loveless plains?

Can you stare out the window of your blackened room
and still wrap yourself in the vertiginous memories

of our kissing, at once as contagious as this threat
that *taketh away* people in a warping world?

I listen to him quietly and think back to the two of us sharing
a bowl of noodles in Chinatown and how it'd warmed us

with blossoming love and good fortune, and then I think
of those who've gone ahead of resolutions made

and I burn, I sweat, I ache [*you give me fever*]

not for what was, but from being under siege
and away from your essential service of love.

Chicken Soup

By Christine Wu

—*Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada*

During flu season my mother makes soup
with a whole chicken and a cauldron

of medicinal herbs carefully selected
from heavy glass jars at the apothecary

in Chinatown: astragalus root, codonopsis,
dried longans, goji berries, ginseng. Ginger and carrots

to sweeten the bitter broth while COVID-19 waits
for my father. Late 60s, diabetic,

high cholesterol, hypertension, bad
tempered, a veritable potage

of abuse to and from his body trapped
still within the same walls as my mother,

who has no place to go, forgotten
what life was like before longing

for his demise, before her firstborn
moved across the country and stopped speaking

with them both. My chicken soup
has only ginger and carrots in common

with hers, none of the herbs from my past,
lost in time and no longer able

to replenish my long-depleted qi.
We may be mute to each other, but

across the distance we are the same
as there are no masks to protect us

from the shame of wearing the face
of the novel coronavirus. Being a model minority

will not save us now. To the world
we are harbingers of disease, carriers

consuming a steady diet of carrion,
feral and barbaric. We have the same blood

haunting our veins, bodily imprint and shadow
like wild horses galloping through a midnight storm,

out of control, slick with sweat and dread,
hooving their way home without a map.

Ground Zero

Ground Zero

By James Schwartz

—*Olympia, Washington, USA*

Walking out of the library
Into the crisp Washington sunshine,

Holding the door with my sleeve
So as not to touch it,

She smiles and says thank you,
Grabbing the handle.

“Don’t touch it” I bark.
She jumps, we laugh,

He comes through next,
Grabbing the handle,

“I’m not scared, it’s just the flu!”
“Good luck!” I say

As we walk out
Into ground zero.

Mild Strike

By Cai Draper

—*Norwich, Norfolk, UK*

You bet! these poems laboured
from the baleen daytime variety show
called jobbing
not this one though this one was
written bedridden
when I was meant to be
the place that stops the writing
/ “at work”

it took a pandemic
/ sore throat
consider it a mild strike
to stay in bed to not be spending
& let the swans back into venice
/ small earth-
shattering revolt

The House on the Cliff

By Jason Heroux

—*Kingston, Ontario, Canada*

Has the house on the cliff been cancelled?
Yes, they cancelled the house on the cliff.
Were the little white clouds above informed?
Yes, I believe the wind was told to tell
the little white clouds to be still.
What about the quiet? What will it do?
Some have said the quiet will grow even quieter.
And all the pines trees, what will happen to them?
They were advised to hide from their cones,
plus the sun has been instructed not to sip
the sky's broth, and our footsteps are no longer
allowed to gnaw the sidewalk's bone.
And what happens to the spoons if our hands go home?
The spoons will have to somehow survive on their own.

World War III

By Temidayo Jacob

—Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

Coronavirus pandemic is ~~Germany's~~

the World's biggest challenge since World War II.

— *The Local*, 18 March 2020, 18:56 CET+01:00.

“World War I, World War II,” I count up in figures:
this pandemic wears the body of World War III.

The war, this time, is between humans and a virus.
In this war, my father's skin colour doesn't matter;

the queerness in my mother's voice doesn't matter.
Today, I knelt and looked into the sky to say a prayer

and I saw a revelation in smoke forming thick clouds.
In my revelation, I saw that even God can't help humans;

no wonder all entrances of prayer houses are locked
to avoid holy altars being altered by coronavirus.

This morning, in a cab, a man coughed and sneezed,
and said this is the best time to become an atheist.

Everyone flew out of the cab's window for safety –
everyone, except the man who coughed and sneezed.

In every newspaper, the world is battling to survive.
Quarantine, sanitizers and nose masks; call them Survival.

We are all in our hideouts waiting for vaccines of survival
in a world where there is war and everyone breathes panic.

In this war, there are greater chances of us being victims

than there are any chances of us being victors.

Fading Fingerprint

By Candice James

—*New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada*

I gaze into the future holocaust days.
I see the disasters, diseases and plagues
shaking the four corners of the earth,
spreading destruction and wanton dearth.
I see a charred painting with Monet splashes
laying in waste amongst yesterday's ashes,
beneath a translucent, glistening eye
refracting a copper, renaissance sky.

Beside an abandoned church in the vale,
with cross to the mast and blood on the sail,
the water ripples and softly whispers
like a tired old man rubbing his whiskers.
And all the people are gone; disappeared
into the harsh moment they most feared;
the moment of endless echoing silence
that followed the devastation and violence.

And slowly their beleaguered hearts stopped beating
as mother nature set into defeating
the careless who threw caution to the wind,
non-environmentalists as they sinned
turning the debt-riddled wheel of fate,
finally paying a price far too great:
not one human eye left to shed a tear,
just a fading fingerprint we were once here.

Doubling time

By Samantha Jones

—*Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

I

we

wait

Skeptics

begin to wonder how

we waste so much time arguing reality

debating fact or fiction and what about the economy There is no need for alarm

and all the while things keep pushing by streaming across in lines doubling each time unchecked uncontrolled Despite best efforts words run off the page

Rate of Exchange

By Lee Potts

—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

You slept on an uncounted coin.
It pressed a mirror image,
like a fading full moon, into the skin
between two ribs. A shadow
coin you carried into your dream
to the bank where you'll always be
mistaken for someone you are not.

Waiting in line you shared
whispered gossip about
a bloodless battle that goes
wherever it will.

Church spires stabbed
into a suddenly quiet sky
waiting to catch lightning if it ever came
and their green copper arrows spun
and spun as every ill wind blew in.

All the cloth in the many mansions
on the hill above the open graves
was taken to wrap the dead and the ghosts
could only watch from the dark
windows of a million empty rooms.

There could never be enough
stiff white linen or even rags
or old newsprint
to shroud them all.

You pressed your penny into the palm
of the nearest dead hand
and started closing
all the open,
uncovered eyes.

Things I Know

By Rachel Tanner

—Huntsville, Alabama, USA

The sky is blue today & the trees
are waving at each other in the wind
like they've always done. The disasters
seem far from here. From the window
next to my bed where I can
watch the birds feast on seed,
I can't tell anything is different.

I can't tell that the world is crumbling. The grass
looks fine here. Green. Untouched. It's
not quite spring but the bugs don't know that
so they're bopping around like maybe
no one has told them the news yet.

Maybe no one has to.

I woke up this morning with my cats
snuggled up against me. They can feel
my stress. They are not immune like the bugs,
not easygoing & relaxed like the trees.
My cats know words like *treat*. Like *food*.
Like *play*. How do I teach them the word *end*?

I am in a constant battle with my body.
Underlying conditions stationed inside me,
ready to welcome whatever else causes harm.
Whatever else can take me down. I wash
my hands until my fingers peel & bleed but
it's still not enough. It'll never be enough.

Lysol, soap, toilet paper, canned pears.
My pantry is full & I am lucky, though I can't help
but feel like I'm waiting for an attack,
waiting to be done in. Waiting for the trees
to wave me home to the sky.

Pandemic Trick Mirror

By Erin Wilson

—Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

In times of panic
our
rituals
anchor
us
like insects
to a windshield. We burrow into
ceremony. We perform burden
in
the
mirror
alone
like meat
soaking in brine. We detangle cannon
with
blistered
clean
hands
like nurses
covering a corpse. Don't confuse
leaving
people
behind
with
survival
like hunters
sparing a deer.

luna malata

luna malata

By M.P. Armstrong

—*Warren, Ohio, USA*

we notice as soon as we step outside:
the virgin mary is missing from the sky,
tucked behind a cover of clouds like a
florentine fresco behind a gilded screen
waiting until the parishioners need her.
though tonight the florentines,
the new yorkers, all the souls on earth
likely do, likely need a hoard
of golden-haloed madonnas in glory
more than toilet paper,
more than any other saint
or even jesus himself.
but she seems overwhelmed,
unable to watch;
she wasn't supposed to be
the one tasked with saving us.
we don't mind, though.
we understand. and we weren't here
to pray to her, anyway—we heard
you can pray directly to god these days,
desperate times and everything.
though we wonder how much sway
even god has over a molecular enemy,
a perpetual lazarus.
and when the clouds open
we have to wonder:
are these someone's tears
or just raindrops?
are we damp with sadness
or simply wishing the atmosphere
could feel what we do, the weight
of the apocalypse coming down?

and still we couldn't find the moon.

Another fine missive from the Office of End-Times Propaganda

By Dessa Bayrock

—Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

I.

I wake up and think: *I should write about this*
and then: *but everyone is writing about this.*

It's true. The end times are everywhere.
Or so the end times would have you believe.

The materials produced by the Office
of End-Times Propaganda are, frankly,
compelling.

The end times are everywhere,
they say, and would prefer to be met with joy.
If not joy, then with quiet acceptance.
If not quiet acceptance, then with joy.

II.

I think of Tolstoy, who might say:
*peace is all alike. But every descent
into chaos is a new original hell.*

Or is that Dante. Or maybe Sartre. Or
is that Tolstoy and Dante in love. Or is that
Tolstoy and Dante and Sartre meeting up
and holding hands in their own hellish
end times, or whatever follows.

I think about Tolstoy, as though he didn't
throw Anna Karenina under the train, as though
there aren't too many trains to count
barreling towards each of us right now.

III.

In any case: it follows that every end of every thing will be unique, in its own beloved chaos.

My own chaos looks surprisingly simple.
I am not doing enough. But I am trying to do more.

The Office of End-Times Propaganda says:
more will be the death of you.

The Office of End-Times Propaganda counsels:
less.

IV.

Of course we're all writing the same poem
about the end times; they're all the same
end times. And everything is catching.

We have all, at the very least, contracted
the virus of being caught in an apocalypse.

V.

The apocalypse is so thick that my cousin
gives birth and can't pick a name for the baby.

Give him something hopeful, my aunt urges.

I too would like to give him something hopeful.
I would like to give him the fish swimming back
into the canals of Venice; I would like to give him
the possibility of air travel, the impracticality
and allure of joining the mile-high club, the gentle
annoyance of a flight attendant telling him
to return his seat to its upright position
in preparation for landing.

I would like to give him this landing.
I would like to give him this whole earth.

Instead I will ship him a furry onesie
that will make him look like a Wookiee
when my cousin puts him in it.

VI.

All of me is swelling and boiling
like a frog in a pot. I dig an ingrown hair
out of my kneecap. I think about drowning
in the hot tub. I imagine a glossy brochure
that asks me, the reader, to consent
to be reassured, to breathe, to think
about something else.

So I do. I think about the ritual
of baking bread. I think about spring,
which must be soon, which even
the end times cannot stop. I think
about the tree on the edge of my hometown
that I stared at every day, growing up,
on the way to class. I think: *that tree
was the closest thing I had to a god.*

I never asked for more. Or, at least,
I was content with less.

VII.

The Office of End-Times Propaganda warns:
*Hostile microbes can survive on paper
for up to five days.*

I pull Tolstoy from the shelf as if
he didn't murder Anna Karenina.

I tie a bandanna around my nose
and mouth as if to ward off — what?
Anna's despair? Tolstoy's heaving
of her body under a train?

I want to put my mouth on this book.
I want to swallow it whole, and shit it out,
and leave Tolstoy holding hands in hell
with somebody else.

*The Office of End-Times Propaganda
would like to reassure residents
that the plague is barely a pandemic,
and that there are no verifiable
reports of locusts at this time.*

VIII.

The glossy brochure says: *You will likely be able to find one another, in your own way, when all this is over.*

The glossy brochure includes an illustration of Dante and Tolstoy and Sartre holding hands and dancing in some secret tenth circle of hell, and which *the Office of End-Times Propaganda cannot confirm depicts fact, but which we certainly wish to believe some portion of which could possibly be true.*

The glossy brochure says: *write about this apocalypse, in your own way, as though it is any different from the examples listed above.*

The glossy brochure says: *we would like to counsel faith, in your own way, but you and I both know that tree is too far away from you to do any good.*

For Chandrahas, Who is Likely Dead

By H. E. Casson

—*Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

“If I live through this,
I will write an autobiography”
He is smaller than he was last week
When I first met him
Over shared diagnoses and milky tea
“And I will call it
Fuck You Canada”

He laughs
He coughs
He shrinks smaller while I hold his hand

Chandrahas unrolls a painting
“It’s over one hundred years old
But it has not faded away!
It is well-preserved, like me.”

I am just over twenty, so I imagine that painting as five of me
Two-and-a-half of my mother
Less than two of Chandrahas

He is not the god and I am not the elephant
But he says he sees us in it

He rescued the painting
But nothing else
Saved some pictures in an album
That show

He used to teach at a University that floated

He used to show prints in public places
And people paid to disagree on how true they were

He loved a woman half his age
And she let him rest his hand on her shoulder
To erase decades like misdrawn lines

Then his mind was not his mind
Then his home was not his home
Then his possessions were not his possessions

Then his history was not his history
Then
Then
Then

Then illness ran through the shelter
That was only shelter and nothing else
And coated it all
His body
His stories
His day-after-tomorrow

(And I know now is not the time
When we all may fall sick
When we all may fall out
When we all may fall away)

He was as afraid then
As we are now

But I couldn't hold his hand tightly enough
To keep him from fading away

Port Authority

By Phillip Crymble

—*Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada*

Relieved of my identity, I stand among a crowd of nameless Croats, Czechs and Sudanese. The immigration waiting room

reminds me of an aging public lavatory, subway platforms seen from a commuter train — the ones that race towards us on a loop

when we're asleep. It's like a scene from Terry Gilliam's latest nihilistic fantasy — as if we're all command performance extras

cast as background-colour refugees. Black socks and open sandals are a unifying theme. Old women in babushkas count out decades

on their rosaries. The air's as close and clammy as a foundered submarine's. Caught in anxious reverie, I think, at first, of grade

school science class — germ spores splashed like galaxies of stars inside a Petri-dish. And then of bird flu, how it incubates. As kids

we stole the rooster from a hen-house down the street. They tried to scare us straight — took us to the station, opened cells for us to see.

My brother started crying, but such tactics had less truck with me. Months later, playing truant with two friends, I found a derelict

fridge-freezer in a field. The muffled sound of laughter. Flailing fists and feet. A smell like rotten canvas — faulty wiring mixed

with kerosene. When they let me out I had to think to breathe. I've been here twenty minutes. No one's called. No one leaves.

"Port Authority" originally appeared in The Malahat Review

Bone Music

By Síle Englert

—London, Ontario, Canada

When repeated, the word *repetition* becomes
percussion. The consonance of a drumstick
raining rhythmic against the dried skin of a goat

or mine, as if I were a xylophone. White on black,
rows of metatarsals and phalanges are piano keys
waiting to be struck. Follow the wobble of sound

back to a cigarette burrowing hot through
the temporal bone; it is a hole burned in time.
If there is no other song, I will make my body

into music. There are only five rotations left,
maybe ten. Find the photographs of my skeleton
in the hospital trash and reclaim them. Carve

the grooves with an army of makeshift machines.
Set the needle down gently. A lifeline scarified
across the x-ray of my ilium, my sacrum, sacred

sound. The Beatles singing through my mandibles
and teeth— *take these sunken eyes and learn to see*.
At seventy-eight rotations per minute, there is nothing
else to dance to. I will make my body into music.

**Lyrics from "Blackbird" by Paul McCartney*

Liked by Miyuki Jomei

By émilie kneifel

—Tiohtiáke (Montreal), Quebec, Canada



In the times of social distancing, I was a grapefruit

By John LaPine

—Chico, California, USA

all pith and pinkskinned. You took me
by my mottled hand and brought me to the ocean.

You ignored the government fines—
You said, *Fuck that, I need to show you something*—
and stuck a finger between rind and flesh,

and cold-pressed citron oil from my lung.
It was midnight; the sun bared its teeth
at the pale and unfamiliar seagulls, the black sand,

the hollow moon. You said there'd be days
like this, when the lilting music from the farmers'
market would seem like counting seconds

between seeing lightning flash and feeling
thunder's hungry boom. *This is a natural ache*,
you said. And I woke up into a dream, where I found

you again. And I told you what life was like
back in the waking world; we talked about the blood
type of horses; the letter "double-you;" the difference

between "six feet away" and "six feet under."
Dream-you said, *This isn't a death sentence*,
and I fell fist-first on the cement. Dream-you said,

Breathe, and the eels in my jaw wriggled to a tune
that vibrated through a beachful of empty shells—
the notes and lyrics laid bare against seawater.

Shadows of Flowers

By James Not'in

—*Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria*

When I was yet the boy I was, every Friday
I watched clerics sit in hundreds as they carefully
excused their hands from whatever goodness
they had been through. It always hurt, knowing
there is a child on the street with burning lungs.
Time took wing and never looked back. I, in
shadows, become a flower. I wrap myself
in shriveled buds, the streets have gone
empty. Friday noon has metamorphosed to
a timid widower, too scared to face his lover.
I have heard of dead roses, of melted icebergs,
of broken dreams and failed metaphors, but
nothing echoes more than the silence that settles in
the heart of the street, where legs had never ceased.
A single room could also metamorphose to
a labyrinth, in which you are accompanied by
thuds and low footsteps that remind you
of the clerics before the mass. How they exonerate
their hands before the prayers.

I have always wanted to tell my mother I stopped
praying; there has never been a perfect time, until
Sunday. I ended the call, and god must have heard
the longing to be alone. From my room, I could
see the empty streets. Where humans never
neglected is now a place for seagulls to gather,
but briefly.

Epilogue ...?

In time

By Amlanjyoti Goswami

—*Delhi, India*

In time, all this will be distant
As last night's faded dream

Our eyes will flicker at the word
Our hearts will miss a beat

When we remember these days,
How an ambulance at the door spelt danger, not hope

How we looked away from each other
With a measured distance, perfect strangers living together

In time, we will be more at home
With our many imperfections, our perfect solitude

We will know how to divide our sorrows, multiply joys,
Like a method actor with many parts, each part a life

In time, we will learn to eat, a morsel in our palms,
We will learn the meaning of taste

And what it is to have enough
We will be sometimes reborn of solitude

That finds us finally whole
After all those years of searching

In time. All in good time
The poet will find the words to live

And this will become novel
As a hatchback turtle cab

Crawling the foggy streets of New York, or Kolkata
In the yellow light, hard to tell car from colour

In time, we will even forget faces

Those in white, warriors wielding scalpels who tunneled through

And we will forget to thank them, we will forget
Their names, what they ate, what it felt like to be around them

Their common destinies, their life stories
Their hopes, their little fears, their moments of joy

We will look back one day, and wonder
What drove us, fear or hope

The gulp in our throats or survival written in our code
The fear on our lips, or the joy of our songs

What drew us together even as we grew apart
Our friendship in hardship

In time, we might remember to call each other home
Like the old days, when growing up meant strangers in our midst

We may even find the meaning of time
When we go out and meet the sun, at our pace

When night falls, past midnight, we will haunt that old bar
Where the barman with half a smoke and broken eyes

Plays those blues from the old days
And says he prefers poetry to the sound of silence

We will remember him, even as he no longer remembers us
And we will think of hope, its absence of thought, its perfect belief

When generations on ask us, what it was like
We will tell them, yes, we kissed with our eyes

Learnt how to live, a day at a time, not a breath too soon
How we never found the time to die

When It Is All Over

By Priyanka Sacheti

—Palo Alto, California, USA and Bangalore, Karnataka, India

When it is all over, tell me,
what are you going to do?
Me, I will build a nest for a day
when it might happen again,
a quilted nest where
stars will shine night and day.
I will unread books just for
the future joy of reading them
for the first time again.
I will stare at a meal on a plate
in a restaurant with pink and green walls
and remind myself of the grace of it all,
the ones who served and cooked it,
who grew the tomatoes and avocados,
and the man who sold them on the highway
by a gleaming satin sea.
I will learn gardening to
nourish myself and others,
planting coriander and tomatoes
and oregano and lemons,
watching them grow,
greening, fattening,
thankful for the sheer
miracle of it all.
And I will learn to always share
my lifejacket with others,
knowing that we are all
adrift in the same sea and
it is only together
we can reach dry land.

Friday Joy and Pain

By Amy Stuber

—Lawrence, Kansas, USA

The virus that sweeps through the town by the ocean causes those who get it to lose certain memories wholesale. Or maybe some people lose joy and pain. Or something they wanted to hold tight to. Really, no one is quite sure. It's a little different in everyone, at least that's what people say. All of it is a good or a bad thing, depending on which person you ask.

The woman whose husband builds boats, and who herself does not have an official profession but is known in the town for growing the best golden beets, starts knitting socks for everyone and leaving them in mailboxes, even though socks are not what anyone needs. She does not remember the time her husband pushed her back into the door with the coat hooks in a way that left a row of bruises like ellipses between her shoulder blades. When she tells him goodbye in the morning by that door, she doesn't pause or flinch. And when she sees the man who makes the cashew milk lattes she orders every day, she knows they know each other, but she can't remember the way they fucked in a cave by the ocean on July 4th while their spouses and everyone drank wine or whiskey from metal mugs and trawled sparklers through the mist by the water. And she doesn't remember the quiet after when the coffee man left her in the cave and there was just the dark hum of the nighttime water out beyond the sand and the flash of the sparklers through the fog and the wet moss against her bare back and she didn't need anything more.

In the coffee place, the man with the coffee continues to put hearts in foam for all the people who order lattes, but he doesn't remember when his wife called to say she was leaving, called in the middle of the day on the landline with the long cord that stretched all the way out to the deck where people sometimes left their dogs to bark at ravens. He forgets the nights outside in the claw-foot tub he's converted to a hot tub and the walks along the cliff where the wild radish pocks the edge that sometimes crumbled but where it was a quiet thrill to walk so close and wonder.

The man's and the woman's children who've known each other forever, who've been friends for life but no longer are, forget why they stopped being friends. They forget so many things: vomiting at 2 AM and knees with split skin that leak blood around bits of embedded gravel. They forget classroom notes not received and the look of their mothers standing at windows at dusk and the sounds of certain songs that always almost make them cry. They forget the sharp and brilliant cold of the water around a wet suit when waves tumble them through a glorious stop-time chaos. They forget the place under the bridge where they sat while their parents ate on blankets they'd brought back from Mexico and where they brought a stolen plastic shell of lemon bars for everyone and then eventually beer and weed and where nights could feel like whole beautiful operatic arcs. They forget beach fires and dogs in troupes that wander across the sand to greet anyone and everyone. They are left with all the mundanities. The gray days. The long hours. The middle ground.

It's the opposite of every other emergency. There's no stockpiling of water, no nighttime worrying. All the news reports are about things like weekend festivals and tolerable traffic jams. The bars empty out. The dealers get no texts. Capitalism tanks.

Then on a Friday after so many weeks that they've almost forgotten joy and pain altogether, when they've almost forgotten the before, they start getting bits of things back, some good, some bad. Someone wakes up feeling off. Someone at the hot bar in the grocery store sees bean sprouts in a stir-fry and flinches because of that one episode of food poisoning that was the worst, and she drops the tongs that really they shouldn't all be sharing anyway. Someone who works the kitchen at the bed and breakfast closest to the water drops something and the shard of glass that lodges in her index finger opens her up completely. The man in the coffee place has to sit behind the building where the foxgloves grow up to his waist and he, to keep from crying, pinches the skin of his fingers so hard he breaks it. The woman takes all of her yarn in a reusable grocery bag and runs to the cliff overlooking the headlands and tosses it over and into the water, but it lands on rocks instead, so it's there, visible for everyone, which is not the dramatic gesture she wanted.

And then they are all completely in it, sitting on sidewalks crying or running down to the beach, elated. So many of them in those stupid socks the woman with the beets left all around town. Tree trunks are wrapped with decorative yarn, too, and the brightness of the designs suddenly means things: the time in the water, the time with a child, the time with two hands on another person. Is this what they liked? Is this, all of it, what they were missing? It's too much. They're not sure they can take it. It's everything.

Contributors

Thekla Martina Altmann spent her childhood in Communism, her youth in a unified Europe, and now lives in rural Canada. Her day jobs spanned many industries (translation, retail, personal care, even tree planting) before she finally had the guts to come out as a poet and writer. She is part of the rainbow community, an invisible immigrant, and survivor of sexual assault. Currently, she is finishing up her collection of poetry *Skin is a Red Herring*, a collaboration with various Nova Scotian visual artists, and working on her novel *Edenville*, a story about a charming serial killer in a small town.

M.P. Armstrong is a queer poet from Ohio, studying English and history at Kent State University. Their work appears or is forthcoming in many publications, including *Luna Negra*, *Brainchild*, and *Red Earth Review*. They also serve as managing editor and reporter for both *Curtain Call* and *Fusion* magazines. In their spare time, they enjoy traveling, board games, and brightly colored blazers. Find them online: @mpawrites and at mpawrites.wixsite.com/website.

Dr **Rachel Bari** is a Professor of English at Kuvempu University, Shimoga, Karnataka. She is an author, editor and creative writer; her areas of interest include gender and feminism. Gardening is a favorite pastime, and she is a huge fan of cats and dogs. She loves to travel in search of good food and is hoping to write a book soon. Her writing has been mostly academic, including *Paradoxical Women: Irigaray, Femininity and Eugene O'Neill* (Pratheeksha Publications).

Dessa Bayrock lives in Ottawa with two cats and a variety of succulents, one of which occasionally blooms. She is the editor of post ghost press. You can find her, or at least more about her, at dessabayrock.com, and at @yodessa on Twitter.

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H. E. Casson lives in a very small house in Toronto with one human, one fish, and eight plants. Their words have recently been featured in *Lunate*, *Taco Bell Quarterly*, *Apparition Lit*, *Stonecrop Review*, *Terse*, and *Writers Resist*. They can be found online at hecasson.com and as @hecasson on Twitter.

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Bill Crumplin lives in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. He will soon retire from a 28-year career as a geography and environmental studies professor, and he knows that he will miss learning with his students. He has many interests outside academia, including poetry, acrylic painting, music, beer and pets. He has led a small group of amateur poets for about 10 years; this group meets at a local pub on an ad hoc basis to share poems on given themes. He volunteers in a local craft brewery and is a cancer survivor.

Phillip Crymble is a physically disabled writer and literary scholar living in Fredericton, New Brunswick. A poetry editor at *The Fiddlehead* and a PhD candidate at UNB, he received his MFA from the University of Michigan and has published poems in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Literary Review of Canada*, *The Forward Book of Poetry 2017*, and elsewhere. In 2016, *Not Even Laughter*, his first full-length collection, was a finalist for both the New Brunswick Book Award and the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia's J.M. Abraham Prize.

Colin Dardis is a poet, editor, art facilitator and sound artist. His most recent collection is *The Dogs of Humanity* (Fly on the Wall Press, 2019). Colin's work has been published widely throughout Ireland, the UK and the US.

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Cai Draper is a poet from South London. His work appears in various publications in print and online. He organises free poetry workshops at the Book Hive. @DraperCai

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Ryan Gibbs is an English professor who lives in London, Canada. His poems have appeared in *Illumen*, *Tower Poetry*, and *The Windsor Review*. His children's poetry has been included in the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness.

Margaryta Golovchenko is a settler-immigrant, poet, critic, and academic based in Tkaronto/Toronto, Treaty 13 and Williams Treaty territory, Canada. The author of two poetry chapbooks, she is completing her MA in art history and curatorial studies at York University and can be found sharing her (mis)adventures on Twitter: @Margaryta505.

Amlanjyoti Goswami's poetry has been published around the world, in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, the UK, USA, South Africa, Kenya and Germany, and in the following anthologies: *40 under 40: An Anthology of Post Globalisation Poetry* (Poetrywala), *A Change of Climate* (Manchester Metropolitan University, Environmental Justice Foundation and the University of Edinburgh), and the Sahitya Akademi anthology of *Modern English Poetry*. His recent collection of poems, *River Wedding*, has just been published by Poetrywala and has been widely reviewed. His poems have also appeared on street walls in Christchurch, exhibitions in Johannesburg and buses in Philadelphia. He has read internationally, including in New York, Delhi and Boston. He grew up in Guwahati, Assam and lives in Delhi.

Halle Gulbrandsen is a writer and pilot. Her work has been published in *The New Quarterly*, *CV2*, *The Antigoniish Review*, *filling Station*, and elsewhere. Find her in the sky, by the water, or online at hallegulbrandsen.com.

Liz Harmer is the author of *The Amateurs*, which was a 2019 finalist for the Amazon Canada First Novel Award. Her work has been published widely. In 2014, she won a National Magazine Award in Personal Journalism; in 2018 was shortlisted for the Journey Prize; and in 2019 was the runner-up for the Mitchell Prize in poetry. Born and raised in Hamilton, Ontario, she now lives in Southern California with her family.

Douglas Herasymuik is a healthcare worker, community activist and emerging Canadian poet who writes about social justice, freedom and beautiful sadness.

Jason Heroux's most recent book is the novel *Amusement Park of Constant Sorrow* (Mansfield Press, 2018). He is currently the Poet Laureate for the city of Kingston, Ontario.

Temidayo Jacob is a Sociologist who writes from the North Central part of Nigeria. He is passionate about expressing the conflict between the individual and society, especially through identity, sexuality and conformity. Temidayo Jacob is a Publisher at foenix press. He is the author of *Beauty Of Ashes*, and his work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Rattle*, *Lucent Dreaming*, *Kalahari Review*, *Peeking Cat Poetry*, *Rejection Letters*, *Page Adventure*, and elsewhere. He is also a contributor to leading anthologies. You can reach him on Twitter: @BoyUntouched.

Candice James is the Poet Laureate Emerita of New Westminster, BC, Canada. She is the author of 15 books of poetry, a visual artist, a musician, a singer/songwriter, and a workshop facilitator. Her first book, *A Split in the Water*, was published by Fiddlehead Poetry Books 1979, and her collection *The Path of Loneliness* is forthcoming with Inanna Publications in Spring 2020.

Samantha Jones (she/her) is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Geography at the University of Calgary. Her poetry appears in *Blanket Sea*, *blue skies poetry*, *Eunoia Review*, *Grain Magazine*, and *Room Magazine*. Samantha lives and writes in Calgary, Alberta.

Sophie Kearing lives in Chicago with two cats, a dog, and an overworked Nespresso machine. Her fiction has been picked up by a variety of publications, and she was nominated for a 2019 Pushcart Prize. She's an avid member of the #WritingCommunity on Twitter and would love to connect with you: @SophieKearing.

émilie kneifel is a sick fish, goo fish, they fish, blue fish (critic, poet, and co-creator of playd8s, a show for you if you need it). find 'em at emiliekneifel.com, @emiliekneifel, and in Tiohtiáke, hopping and hoping.

John LaPine earned his MA in creative writing & pedagogy from Northern Michigan University (NMU), where he volunteered as an associate editor of creative nonfiction & poetry for the literary journal *Passages North*. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Rising Phoenix Review*, *Hot Metal Bridge*, *The /Temz/ Review*, *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*, *Under the Gum Tree*, *Rhythm & Bones*, *Midwestern Gothic*, & elsewhere. His first chapbook of essays, *An Unstable Container*, is forthcoming from Bull City Press in 2020. He teaches English at Butte College.

Jessica Martinez spent her life in various European countries before the winds took her to Hartford, Connecticut, in 2014. Her poems have appeared in a few places, among them *Literary Mama*, *Mom Egg Review*, and *Selected Texts from the Daniil Pashkoff Prize*.

Thandiwe Mccarthy is a Fredericton, New Brunswick, Spoken Word poet and performer focused on promoting wellness through self-discovery. As a senior-year recreation student at the University of New Brunswick, he is often found lost in books, happily indulging his love of learning.

Mackenzie Moore is a podcast and television writer living in Los Angeles. Her work has appeared in *Architectural Digest*, *Man Repeller*, and *Lunch Ticket*. She smears miso on bagels and forgets to drink water most days.

James Not'in is an experimental artist & poet exploring the universality of individual experiences, the individualities of universal experiences, and Yorùbá myths. His works explore the trajectory of existing as one and as wholes, and his constructive works eliminate the separation of the writer/performer and the audience/reader. He currently experiments with Contemporary Dance and Digital Literature. He is most times on Twitter @eclipsepoet and currently lives in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Cindy Arlette Orellana is a Montreal-born, Ottawa-raised and Toronto-based writer and poet. She is a linguist by trade and currently learning her fourth language. Her poetry will appear in the inaugural *Feel Ways* anthology, slated for release this coming June. Cindy is betting on her creativity as her exit strategy.

Kirsten Pendreigh's poems have recently appeared in magazines such as *Room*, *Prairie Fire*, *Arc Poetry*, *Savant-Garde*, *subTerrain*, and *CV2*, as well in anthologies, including *Sweet Water*, *Poems for the Watersheds* (Caitlin Press). Kirsten's debut picture book *LET THE BABY PUSH THE BUTTONS!* will be published next year. She's too often on Twitter @kpiependreigh.

Lee Potts is a poet with work in several journals, including *Rust + Moth*, *Ghost City Review*, *Kissing Dynamite*, *UCity Review*, and *Sugar House Review*. He is poetry editor at *Barren Magazine*. You can find him on Twitter @LeePottsPoet and online at leepotts.net.

Emma Rhodes is in her final year completing a BA in English Literature (honours) with a concentration in Creative Writing at St. Thomas University. She will be pursuing an MA in English Literature at Queen's University in the fall. Her publishing experience includes *Sonder Midwest Magazine*, *Feelszine*, *Elm and Ampersand* podcast, *Plenitude*, and *The Puritan*.

Priyanka Sacheti is a writer and poet based in Bangalore, India. She has previously lived in the United Kingdom and the United States. She has been published in numerous publications, with a special focus on art, gender, diaspora, and identity. Her literary work has appeared in *The Brown Orient*, *Barren Magazine*, *Berfrois*, *The Lunchticket*, and *Jaggery Lit*, as well as in various anthologies. She's currently working on a poetry collection. She explores the intersection of her writing and photography on Instagram: @anatasofallthatisee. She tweets @priyankasacheti1.

James Schwartz is a poet, writer, slam performer and author of 5 poetry collections, including *The Literary Party: Growing Up Gay and Amish in America*. He resides in Olympia, Washington. (literaryparty.blogspot.com)

Ashley Stennett is a freelance television news writer in Toronto, Canada. She is a graduate of McMaster University (BA, English Literature) and Sheridan College (diploma, Broadcast Journalism). She began her media career as an announcer at a radio station in Hamilton, Ontario, where she currently resides. Ashley is a proud golden retriever aunt to Harley.

Amy Stuber's fiction has appeared in *American Short Fiction*, *Joyland*, *Hobart*, *Wigleaf*, *New England Review*, and elsewhere. She is an Assistant Flash Editor for *Split Lip Magazine* and is on Twitter @amy_stuber_ and online at www.amystuber.com. She lives in Lawrence, Kansas.

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Erin Wilson is a wannabe poet living in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Her work is mostly about her experiences living as a woman, mother and feminist. Eight out of ten people describe her as opinionated, sardonic and consistently peckish. You can find her on Twitter at @ErinWilsonNB.

Christine Wu is a Chinese-Canadian poet currently living in Fredericton on traditional unceded Wolastoqiyik territory.