



MAYHEM FIVE

MayhemLiteraryJournal5|October2017

Mayhem 5 | October 2017

Editor: Dr Tracey Slaughter

Deputy Editor: D.A. Taylor

Editorial Team: Renée Boyer, Rachael Elliott, Karl Guethert,
essa ranapiri, Jeanie Richards and Melody Wilkinson

Issue 5 Original Web Design: Cathy Cross

Advisory Board: Catherine Chidgey and Mark Houlahan

Digital issue publisher (2022): D.A. Taylor

Cover image by Joel Hinton

ISSN: 2382-0322

Mayhem Literary Journal 5 © 2017, 2022

**The fifth issue of *Mayhem* was made possible thanks to
support from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at
The University of Waikato**

See the back page for information about submitting to
Mayhem Literary Journal

MayhemLiteraryJournal5|October2017

Tracey Slaughter	Editorial	7
D.A. Taylor	Editorial	9
essa ranapiri	The Hol(e) Triptych	11
	We Were Never of Dust and Shall Never Return to It	13
	E N B Y	16
Rebecca Hawkes	Pony Club Summer Camp	22
Luana Leupolu	Dad's Bad Words	24
	Baby Hairs (A Tribute to Courtney)	26
Bob Orr	Z	27
Bronwyn Laundry	Fingers	28
	Blueprints	30
Evelyn Birch	If Harry Dresden Was My Best Friend	32
Rhys Monkley	Dismantled	33
Ash Dorgan	+	34
Nikki Crutchley	Half Way Across the World for You	36
Lee Kimber	A Time When	37
Alyssa Miles	Picture Perfect	39
Mark Anthony Houlahan	Conference	40
Tania Collins	Moge byc slodka (I can be sweet)	42
	Dwie pogrzeby (Two Funerals)	46
Brittany Rose	my mint plant is not a metaphor for my mental health	50
Calum Hughes	Broken House	51
Emily Campbell	Doris	52
	Holzer Diagnostic	53
Mark Prisco	Lines by the River	55
	Reflex	60

Mayhem Literary Journal

Eefa Yasir Jauhary	Season of an eating disorder	61
N R Pelham	from Triangle	64
Jenny Price	Where are you	67
Andrew T. Lyall	Oneironautics	68
D.A. Taylor	-ve space	69
	Dahlias (dialtone wake)	71
	Dud	72
Jamie de Jong	Swimming Pool	74
	You knew something about this	75
Chloe Francis	Butterflies and Birds	76
Andrew Lacey	Pohutukawa	78
Carmen Penny	Numbers Tense	79
Aimee-Jane Anderson-O'Connor		
	Amber	81
	Knead	83
Maryana Garcia	Amistad	85
Steve Outram	Room 11 1967	86
Holly McLeod	I am	87
Maria-Teresa Corino	body/hair	89
Loren Thomas	Back Roads	92
Norman Franke	On the early films of Yasujirō Ozu	94
	Accidental poem on a Genitive website (Mind Mars, Moses, Sands and Grace)	95
Tori Mitchell	critical	96
	freedom	98
Hazel Brooking	Willing to Wait	99
Conor Maxwell	Helena Road	100
	dis integrate	102
	Rose-glass	104

Mayhem Literary Journal

Scott Carroll	Cameras	106
Wayland Davick	Understand	107
Trevor Hayes	What it Feels Like	109
Rebecca Tegan	I am not my diagnosis	110
Dadon Rowell	Mingled Memories	111
	A History of the Body	112
Hamish Ansley	Notes on a Razor	114
	Four Simple Steps to Becoming a Successful Writer	117
Contributors' Notes		122
Submit to <i>Mayhem</i>		128

Tracey Slaughter

Editorial

Writers read. Full stop. No exception. End of story. A writer who doesn't read is like a painter who never opens their eyes. Is there a musician out there whose headphones aren't crunching with punk history, or brimming with symphony, who doesn't slip the turntable their latest LP and lie down to wait for the chromatic transports of the needle? If you write, you're a junkie for the word, wherever you can pick up the next hit. And luckily, the drug is everywhere. It's stitched into the battered leather covers of volumes you ease off the shelf in a gilded haze of dust, the classics whose pages breathe out the weather and melody of ancient sentences. It's loaded on link after electric link, the latenight screen set alight with glinting rivulets of now. It pops up in ads, banging hardsell lines into your brain. It's inked around the toilet stalls, dirty clues to our psyche's deep graffiti. It's packed into the graphic punch of zines. It's stamped on the back of endless planet-choking packets, a landfill of plastic language, a best-before hell. It shouts from streetsigns, it whispers from notes slid along the desk in class. It zings between besties, a fast track of texts, trading plans and goss and ohmygods, or weaves between lovers, a trail of coded want, shortcuts of heartbeat. It jams your letterbox with red lines, sales that must end, payments overdue. It posts its status in flashes of self-satisfaction, or updates of lonely sob. It looms in the leaves of the dark tale that spellbound you in childhood, luring you to where the wild things are, where language first taught you to listen for its feathers and claws. It spills out your course-reader, if you open it, and don't just pay Campus Copy for nothing. If you're a writer, you read everything, because you want to see language at work, everywhere it goes. You want to pay attention to how it travels, how it shapes and hides, how it heals and hurts. You

want to see it in action, you want to scope its moves, break down its m.o. You read like a hunter, you read like a heroine on a dark quest, you read like a noir private eye (*so what's a beautiful word like you doing in a lousy joint like this...*). You never quit. You're addicted to language, however you can get it, its gift, its trick, its nectar, its fix.

For this kind of reader, another edition of *Mayhem* is a rare thrill, a one-stop shop of sensory wonders. It's full of the kick of language, full of writers who share this hunger, this urge for words' energy and entropy and rush. It's an issue made of writers who push, on limits, on meanings, on yesterdays, on relationships, on genders and genres. It holds the magnifying glass of words up close to the body of experience and everywhere the light strikes finds us 'highly combustible,' our contemporary lives made of 'intense heat' (see Rebecca Hawkes' 'Would I recognise the garden if I saw it'). It tips the lines of convention on their side and sets adrift a lonely silhouette to wander 'the depths of the left-hand' margin littered with vagrant loveliness and longing (see D.A. Taylor's '-ve space'). It vandalises the house of fiction, to 'turn on all the taps full bore and open up the windows,' strobing a new prose form into lush poetic shape through use of the fragment and the flash (see Aimee-Jane Anderson-O'Connor's 'Amber'). Perhaps above it all it wants to make felt the links between language and the body, to jam the lexicon of binaries and doublebinds that have reduced and ensnared our flesh, and let the physical revel in the 'shuddering call and response' of unleashed language (see the work of Essa Ranapiri). It reads skin, it reads bloodbeat, it reads 'the violent reality' of 'nerves hit on nerves,' to bring alive a stunning imprint of who we are and who we need to be, who we should be free to be. *Mayhem 5* reads us – we hope it brings you joy to read it back.

D.A. Taylor

Editorial

The relationship between writers and their work is strained and dirty. It's the late nights scratching at a pad and a beer tab-pull, streetlamps shutting off at the sprawl of dawn, enamel-staining buckets of coffee. It's snatching a few lines between classes or the napping of babes, or devoting a weekend to a hotel or treehouse to get some lines down. It's the hairline thinning to the labouring over verbs, the specks between your vision and the ceiling bulb, the slow timekeeping contractions of the oil heaters in the silent orbit of that sentence that refuses to cooperate. A laptop keeps the sheets warm; a biro sits just so in the pen-shaped dent at the end of the middle finger.

These are the signs of our compulsion to write, to endure the 'intolerable wrestle with words and meanings.' To put words to paper, to comb and re-comb them for fault like searching for lice in a child's hair, to then take your grubby and glyphed paper to a workshop or writer's group; to hear it aloud, sometimes damp underarm, sometimes without eyes lifting from the too-small desk, sometimes vibrating from the plexus to the whiteboard in the next room; to ask for a small piece of your soul to be judged one word at a time: these are not things we do for love but, as Catherine Chidgey and Tracey Slaughter once remarked, to save some small and precious moments from the plunge of time.

Mayhem 5 is a testament to those moments that bear witness and refuse to be left to time and oblivion. It's the rhetorical question of a stain in the underpants and a pink plus in Ash Dorgan's +, the pain of distance and unpromises in Mark Prisco's *lines by the river*, the gorgon at the periphery of Eefa Yasir Jauhary's *Season of an eating disorder*. It makes its way from under the base of the spine to scratch with chewed hangnail in Bronwyn Laundry's *Fingers*, puts

a blade to the breastbone in Mark Anthony Houlahan's *Conference*, offers instruction and forgiveness in Hamish Ansley's *Four Simple Steps to Becoming a Successful Writer*, calls from our blind spots the 'functioning messes' of the human body in Essa Ranapiri's *ENBY*.

Mayhem 5 shines darkly with need to write, to salvage from the wreckage and jetsam of the everyday, to resist the simple and celebrate dirt-frosted glass and survivors' scars, unclean lines, boots on the table, the agony of putting pen to paper and the pleasure in having saved something. So put words to paper, and make them matter to someone somewhere, starting with yourself. Nobody minds if it starts with an HB on looseleaf or on a \$5.99 app; whether you have to have to be three cups deep in tea or face north in the mornings. Write. Then read. Re-read. Write the stories you want to read. Read stories you wished you wrote, and take notes. People-watch on your days off. Start a blog. Write a play and put it on. Tell bad stories and learn from the experience. I don't know if writing gets easier—go ask someone with more miles on the clock—but you will get better with practice. Grab some paper and get to it.

essa ranapiri

The Hol(e) Triptych

Jesus is a spread-eagled corpse on my bed – been that way for years now.
A statue to straddle in my sleep.
Wandering fingers finding more questions than answers.
But I'm not looking at him
(he's just the same as always)
there is a painting hung from a staircase cupboard
and on it a
wooden coded-*woman* form
arms raised / horns like fumes / a skull blast holding the same hue
dragged by fingernail
raked purpose.
I scatter / eyes skitter for a father in Christ's deterioration-
unable to find the fucking words for son in the language of my
gender.
Eyes bleed already on the second painting
writing words in black ink that dry black
wrists spitting red /drying brown.
My friends are safe
in the knowledge paint can dry brown too.
A crystal white womb uncorrupted by liquid plastic.

And I found the word *father* in the bible before I found it
on your face
or in your hands
turned into broken water for the first time.
A song is playing forgiveness in 3/4

I scream *I still love you* because I like to sing along.
I feel the failure of the third
a blue face
with red mouth and orange flesh
yellow bones of a
heated exclamation
driven by the dot
right into my forehead
what beastly self-portrait is this?
Unlisted as prodigal you just wanted to escape me.
And when I look back
Jesus is corpse dust
on the window sill now
I never heard him utter *Eloi*
because the mouth couldn't invent forsaken
or *father*.

We Were Never of Dust and Shall Never Return to It

the word

you get a ten-dollar bottle of wine
and i get some potato chips and dip
we take them up to Polhill
find a pallet to sit on and share
we look like background characters from Harry Potter
me in a red tunic and you in shimmering blue
your hair as long it gets
we sit on the slope
constellations poking through
the scarce cover
of the surrounding trees
you can only see two stars without your glasses on
one for each eye
we talk about the lit scene
and expectations of gender
til the wind picks up and
it gets cold so we start kissing each other
i don't think about your partner
much
and i don't think you do either

the breath

in my room we sit reading poetry
Ronald Johnson had a ship to get on
and wrote about beauty as beauty
instead of pain

and when you're in my bed on top of me
you don't take off your shoes
because you don't want us to go as far as fucking

it basically works

transitioning between your legs
a shuddering call and response
a hand behind my neck
massaging the base

of my skull
feels like it could
split
my fingers crawling around your legs and waist
a journey i seldom make
the word pilgrimage would carry all the wrong
connotations
so i think of the hyphen in G-d instead

mouths press firm on mouths
emotional interiority performed
in the clatter of teeth and
the laughter that follows it
make my lips turn to dusk
the liquid on the window sill
of my many vibrating parts
that take the sample of greenstone from your neck
how can you prefer something shapeless
to filled space
it swings into the mole of your collar
you're a patchwork from head to toe
you're wearing fucking nothing
i'm digging fingers into the
crevasses of your thighs

the site of the body feels more like a battlefield than it
ever has
more connotational slippage
but the reality of
nerves hit on nerves
is a violent reality

you pull my hair
you scratch my skin
you bite my lips

but you are gentle
in letting me go

there being a sigh of the gate that rises to a screech of
the hinge and a clap of the lock

E N B Y

I
let
up
I
sev
er
I
ailmen
to-be
a line

There is nowhere so centromere. And after the S phase I challenge
your identical claim.

Walter Sutton and Theodor Boveri found me while I was cutting
fuck you's into desks and strung me up from the hair on my chest
and between my legs. If you strip me naked and (only my nan and
two others have done so) you would find a perfect biologically
functioning male. And by that I mean a cock and balls.

I's
roll
back

Colour of soma. Your yoga body fuzzing inside of what one called
a vector of heredity – genetic load.

I am numbers 47 and 48 continuously copied and wrong. *Poecilia
reticulata* holds the correct number of chromosomes – pot at

bottom of rainbow metaphor. The guppy has another name; millionfish. See how it swims to the surface and licks the air bubbles, sea glinting (give us a wink for a wave).

Cri
Down
Edwards
Isodentric 15
Jacobsen
Klinefelter

Languorous list of aberration how can a mistake be so long –
when does the rule you make start to look like overcooked pasta
left to dry in the strainer.

There are genetics
laid like mosaics
carry your X and
your Y
& XY
inter-patterning.

Someone colonized our bodies but I cannot lay the blame at the
feet of two scientists just doing their jobs – blam less the worker
bee stub

science medusa cull the dis-order from the body with
cistematic distruction
But all bodies are functioning messes. Do you deny that your
blood and guts are not curving on a ratio of 1.62 stop.

My point being my skin is no distraction from my self.

The nonbinary individual in terms of biological science can
exist anywhere on a spectrum of XX to XY, have any form of

gonad or any thing from vulva to penis, testicles to ovaries, (the appearance of a spectrum as linear is false but frequently the only way to suggest clearly to the “unwilling” that there is an out).

The nonbinary individual need not exist within an in-between space. They/xe/he/her etc. (pronouns are not necessarily related to gender – or there is no one rule) may exist on all the spectrums. Time itself can play a part in the gender of a person. Like Richard O’Brien a nonbinary individual may conceptualize themselves as 70 percent male, 30 percent female. This is not a rule. The nonbinary individual finds rules difficult and looks at them like how they look at knives that never need sharpening. Trans and cis constructs are indicative of another false binary – one that is more reconcilable than man and woman (I would like to change the base there but how?) Gender nonconforming is not necessarily trans but can be; the nonbinary individual has full say over what they are – “as long as they are of sound mind”. Farcical. The scientific community found in many inane discussion threads littered all over the internet would argue that no nonbinary identity exists and isn’t insane. Their binary is looser; man/woman/mentally ill. This community was raised on hot dog sex education. Their discourse is by its nature transphobic. The nonbinary individual is biologically nonbinary. The gonad does not determine gender.

The nonbinary individual may suffer from gender dysphoria (this technically only counts in the DSM so that there may be help provided for those that experience this) the body is not by nature but by cultural necessity gendered. However, in the nonbinary individual’s personal experience they have a deep hatred for their own body – promoted by the cultural signifiers that idealize certain types of bodies as male and certain types of bodies as female. There is nothing about their body that is unfemale or unmale – there is nothing unsatisfying about crushing a snail underfoot aside from the death.

This shouldn’t tell you much because gender shouldn’t tell you

anything.
About
a
person.
I make smoke
and foam
into whistles –
I live
liminally and nominally.
More whitecap than whitewash.
Splashing impotently over black sandy beaches.

over some unfortunate ant – wrong
place wrong time and so highly combustible
– I find myself wanting
 wrong things – bite until I burst every capillary
all over you to bruise – the smell of your skin hairs shrivelling to ash
too close to a source of intense heat – I don't know why I ache after
what is most hurtful – as though I could skin everyone who is nice to me
and live inside of them – is there anything
I react to more violently than gentleness – it's just
 – there's a lot going on right now
this vagrant heart swinging its amnesias ahead of us now like a
cellphone torch
and laughing at our stumble up the slick clay incline
– can we lie down – can I leave my shoes on – taste
fermented honey mead or well-fed sourdough starter – a kind of
redness
inflammatory and luxuriant as the indefensible
pop songs of our youth – crooked fingers
bucking directionless on the way to somewhere
 unspecified by language

and then a falling branch in the dark
a body
crying out and trembling beneath mine

Pony Club Summer Camp

the pony club wash up against the rocks
while you watch
the socks & jodhpurs stuffed into their helmets riverside
&
the pony club offer you electrolyte
drink so much more blue than swimming pool you expect to
half die of it quenching in your throat like an eyeful of chlorine
&
the pony club argue over whether any of their true
loves could be stronger than the bond between a girl & her horse
(a phenomenon so universally potent it is taken for granted as a
unit of measurement)
&
the pony club braid everything with their hot freckled hands &
after weaving plaits
in hay & manes & dressage ribbons they sit in a circle and braid
your hair together with
their hair & thus you become one ponytail & so the pony club is a
sunburnt rat king
&
the pony club weep their way through the season
mucking in through pollen & spore & gusty choking horsehair
moult all red-eyed unrepentant
antihistamine addled & still yelling at you newly unsaddled to get
up and quit bawling
&
the pony club dangle above your bunk on their reins from the
rings of Saturn

like a child's mobile & they rotate slowly with your every exhale
as though you could still move them even if you can't quite reach
from here

&

the pony club have you scrubbing for hours
polishing halfchewed grass from bridle bits but they
refuse to pick the musky caked oatmeal out of their braces after
breakfast

Luana Leupolu

Dad's Bad Words

you learn all of dad's bad words by age six:
for fucks sake,
bloody hell,
jesus christ, what's the bloody hold-up?
and capitalism.

they appear on the way to swimming lessons,
orchestra practice, and piano lessons:
any time he has to sit in bloody auckland traffic,
and any time you have a question
about the corporate slugs being interviewed
on the six o'clock news.

as a kid, you hear them after someone does something naughty -
when you accidentally kick a hole in the living room wall as
you're being tickled,
or when your older brother peter runs all over dad's newly planted
lettuce patch during a game of tag.
on these occasions dad gives you each a smack on the arm
which leaves a mark the same gleaming red as his yelling face.

in your pre-teens, dad doesn't smack you anymore, but he lectures
you.
by this stage, you have read a lot of books where girls 'flounce'
out of the room,
and so you try to 'flounce' out of the room too, after such lectures.
but you quickly realise your dad hasn't read the same books.
he follows you while you stomp away and says

you'd better watch that fucking attitude, too, and then you cry.

sometimes, you consider running away.
(you've read a lot of books where girls do this too.)
on a particularly brave day, you don't run away,
but you sneak to the end of the garden
and hide under the avocado tree for hours.
doing nothing. just to make dad worry.

instead, your mother worries,
and peter goes to the neighbours and the dairy:
'have you seen my sister? have you seen my sister?'
and dad is in his office the whole time,
working on his new piece titled
the condition of the working class in 1890s new zealand;
and the sun sets and you go back into the house
before anyone gets round to telling him you were missing.

peter grows up to be a master of imitating dad:
come on grandma!, on the motorway;
no, there's much nicer food at home, when someone suggests
mcdonalds on the way back.
give it a few years, and you won't be able to tell if he's joking
anymore:
shirt tucked in on one side and hanging out the other,
tattered jeans browned at the knees after a day in the garden,
speights old dark in hand,
teaching the kids how to spell bourgeoisie.

Baby Hairs (A Tribute to Courtney)

we met the year our hips suddenly stretched out into broad, untouched horizons; when pimples formed constellations across our foreheads; when we got home one day to find a smear of dark sludge in our underwear.

we met the year we learned people don't like it when girls get too many things: good marks and a date to the dance; captain of the netball team and a spot on the school council. we met the year we learned big-mouthed year seven girls were not allowed to have crushes on skinny boys in the year eight sports class.

we met in the year we believed we were ugly. we cut off our baby hairs with the kitchen scissors because people told us they stuck up when it rained, and we kept cutting until we accidentally chopped off some bits around them too. we met in the year we couldn't explain to our mums why we would do such a thing, and everyone called us the *little shit year sevens with the shaven baby hairs* when we were made to grow it all back out.

if we could meet our younger selves now - if we could remember what we used to think as we lay in bed each night, tears streaming down the sides of our face; if we hadn't gone back to our diaries years later with a giant black marker, scrubbing out each page of naïve daily report - we would go easy on us.

we would smile in a way that said *you can trust us*; we would sit cross-legged on the rugby field and listen; we would tell us our friendship was the only thing said or done that year which would outlast the gentle magic of time.

Bob Orr

Z

One night I saw as if in a vision
the warning lights above the level crossing
as red roses announcing the arrival of beauty.
Having reached the end of the line
beneath the Z of a service station neon sign
I dreamt of Robin and mandolin sweet Marion
fleeing the hangman of Nottingham Castle
naked as fleas in the filth of a barn
to hide out in the tangled forest of Howie Parke's
dark shadow land.
With pre-mixed spirits and a fractured red rose
stolen from a carbon monoxide garden
after passing through time zones to the other side of
town
I looked back only once
turning to see my life a train wreck behind me.

Bronwyn Laundry

Fingers

You never realise how big a man's fingers are
until they're inside you

until they probe and rub and say
"Does this feel good?"

waiting for the right moment to put something else

inside you
only then you feel the roughness
each groove
every hangnail
a raw fingernail edge that's he's tried to chew off

movement from the inside out

and you try to give in to it
maybe you're the reason it doesn't feel right

you should instruct him
you should tell him higher
softer
slower
stop.

But you don't.

You just lay there and think about

how much noise you have to make
before he'll think his job is done

then

you are left
lying face up on your steel-coloured sheets;
pressing against a rock in the moonlight;
in a green sleeping bag;
on his lap by the brazier;
on the stained couch at a random party;

wondering
why couldn't he touch your hand first?

Blueprints

My parents were never content to sit by the same fireplace for more than one winter. Perhaps it was because they were both expatriates with itchy feet. Perhaps it was just because they liked building. My childhood lives in the bones of houses lived in by families that were not our own. The houses born from lines on a page, realised as rooms with too few scratches in the hardwood floor for me to consider them home.

“This will be your room,” my mum says. We stand in a skeleton of timber and concrete. “We can paint it pink or green or duck egg blue.” By six I know not to fall for that line. They’re always beige. Easier to sell with neutral colours.

By seven, three welcome mats have borne our last name. All in a row. The neighbours call it Laundry Lane. At night me and my brothers pack our bags and take torches into the rain. We explore the half-built crawl space. We light fires and pretend we’re on the run.

I see more men in hard hats than children during the summers. Sitting on upturned mixing buckets, flecks of paint under their fingernails. They eat last night’s corned beef, sandwiched between white bread. One brings his chocolate lab, Motor. I hear him say “shit” and I blush. To me, ‘shut up’ is a bad word.

Fifteen years later I get a Facebook message from one of the men. I don’t reply.

I don’t mind being such an anomaly. I am the queen of the jobsite castle. I fashion tea sets from scraps. Cement pies on laminate plates, mugs of tubing and the odd fiberglass saucer. They leave

splinters as long as eyelashes. My mum tells me to stay away from the insulation, even though it looks like candy floss and would be an excellent addition to my kitchen.

My dad often comes away with a new scar to match the new house. A nail gun bullet hole in his foot. A broken wrist from a fall off scaffolding. He's more of a lawmaker than a dad. The sort of guy who chews on matchsticks and tells me not to ask stupid questions when I say "Won't that catch on fire?"

We carve our names onto any surfaces that will eventually be hidden by the skin of the house. We know even then not to get attached to a place, but we can't help but have our favourites. Mine is the cream three storey; the garden attracts hummingbirds and my room has shutters. I wake up every morning and throw them open as if I'm a Disney princess. I come home from school one day and there is a woman named Margarita in my room, she says it will be a beautiful nursery for her daughter. There isn't even a 'For Sale' sign at the mailbox yet.

Mum is particular about packing. "Pack your books into small boxes," she says, "The bigger they are, the heavier they get." I know the drill. Label big and clear, wrap glass in clothes and newspaper.

Prepare to lose things.

Evelyn Birch

If Harry Dresden Was My Best Friend

Our friendship would have started with Mister.
Cats know cat ladies.
We would chat so late
my teeth would feel fuzzy from all the chocolate
and tea.
We would swap leather duster for denim jacket,
stretch our cheeks pink.
I would show him how to flirt
but grow distant when he
flirted back.
I would reprimand him.
He would disappear
and I would wait for his letters
spattered with coffee and what I hope is rust.
Even after his letters no longer filled shoe boxes,
I would still send him the Christmas present of
Crystaderm
and a graphic print tee.

Rhys Monkley

Dismantled

I feel strange that I still want you
installed on me.
the way your wires flew and shook in the
breeze
And made me overheat
I wanted to link up with you
forever

We were linked up for so terribly long
I felt like I was irreplaceable
and you just move to the newest model in
a day?
I get having a well-used port makes things
slide smoother but
surely our connection must have meant something?

I want to be able to move on
to move freely without the jagged metal
weighing me
down
And without feeling your wires strangle me
but I always get dragged back, reinstalled
And I hate being shareware

Sure, the new model is better
it's faster, better cooling...
hell, maybe the fucking ports fit better
but they don't link the same way we did
I've still got your programming soldered
to me

Ash Dorgan

+

There's a girl
a boy
a party
a bed
a condom
a condom?
was there a condom?
There's tenderness in her breasts
a stain in her briefs
a pee pot
a pink plus
a question
a question?
what was the question?
There's a blood test
a scan
a phone call
a fight
a choice
a choice?
was there a choice?
There's a nurse
There's another
There's a shrink
There's a doctor
There's a pill

a pill

a pill

There's a clock
a tick
a tick
a tick
There's a wheelchair
bed
stirrups
pressure
suction
wheelchair
There's a girl
alone.

Nikki Crutchley

Half Way Across the World for You

The man and woman took you to the beach and watched as you stared open-mouthed at the giant blue desert before you. You edged back as the tide made its way in, devouring the lopsided sand castle you'd built with the man who was called Tom "or Dad ... It's up to you."

You walked on golden sand studded with pastel shells and ran ahead until they shouted out, "Come on, let's go home."

Home.

That night your new mother lay down next to you and stroked your forehead. You closed your eyes against the dark, rimmed by the foreign glow of street lamps outside, and listened.

You heard how she had waited for you. And how when she got sick of waiting, she went in search of you. To doctors, to hospitals, to other men, to other women.

You felt her chest rising and falling; the walls of your new room, which was far from new, expanding and then contracting.

Lee Kimber

A Time When

There was a time when
young girls
compared
red and purple wounds
on impressionable thighs
and small backs
When loop by loop
the leather slid
from farmers' tweeds,
to lick their limbs
And they clung
to the lee
of the fathers' legs
to block the sting
of their helplessness
And bruised arms were fine
on hot, short-sleeve days
There was a time when
your leather belt was slick and worn -
the time when I'd fallen
'cos your beer was spilled -
and the pointed tip
slid from the loops
of your city
jeans
and I remembered
to block the hurt,
to hunch my shoulders,

to bend my legs together
Those were the years
you stole what was left -
even who I was
letter
by
letter
And the time when
I was so tiny,
shrivelled to a place
where you
couldn't
touch me
anymore.

Alyssa Miles

Picture Perfect

I am yellow
Like your cigarette-stained fingertips
That roam my skin as if it belongs to you
I am marred
By the ink that drips on my surface
Like mascara tracks
Against her picture perfect complexion
I am indiscernible
Blurred like crossed lines
And sight obscured by tears
I am greyscale
Against the scream
Of her tangerine pout
I am shrouded
Halation hides the crooked-toothed smile
Of a face best forgotten
I am captured
Peg me up in the dark room
An image of still-life
Still living

Mark Anthony Houlahan

Conference

It was the

visitorial garb
of the
conferencing academic
tweed jacket
tourist map
left pocket

knitted tie
snappy trousers

that stood out from
the mid-day
marketplace crowd

It was the

sheen
on the
foot-long machete
an inch
from my
breastbone
the polite request
of the knife-holding
young man

Be still Big Boss

It was the

soft hold
on my shoulders
of his
two assistants
their finesse in
removing
a watch
from the
right wrist
and a
travel bag
from my back

That made the Johannesburg mugging adventure
experience
a highlight of my South Africa sojourn

Tania Collins

Moge byc slodka (I can be sweet)

“I want to be drunk when I wake up on the right side of the wrong bed.” I sing along a bit off-key and do a little dance, sliding across the cold, grey uneven stone floor. You place a hand on my arm to steady me and give me a wink as you sit back on your low stool and lean back on your elbows on the table.

Connor, our newest recruit, is poking at the fire doing more harm than good. He’s wearing a purple beanie he’s stolen from me. It’s pulled down over one ear and one eye. He looks ridiculous tilting his head back to see. “Why are we listening to this crap?”

You roll your eyes and any amusement slips away. The softness you have when you watch me is replaced with a glare aimed at Connor. “It’s lady’s choice.”

It’s a phrase you’ve only just discovered. I nod at the fact you’ve actually used it in the correct context.

Connor’s not as impressed. “I have an inkling it’s always lady’s choice.”

You down what’s left of your drink stand and come over to the bar in a move that places you between Connor and me. You fold your arms and stand just a little bit taller as if your six foot three inches isn’t enough. “What if it is? You will just have to get used to it.”

Oh sweet baby Jesus. I roll my eyes. You’ve got your back to me but I know your expression will be anything but pleasant. It’s always the same performance whenever we get someone new. You might as well just lift your leg and pee on me.

Hooking my fingers into the belt loop on the back of your jeans, I pull you backwards. I might get just the teeny tiniest bit of satisfaction at the fact you stumble slightly. You brush my hand away and

turn and glare at me.

I shrug; I've built up immunity to your glares. "I need your help in the cellar for a moment." I turn and walk away knowing you'll follow. "Connor," I call back, "Entertain yourself."

We do a weird crab walk to the cellar. The latch creaks as you reach over my shoulder and lift it. We take a synchronized step back to accommodate the door flinging open at us. I disentangle myself from you and hold onto the wall. Pressing my fingers into the grooves between the bricks I take slow, tiny steps down the too-steep stairs. I can feel you behind me. Watching, waiting, patiently ready to catch me if I stumble.

I take the last tentative step, turn and get straight to the point. "Want to tell me why you're being all aggressive with Connor?"

You scrunch your forehead in that way you do when what I've said is beyond your comprehension of the English language. "What?"

Frustrated, I wave my hands in the air, "Connor. You being all grr argh." The edge is taken off the statement by my shiver. You shrug out of your hoodie and drop it onto my shoulders.

"I don't like him."

"No. Really? I never would have guessed. You're just so subtle."

I give you my most innocent look and in return you narrow your eyes and give me the finger. It's a gesture that is universally understood. You climb over the kegs that fill the cellar; the room is so small that when we've had the weekly delivery the only way to work is to climb over. You offer me your hand and help me step up onto a keg then back down.

"He's loud." You drop my hand, pass me a bucket and start to move the empty kegs.

"He's loud?" We're talking over the scraping of kegs on the concrete floor and water splashing into the bucket. I wrinkle my nose as I step into a puddle of old beer.

Connor is loud. He's also a human cyclone. He leaves debris in his wake. One night he got out every glass we have and lined them up in size order then walked away because something else distracted

him.

“Yeah,” you brush me aside to reposition the Strongbow keg. “He’s loud. He’s just so.....Irish.”

Holding onto the hem of your t-shirt, I step over my full bucket and position myself by the wall to wait for you to finish your rear-ranging. “Well, that’s what happens when someone is from Ireland.”

You roll your eyes, hook your fingers into the pockets of the hoodie and haul me in. You bend so we’re nose to nose and I can count your lashes. “You’re not as funny as you think you are.” You give me a quick kiss, push me away and start to sweep the newly cleared area.

“We’re never alone.” You say it so quietly, so seriously that I almost miss it. It’s the real issue. Our living space is only two bedrooms and a living room; we’re already living on top of each other as it is.

I shrug. “We’re alone right now.”

You pause in sweeping and give me a look. “Not what I mean. You want to be alone in the cellar?”

I sigh and look around. You have a point. The cellar does lack a certain ambiance. It’s dank and dark and constantly smells like stale beer.

“At least it’s not the toilets.” I’m taking a glass half full approach. “So, besides Connor’s blatant Irishness what else is wrong with him?”

You don’t look at me, just concentrate on sweeping as if it’s the most important thing you’ll do all night and need to get it right. Oh, this is going to be good. Wrapping your hoodie tightly around myself, I wait you out. One Mississippi, two Mississippi, three Mississippi...

“He doesn’t like football.”

Totally worth the wait. You say it with such disdain that I bite my lip to stop the smile that’s dying to form.

“Oh, the shame! How about you hold him down, I’ll tie him up and we’ll shove him on a plane back to Dublin?”

As you so often do you decide to ignore my sarcasm. “It’s just

not right.”

“I don’t like football.” Huge understatement there. “But you like me just fine.”

“That’s different.”

“How?”

You stop sweeping and lean on the broom. For a moment you watch me watching you. You tip your head to the side and you’ve got just a hint of a smile. “You annoy the shit out of me. But I can handle it.”

I shake my head with a little laugh. “You say the sweetest things to me.”

“You want sweet?” You crook a finger and I’m compelled to push off the wall and step a little closer as your smile widens. “Come here.”

Dwie pogrzeby (Two Funerals)

“Haven’t you had enough cleansing for one day?”

I find you sitting in the empty bathtub, knees pulled up, arms dangling over the sides. Your tie’s tangled around one of the taps; you’ve unbuttoned the top of your shirt and your jacket’s crumpled in the corner by the toilet where you’ve thrown it. You’re staring up at the ceiling mumbling away in Polish but you turn your head and watch me clutch the doorframe and discard my heels.

I’ve caught you at a good time. This is the most lucid you’ll be all night. At some point someone will slip you something to take the edge off, to numb the pain. You’ll know I know but we’ll both pretend I don’t, instead I’ll serve you drinks and watch as you disappear into the bathroom chasing whatever makes you feel better. Until then, you and your mind are still mine.

I shut the door and drown out the sound of Steve Earle singing about losing his heart to a Galway Girl. The murmur of indistinguishable voices drifting up from the pub below us serves as a reminder that we’re never really alone.

“That Priest had it out for me,” you say as I settle on the floor next to the bath. “He purposely splashed Holy Water on me. Nearly took my head off with the thing with the incense crap in it.”

“He wasn’t enacting some kind of intricate revenge plot against you. He was performing a Requiem Mass.”

You squint at me as you sit up from your slouched position and lean over the side of the bath in a bid to get closer. You rest your chin on cold porcelain and I scoot in, leaning my back against the wall.

“I don’t know what you just said,” you say, reaching out and tangling your fingers in the ends of my hair. “At least he didn’t see what we put in the coffin. That would have definitely put us firmly

on the naughty list.”

“Santa has a naughty and nice list. Not the Catholic Church,” I point out, “They have Catholic guilt. Why did you slip a hip flask full of Vodka in there?”

You shrug and walk your fingers down my arm and fiddle with the rosary beads I’ve wrapped around my wrist. You stare at them as if you’ve never seen them before. Earlier you said the beads reminded you of sapphires.

“Thought it might make the afterlife slightly better,” you murmur, your attention fixed on my rosary beads.

“And the tin of cigarettes you rolled last night?” I ask with a tilt of my head and a small smile.

You shrug. “Thought she might need them.”

“She didn’t smoke.”

“They might help her if they don’t let her in right away?”

And there it was. The whole point. The thing we’d been dancing around. It was the fear that sat deep within you.

“Let her in where? Heaven? Why wouldn’t they let her in?” I ask hoping we’ll finally have the conversation we’ve been avoiding.

No matter what you said, you believed in the ideals of Heaven and Hell and the place in between. You feared because of what she’d done she’d linger in purgatory.

“Don’t know. But if they don’t, thought she could pay her way in.” You want her to bribe the one guarding heaven.

“With Vodka and cigarettes?” I’m a little sceptical about this plan. “Do you picture Saint Peter being a smoker?”

You tear your gaze away from the beads and watch me with a furrowed brow. “Who’s Saint Peter?”

“The gatekeeper of Heaven,” I tell you slowly, “Didn’t you go to Catholic schools?”

“We call him something different. Got kicked out of them all.”

“Of course you did.” I roll my eyes but squeeze the hand you’ve intertwined with mine. You give me a smile and it’s almost a real one. Maybe we could stay cocooned in our little bathroom world all night. It’s not meant to be. Someone bangs on the door; you drop

my hand and lumber out of the tub. “Fuck off,” you say as you pull it open. “We’re having a moment.”

Our Uzbek roommate glares at you before his gaze slides past you and lands on me in a silent question. I’ve barely given him a nod before you slam the door. You crouch in front of me and try for a smile but it’s off and the moment is gone. You’re already retreating.

“Want to get out of here?”

I’d love to. I want it to be just the two of us sitting on the train station platform or in the backfield with a bottle of your Polish Vodka. I know when you ask you mean it but we wouldn’t get halfway through the pub before someone would be calling you back.

So instead I shake my head and you tilt yours in that way you do.

“Can’t. I’ve got to work. I’ve got to get the food out.”

It’s your turn to roll your eyes. “Sausage rolls and cucumber sandwiches. Great. Why is the food at these things always crap?”

“You made the food. It’s comfort food. Could be worse. Could be asparagus rolls.”

“I like asparagus.” You grab my hand and pull me to my feet, pull me into you. I press a kiss to your jaw. You hold the door open for me and follow me out, your hands on my waist as we walk. Your chin lands on my shoulder.

“I’m also on tea duty,” I say. “You can help. If you’re really good you can be in charge of putting the tea bags into the cups.”

“That’s a big responsibility. You sure I can be trusted?”

I smile at you going along with my humour and turn my head to look at you, my cheek brushing yours as I do; “I think you can handle it.”

“What’s with the tea anyway? It’s like they all think it has some kind of magical healing powers. Are you hot? Here have a cup of tea. Cold? Cup of tea. You’re plotting mass murder? Before you do, have a cup of tea.”

“It’s just tea. Something warm to hold onto, something to do with your hands while you stand and listen as everyone tells you how deeply sorry they are.”

You don’t say anything, just brush your lips against my neck and

follow me down the stairs. Your hands drop from my waist, fingers dragging across my skin as they go. The dimly lit kitchen represents a crossroads: I'll go left to make tea and arrange sausage rolls on a plate while you go right ducking your head under the too-low door-frame that leads into the pub.

I hear someone greet you loudly and ask if you want a drink. Through the slowly closing door I catch a glimpse of that someone not so subtly giving you a small bag that fits in your palm. Your eyes meet mine just before the door shuts.

Brittany Rose

my mint plant is not a metaphor for my mental health

but i am proud of how it stretches toward the nearly-spring sunlight; adolescent leaves, broad and blooming.
over summer it suffered, shriveled, straggled, browned dry by the spotlight sun, the fishbowl house a magnifying glass, harsh uv blaring down against the mojito-sweet little sprig.
the sun rose and
set and rose
and set again. some days apricot, peach, lilac, cornflower blue skies; on others, burnt persimmon, violet and baby blue, sometimes smeared with oil paint blots of mist. the stripped branches are witch fingers cackling into the fuchsia sky, silhouettes harsh against the setting sun and the ticking clock. the dog next door yaps all day, a beat for her continuous bassline of shallow breathing, punctuated by a sigh or a whimper of lungs punctured, wounded by a fleeting glance. flocks of birds flee as a neighbourhood car revs and squeals. she jumps when doors slam.
my mint plant probably is a metaphor for my mental health
or maybe not
at the very least
it sits in a purple pot, bright contrast against the damp black dirt, and tidy green leaves,
and smells nice when i remember to water it.

Calum Hughes

Broken House

A crack rushes through the koru whorls of a family
plate.
Three beads shiver on an ever-unravelling thread.
Silent, supine definitions of rigidity.
An instant waterfall bursts through sodden mist.
Tiny coffins filled and tombstone blankets tucked.
Cogs and springs wound tight.
Holes bored through, piercing comfort.
A tribe of parallel lines, close but never touching.
The heavy packed darkness filling both ears with
blood.
Time stretches like a too-small watch cuffing a
blistered wrist.
Condensation and steam make rain clouds and sweat.
Lonely and united, strangers in an elevator slowly
going down.
Familiar made odd like a speedy paint job.
Slathered over cracks before breakfast.
The pillow on the couch is crushed,
And still warm.

Emily Campbell

Doris

(if you're reading this i hope i'm fucking dead)
in my mother's nightmares i am the skin-
walker
spider-eyed in the summer
fertilizing girls in the
mosquito heat
ovaries split into pomegranate seeds spilling
free &
bug-eaten through his slit
fists
a woman's quiet terror in three hundred sixty
degrees
burrowed deep into the bloodline
a childhood kingdom submerges
mermaids drowning in the after-
birth
formaldehyde skies hemorrhage wet
memory meat
i am afraid of something we cannot
accuse
if the mother is survivor's guilt formed flesh
then what is the child
horror
a child is horror

Holzer Diagnostic

Circle your answer from one to five: one being completely false, five being completely true.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] Better to die young than live-forever.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] This hole has existed long before you; you were born oozing around the sides of it.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] It's not easy being a woman in outer space.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] Teachers warned you not to smile with too many teeth.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] Sometimes, you find yourself leaking from surprising places.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] You've been unnecessarily preoccupied with kidnappings.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] Near the point of climax, it's fun to image Venus bursting through the ceiling to stain the mattress with you.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] You can see your face in other people's knees.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] A better man would know what to do with his hands at all times.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] You believe it'd be quite pleasurable to have your skull rearranged.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] It is important to learn other languages so you can explain your traumas to strangers in foreign lands.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] You'd have made a much prettier boy.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] In a perfect world, all genitalia would be as hairless and smoothed shut as a Barbie Doll's.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] You'd look good with surgery scars.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] You identify with photographs of insects with holes on both ends.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] God is the ultimate absent Mother.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] You're afraid of horses. Their eyes are so heavy, and you don't know that they like what they see.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] Late at night, you turn your tongue sideways to simulate feelings of intrusion.

[1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5] If something dies quiet, it never should have been alive in the first place.

Calculate your Score: __

Mark Prisco

Lines by the River

1

The poem's there, pulled by the flow, tossed by the boat;
in sunlight, spun in the circles of water;
here, on the bank, the bare branches of winter,
bowed to the water. It motors: like film, the repose
of passengers, still, but this 1 girl
turned her head as an afterthought, saw, she thinks,
a glimpse of man stood tall. He thinks her lips
formed vowels, an O, for the real flesh of man, tore

off, with her teeth, something... Think: what it is
to be her, there, to see me falling away caught
in the flux like it's really me that's moving.
This will have to do - the circular wind
rolling the sky; the solitude hung still
like a gull reeled, art that blows even before
it stills. Here my thoughts are degenerate,
post-modernist, a white page of black lines,
the rudimentary outlines
of bare trees.

I envision the scene – now, but tonight also
& all my days, nailed like stars that light the walls
of a room I slept in 10 or 12 years ago.

2

her stars aligned.

fortuitously.

each line

*

discrete

has something like

blood stone

torn limb

skin prick

a flesh wound that actually

hurts

kick-starts her

heart some part

of herself half

known

*

so she was

here her syllables

clues missed

by the meticulous

casuals in blue

on the sand-flecked

floor for instance her

back room

at the end of a long
hall for instance the

sun-tipped straw

the wide

round of days

long

sky the riverbed

grey a face

in water her dress

weighed

by stones that had lain
among the bric-a-brac
of the bank
she lay in the hollow
pool of shallows where
spectres bowed
disfigured eyes wide
saw the line that
divides this world
from another

*

I need to be high like
this at her feet. beneath
her skirt I fell
on purpose tried
all night to see
nothing but her white

 stars head high &
the blue light of an ambulance

*

she was here one summer
& when she left I shook at the knees.
In dreams her hair's
real short her eyes

glazed wide
like strangers,
cars on the highways
of your sleep
& when you wake
miles away
cows graze
fields

buttercups
of spring
worlds away
but you anyway are.
really there

*

in the curves
of her line
break snake
hip syllables.

crawl. shed skin.
score bark. round
my neck down
the boughs & twigs
of my finger

tips

no big deal

but still

try me

she says

ok

I will

*

it's winter.
tuesday. we had lunch
by the lakes.
the sun shone.
the sky was blue
& the water...
birds flew
both ways because it's all so
beautiful

*

we met
in the cherry red
mirror between
2 brush strokes

Reflex

I get a measure here of solitude when the street turns
in
& the night is soft & distant.
I hear the blue light of a siren dying, & in the silence,
the corrugated iron clawed by the cold fingers of the
plum tree.
This is my table in the corner, photographs, postcards
bought on holiday; the body of Christ
post crucifixion; de-nailed, tender - it's queer
to think of him that way – & other memorabilia:
a Madonna, for instance, presented after a funeral.
I remember because i'm swayed now & then,

believe for no reason. Even immoral things. I react
i think to rational politics, the nightmare of produc-
tion-
production: i'm for the risen Christ,
the soft night; the flashing blue light in the distance.

Eefa Yasir Jauhary

Season of an eating disorder

Summer

Bright rays collide with my flesh
Making their way through my skin
Bones feast on the warmth
Atrocious music, ice cream
My ears invaded by others' bliss
My father hands my aching stomach
A cone of a thousand calories
Chocolate oozes against their fingertips
Scarlet, through mine
Their smiles glow
The mirror is my own transgression
My sin is the obsession staring back
A fight to free my insides
But only bones remain within
Mother's love bleeds through her cherry pies
Her love, her naïveté
Now cold and seeping sweet crimson
Lust I indulge in, necessity turned serpentine
Done with food, craving for an edge
Elephantine thighs
Attack the blade.

Autumn

My stomach is an alarm clock
Churns, half wakes up the house
Hush now, hush now
We must not let them know

The trees cry
When the wind blows
Death surrounds me
The tears have found a new home
Brushing against the concrete
Weightless as they fall
Just as I wish to be
The branches
Naked, still, empty
My reflection
Stepping on death so carelessly
Chlorophyll weeps as their bones shatter
It used to be a game for us
Crack the bones they would say
Their secrets and juvenile giggles
“This stays between us”
My secret? Only with myself
Friends, they glide into the autumn haze
Poundage shackles me to the ground
I don't ask them to come back for me
They should have never soared away.

Winter

Cracks on the window
Beats of my heart not yet still
Only water running through my blood stream
Still as stout as ever
The cold wraps around my bulk
Goosebumps protrude from my skin
Fighting for an escape
Stomach craves for warmth
Two spoons of mud in milk
Happiness in a poison cup.

Spring

Dahlias arise
Zombies from the grave
Shades of colors stab my eyes
My lips have turned blue.
Mother's daffodils in a fight
With the ground,
Life sprouting
Efflorescence of tulips
Obtrudes from their flowerbeds
Ready for being
The world is trying to show me hues
Of already blossomed blues,
Whites and pinks
My color, the dreaded red.
Gone are the days of bouquets of lilies
Chocolates, and rose-colored glasses
The craving for touch
I only want a blade
Aching in my body
Warning me of my own fragility
Dandelions freed with one blow.

N R Pelham

from *Triangle*

HE'S IN BED

He's in bed and he won't get up.

Tim is Kylie's best friend, and an asshole. That's a person who always asks for the same advice but never takes it, so always has the same problems.

He's in bed and he won't get up. He said he wants to die.

Jo is Tim's flat-wife. That's when your marriage has flat-lined so you're separated but live together 'for the sake of the kids'. The modern term for this is "co-parenting".

Jo resents parenting. In the evenings, she relaxes in her armchair and watches her programs on the tv. Jo enjoys watching Neighbours and Shortland Street. She likes to binge-watch programs on DVD. She has a large collection. Game of Thrones and Desperate Housewives are her favourites and she watches them often.

Tim spends his evenings helping the kids with their homework. He also prepares dinner and does the dishes. He tidies up, folds the laundry and tucks the kids into bed. Jo doesn't help, but she does say goodnight to the kids. Tim supposes that's something.

He's in bed and he won't get up. He said he wants to die. I don't know what to do.

Jo crushes Tim under her thumb. She enjoys the power of manipulation. She has told him that if he ever leaves, she will keep the kids from him. They co-exist in a state of anxious sorrow.

Tim has been known to cheat on Jo. She thinks he cheats on her with Kylie.

Maybe he does.

He's in bed and he won't get up. He said he wants to die. I

don't know what to do. He won't stop crying.

Tim complains to Kylie frequently. She listens, offers sympathy and advice. Sympathy is taken, advice ignored, until Kylie tires of Tim being an asshole. She tells him this, then says goodbye. He lets her go. It's a friendly farewell, and probably for the best.

He's in bed and he won't get up. He said he wants to die. I don't know what to do. He won't stop crying. He won't even talk to me.

Kylie grieves the loss of Tim, they've been friends for years. Despite being an asshole he's a decent guy. He listened with empathy when Kylie had problems of her own, and they often talked together for hours.

Kylie becomes busy with life so the void left by Tim won't engulf her. She begins a new exercise regime which involves power walking, Zumba and weight training. She enrolls in an Italian cooking course at night school and auditions for a stage show. Kylie enjoyed theatre as a teenager, and *Legally Blonde: The Musical* looks like fun.

He's in bed and he won't get up. He said he wants to die. I don't know what to do. He won't stop crying. He won't even talk to me. I don't know what to do.

Tim wrestles with being abandoned by Kylie, and endures a rapid downhill slide into depression. His doctor starts him on Prozac. Take one for three days, then two for three days, and the full dose of three after that.

Tim starts straight on three for three days, and the next day can't get out of bed.

Jo stands at the end of his bed and watches him cry. Jo cries too. She needs his income. She admits to herself that Tim adults for her. He drives her to work, buys the groceries and takes care of the kids and the household.

He's in bed and he won't get up. He said he wants to die. I don't know what to do. He won't stop crying. He won't even talk to me. I don't know what to do. I can't manage on my own.

Tim despises the bleakness of his life and can envision only one way out.

Then he thinks of Kylie. She gets him, understands what makes him tick. She'd hug him and tell him to stop being so stupid. Then she'd smile her gorgeous smile like the sun blinking through his gloom.

Dammit ... he'd listen to Kylie.

Jo thinks Tim cheats on her with Kylie.

Maybe he should.

Jenny Price

Where are you

Lingering in unlit hallways
Sewn into curtain seams.
Under bottles of patchouli hand soap
Or orange blossom bath salts.
In the chain links of a cross
Or on a surgeon's scalpel.
Skewed on teeth of a zester
Or mummified in plain flour.
Under a pillow
Or under the sofa.
Under a burqa
And laced lingerie
Wedged under nails of a passed relationship
Or in the fingerprints of my husband.
Wedged on x chromosomes
Wise man has little to offer.
Only two sets of genitalia
One Barbie
One Ken
Below the epidermis
Sleeping within capillaries.
Under the freckles of fifteenth year old self
Or greying hair follicles of fifty year old me.
Under a box of Gundam kits
Or under a box of makeup kits.
Under *The God Delusion*
Or *Where The Moon Isn't*.
Why are you never in one place?

Andrew T. Lyall

Oneironautics

The archives of the hippocampus flourish
Tangent memory seen through a pane of frosted
rose-glass
Infinite ghosts of brainspun matter grey
Heed nothing from inarticulate moving lips
Hear without the oscillation of sound waves
A knife sharpener beeline to the left hemisphere
You don't have to talk to them. Look to the sky.
You can run. You can fall. You can kill. You can fly.
Rust iron hooks find their way between the ribs
Find purchase between the lungs
The final phantom with a familiar face reels you
Flinch. Here her heart's equally exposed.
A promise of potentiality locked beyond the blood-
brain barrier
The skin peel of heartbreak in microscopic minutiae
Man has the gift of rapid-eye, military-grade, neurons
firing
Any conversation at
any time in
any place.
I love you.

I always have.

We can be honest here.

Until

dawn.

The arctic bedsheet melts with tears
Rolling down from a lonely mountain range

D.A. Taylor

-ve space

Suppose you take this poem,
turn it on its side.
A silhouette emerges
from the skyline of its breaks,
its stanzas
city blocks
where abandoned syllables,
wool-capped, distended,
lean a bicycle
drunk with jetsam
against the serif,
utter something cleft-palate, hungry
for change or a cup of coffee
to wrap their nicotine fingers around
and wait out the dark.
You rent a room on the Lower East Side
with a window at which
you can hesitate, calculate the distance
between gutters, labour over
nineteen years of writing
as level and steady in depth
as the ocean, bar
a few cerulean curls to break
the surface,
the depths of the left-hand
justification littered
with sunken apostrophe

and her fingertips,
the handprint graffiti of our ancestors
who understood the grammar
of mortality
and carved the ochre walls
with moonmilk and
I was here.
You'd build a city if only
she'd wander the spaces inbetween,
come home before dawn with
fingers bruised from
dog-eared corners
where leaves and stubs collect:
the stanzas, as in standing, or stopping place;
or a stare, from steh, with an H like
Muhummad. Maybe that was his name; maybe
the brush of cloth, the soil shifting beneath
his feet gave name to the breaks and rooms of one's
own.
So you rise, and the earth shifts
in the morning light,
like a lover,
or the hush of asphalt beneath our feet.

Dahlia (dialtone wake)

I go back to the eggshell wallpaper,
the matching bluebell prints, a wedding photo,
her face buried in dad's collarbone as if
to fill his heart through the hollow of his clavicle.
The air is still as fireplace ash. No one wants
to wake the baby.

We have our backs to the windows, November
draining the colour from the deck and the lawn,
soft tarmac and popsicle stick,
a box of beer halfburied in sand,
the sunpink of some other family's cheeks,
a high tide.

It was dark by the time
we made it to the corner for c-sections
car crashes and gone-too-soons. In
the dialtone wake of the ward the family arrived
by degrees; there no rush.

I want to go back
and take down the boxes of brand news and hand-
knits,
just to unwrap their plastic cocoons and
hold them up between my sister and the sunlight;
before
that four-thirty thursday voice,
tight and sober down the copper lines,
asked for mum over
the rattle and drum of the Ward,
gave thanks, and hung up.

Dud

We are in the Te Urewera ranges. He has given me a gun.

Mum thinks it would be good for me to spend more time with Dad, so we are hunting.

There are rules in the bush, because deer are stupid but not stupid, and because people make mistakes. The gun has to stay pointing upwards, because if you fall the barrel might jam with dirt or you might bend it. You can't point a gun at something unless you're prepared to shoot. Safety on. Safety off. Twigs don't break on their own; you have to move quietly, slowly, in places where the ground is soft but not squelchy, and make no sound, like a deer.

Dad knows where to step, so try to trace his steps across the Novemberdry leaf litter. He hears me coming, and turns as if to say

-What.

-A deer, I whisper.

-What?

-Over there. It was. Sort of. So big. No horns, so a doe, maybe? Didn't you hear it?

He shrugs, looks to where my oversized orangebrown long-sleeve points, over a dry crest no taller than me. On the other side is a clearing, a few fern ribs poking out from the earth and shading the undergrowth like silvered umbrellas.

-It came down the other side of this bit here, I say.

I thought it was someone walking it was so loud, the slow lopplop amble of a Sunday on the beach. When you make no sound you sound like a deer. You have to make sure that what you're looking at is a deer. Always Identify Your Target.

-Why didn't you shoot it?

-Something's wrong with my gun, I say. His gun. A few fat kilos of smooth wood and oiled blackmetal, a little telescope on the top that makes the world look greener and so much bigger.

He slings his rifle over his shoulder and gestures for mine. He slides up the bolt, draws it back and a whole round spins out. The air is hot and sweet and so very, very green. The brass of the casing catches the light before it lands in his hand. I slumf my bag on my shoulders a couple of times to shift the weight of water bottles and peanut slabs and a camera with an untouched filmroll. Dad turns the round in his fingers, looks at the back where the pin fires, then to the gun. His breath smells of tea and and kidney, like Granddad without the Port Royal yellow teeth.

-Didn't you hear it?

He palms the round, shifts the bolt back and forth, tries the safety trigger a couple of times. Slower. Safety on. Safety off. The bullet is still in his hand, warming.

Do Not Squeeze the Trigger Unless You Are Prepared to Kill.

A pin firing sounds like a breaking twig. He shows me the back where the pin fires, where there should be a dent.

Twigs do not break on their own in the bush.

The dent is as clear as the stones on the creekbed, a short sharp hollow in centre of the silvered back of the casing. Dud. He throws the round off to land somewhere in the undergrowth and turns away.

-The deer dashed, I say. I watched it go from the inside of the scope.

Jamie de Jong

Swimming Pool

the babies love it here
they get wet and wild
mums and dads like metal detectors in the shallow
end
i do my lengths and stare at the tiles
dried juice around where you sipped
crusted and brown
look at where we are
like we slipped, holding hands

You knew something about this

you knew something about this,
come, gently and sit on my knee
ten pearls playing cards
it was the small ones who held up the house
here, your hand, then your hair in my hands
the house crumbling around your bed
your strong people burst into frail pieces
after this, then calm - Brutus, Ben....
the bulbs, Milford Sound and Port Douglas
you know what i miss? your handwriting
i wish you would write this poem out for me
in your round purl like your accent.
i can hear you from just around the corner
our Queen is here, in long and black, tortoiseshell
mourning
now - how important it is to remember, i see every
part of her saying
but there are pieces of you -
like you burst into very small pieces
sometimes i think you are here, like i can see into
Heaven,
or Heaven has come down to me.
we sang Ka Waiata for you
we knew you could hear us.

Chloe Francis

Butterflies and Birds

A tree full of butterflies and birds. It tastes disgusting but I do it anyway. Catching moments like butterflies in the winter time. If you rub two nice things together they will make a spark. Forever life is rubbing it self together to make a fire of hope in bellies of cold weather rub them together. I'll just keep driving past that piece of shit I call my house. Watching a weirdo on a bike. I feel like a weirdo. The fancy weirdos drive cars. Pebbles to ripples, gutter to throne. We all make ripples then we all sink home. No more cigarettes for me, I've run out till next pay. No more regret for me. Till next pay. No more coming round for me.

You've run out. Bye.

I can never hold thoughts long enough to write them down so I stay in my head and chase them around. Mother.

I blow my smoke out into the thunder but I can hear one bird sing through the rain. I get a runny nose. I never did learn restraint. I can never find a pen when I need one. I just want to stay in one safe moment. These little ceremonies will suffice. Childhood is everywhere. I'm breathing in my younger years. Jesus took the credit for my mortality. That was my one chance. To explain why. I paid for myself Jesus. I kept looking for your feet to lay my sorrow. All I ever saw was my own as I hung my head in shame. I needed to feel my own pain. Put my hands out in the dark and feel my way.. I am a soul that fits between the raindrops. The holes in the rainbow. The nothing songs. There are tiny fingers wrapped tight around my heart. It makes it hard to beat. Little claws. Five hundred and sixty-three thousand

strings attached to me. And not even one of them connects to you. How am I supposed to breathe? How can I be desperate enough?

Dark.

You don't always want to open it. How do you speak of something with no form? How do you define an abyss?

We are a language. We are a creation. We are a story and nerves. Reverse me. We are thoughts and dreams passing through the universe. Move along the rails you are set upon. We are what theory exposes to the cold air. All naked to doubt and death and fear. Life clothes us in fantasy momentarily. We are thrown in the air and at the cusp of the view we feel eternity in the knowledge that we are doomed. Then we dissolve into fire. Move from shadows into dark. But we know this. We don't want to. But we really, honestly cannot ever forget.

Sometimes I feel like I want to die. Depending on the day this could be a good or a bad thing. Who am I? A pair of hunched anxious shoulders under a sky. Look to the stars. They are questions and answers. Depending on the day. Sometimes I stare for ages. Sometimes I need to look away. I shuffle about my house. It makes me feel important. Or maybe insignificant? Life is just one long last drag on the cigarette before it burns my lip. Don't lose yourself girl.

I will very quietly shut the door. Except when I left, I didn't gently vanish. I burned through the wall.

Andrew Lacey

Pohutukawa

Pohutukawa trees by the shore,
Their blossoms glowing like beacons of yore.
Their lacy flowers shine so red,
How could such beauty come from trees so dead?
From withered old trunk and wrinkled old limb,
From cracked yellow leaves that are broken and dim.
How did such fairness, how did such light,
Come from such shrivelled and broken old might?
May these flowers glow, may they blossom and spread,
To tell all the world, what's old is not dead.

Carmen Penny

Numbers Tense

I begin counting the times it happens. One. Just a mistake. Two. He doesn't mean it. Three. He just doesn't understand. Four. It's okay. Five. This is okay. This IS okay. Six. If I loved him I wouldn't be crying. Seven. This is okay. This is love. EightNine. Ten. I begin to justify his actions with my numbers. One. Two. Three. We have been together four months. This is normal. I want to be normal. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. He spends ten weeks fighting to have me. Surely he cares. Eleven. He is the first person I tell about the men when I was twelve. Thirteen. He gives me my first kiss when I am fourteen. Steals my virtues at fifteen. Sixteen. He is a year older. I should be prepared for what dating an older boy means. I should be ready. I shouldn't be crying. No one warns me. No one tells me how much it hurts. No one tells me he won't stop. No. No one warns me. But I teach myself. I learn to count. Count anything. Count the posters on his wall. Count the cracks in the ceiling. Count to ten. Then back again. Then up again. Until it's over. Count up to the amount of times it has happened. See if it ends before you reach that number. 89. 96. 103. This isn't soothing anymore. 112. 120. This is all I am now. There is no love in his eyes. There is nothing. I stare into the husks of hazel that used to home the boy that I adored. Nothing. One hundred and thirty-six. One. Hundred. And. Thirty. Six.

Inhale. Three months in I stop counting. Exhale.
Everything is fine. FourThree. Two more years of
blood stained sheets and tear soaked pillows. Two.
One. I am not here. Not one part of me wants to
endure the pain he inflicts on my brain and my bones
anymore.

Leave at sixteen. It happens once more. Twice more.
Two boys. Three months apart. Four words. *You can
trust me. I won't hurt you. Go. Back. To. Sleep.*
Released from the clinic at seventeen with an
acronym diagnosis. Fall back in love at Eighteen.
Nineteen. 'I do' at twenty to a boy who thinks faking
love and throwing things makes him a man. Three
week expiry on a lifetime warranty. Twenty-one.
Twenty-two.
Still here. Four. Three. Two. One.

Aimee-Jane Anderson-O'Connor

Amber

I

Choose a house. Brick. White Door. Take a torch and look under the floorboards. Fibreglass falling. Friction Fit. Wear mud on your knees. The smoke alarm blinking. Turn on all the taps full bore and open up the windows. Take your shoes off. Walk its cool length. Imagine yourself living here. The green drip of the bath. Paint puckered in the corners. Crumbs cooked onto the element. A Chrysanthemum bush. Silver hair caught in the netting. An appendix in the kitchen drawer. Draw a floor plan. Shop by eye. Get a cookbook with a velvet ribbon. Red. You were meant to be engaged by now. Your toothbrush alone in a melamine cup. Your teeth in your gums. Your teeth in your hands. Your hands deep hollows. Quit thinking of him at 2am. You need to sleep.

II

If you eat pizza in the shower and wash your mouth out with vodka then you are really doing your whole morning regime in one. Vodka sterilises things, settles in your molars like the sea caught in halogen bulbs, green army men pouring out of a white Nissan. Gulls swarm the tug boat like a school of floss phantom. The best cure for a hangover is a whole California orange, suckled down sweet and pip. On the shower floor it looks like one of those fantail goldfish gone through the blender. Neon icing drips from the strobe

lights. This is a baptism two tequilas too late. Heels are for running. Mascara is for the lowtide. Swallow your heartbreak with a slice of lemon and a lick of salt.

III

Wake to the fire siren wail of your baby cousin and stomach a month of pills all at once. Cursor the rosebud family you built together and put them into the mansion pool. Remove all the ladders and watch them circle till they drown. Take to every grapefruit in the world with a sledgehammer and rollerblade in the pulp. Stalk the engagement photos until you believe in life on Mars and then open the Moscato. Watch condensation drip down the windows like stretch marks slow and wet. The rock on her finger pop candy, cut seaglass, crystal meth. Pick up the phone, 1980 called and you weren't even born yet. Quit being nostalgic for shit wasn't yours in the first place.

Knead

Your thighs are warm with him
lying there ass up
on teal flannel sheets
and you knead his knots
you knead him deep
fists and knuckles
you knead
him to hear you.
A moth tinkles at the window and
the paddocks hum electric.
The hair on his neck is
honeyash
and stiffens to your touch.
Write sunshine on his skin.
Trace *cinnamon* on his back.
butterscotch
sycamore
eclipse
They
called you last night
while he was in the shower
and you wrote the word
on the back of the grocery receipt and you
dropped it in the waste disposal
with a mandarin
hard and white and buzzing.
You squeaked the word in morning mirror fog,
scratched it in the ice on your windshield
and watched it melt.

Rattled it to yourself
air-conditioned
in an email
addressed to everyone you're gonna need.
You deleted it before you found the nerve so
write it now.

Maryana Garcia

Amistad

My friend
You are.
The sugar of life,
A moment sweetener.
A mid-air heel click thrill
Accomplished in perfect time.
A couplet that rhymes
Where and when you will.
A matched gaze
Between windows
To the same soul.

Steve Outram

Room 11 1967

at the bottom of the drawer i found room 11 1967
i had elephant legs tight clothes and my top button
done up eric ran fast and never wore shoes nancy
wore tartan and smelt of sick ashley and i got
strapped on the same day marjorie laughed like a seal
richard played tennis and never lost andrew lived
on a farm and had a gay uncle on tv colin got hit in
the crotch by a hockey ball followed by the stick
bronwyn slapped me but i could never tell the teacher
gundy had one ear and helped me score my only try
shirley was fat and fainted in the pool it took six of
us to get her out lance had no dad but his mum put
on the best birthday parties ross and karl bounced on
the soccer cross bar until it broke peter had stick out
ears that he could flap and wiggle baz and i drank his
dad's home brew beer after school rosie bled on the
concrete when she fell on her head julie was queen
when i was king and stole my heart and mr mac our
teacher died that year

Holly McLeod

I am

My best friend breaks her arm as she falls from my trampoline.
The school kids laugh at my hand-me-down uniform.
Nurses feed a friend charcoal to throw up all the pills she just swallowed.
I am every book on my bookshelf.
Warm cookies.
The lips of my first love.
I am bitter drugs and the burn of hard liquor.
Scraped knees.
Holding hands.
Hot tea burns my mouth.
Unwanted touches from malicious fingers.
Razor blades.
My mother's body shakes the first time I try to kill myself.
I am the scratch of the tattoo gun as it carves meaning into my skin.
Songbirds, fires, pop music.
Hospital machinery whirr.
I am laughter and library silence.
Fresh hot cross buns.
The ocean and the snow.
I am strawberry perfume.
Add the ones and carry the 10s.
Look both ways before you cross the road.
I am "wear your keys as a weapon and run".
Two dogs and a white picket fence.

Travel the world.
I walk down the aisle of the church my parents
married in.

Maria-Teresa Corino

body/hair

On your skull, precious brain casket
Plenteous hair is glory.

Your face: a contested border zone.

Below, hair is animal, sex, sin
Inferior races, soul-less females, the dirty, the dumb.

Though even the hair on your head offends many
gods:

Shave it like Buddha, cover it up like Mary (you have
to like pale blue)

Or come with me on a hairy little ride.

.....

....

.

Take the merkin, pussy peruke, down-under rug:
In the days when men liked their women bushy

A working girl could be blonde for Tom and
ginger for Harry

Or cover up the pox
she got from Dick.

-- but now Word tells me there's no such word as
merkin.

I must mean *merlin* – the magician that
shows and hides

Or *marking* – map of Tassie if you're an Aussie, the
hair that marks the spot

Or *jerkin*, getting closer – all some of us need to see
for a happy ending

Or *merkid* – frolicking child mermaid,

brushing her hair

Or the shame of those too young to sprout a cover
For what they need to sell

Or marlin – yes, proud, muscular, hard to catch,
hidden. Go fishing if you dare.

I digress, but I've long loved the merkin.

A large black Halloween beard is an exuberant
merkin,

Under something skimpy and frilly at parties.
Being of a cantankerous feminist bent, it's a favourite
outfit of mine
And it hides my own hair -- I'm far too feeble to
show that.

Furry rollercoaster, fluffy punctuation
1970s: I have to give my mother leg waxes on the
kitchen table

- this goes onto the list of things to never make my
own children do.

1980s: swimsuits cut from labia to waist.

1990s: the rise of the metrosexual - men discover
pain, and post-wax acne.

The twenty-first century, everyone goes Brazilian
Clear-felled cunts, smooth sacs and silky
cracks:

Every last hair plucked for men who like women who
look like little girls

And Peter Pans who never never want to age.

.....

....

.

Pubic topiary

Body hair ripped out by the roots, shaved, shaped,
tinted, bejewelled – vajazzled:

Catch your screams behind your teeth and imagine
Rekindled fire in your lover's eyes

As he or she finally gets to fuck Barbie or Ken
Or a very naughty fairy.
Hairy rollercoaster, fuzzy punctuation
1970s: pre-internet porn – beaver and split beaver in
the pages of men’s magazines.
1980s: legwarmers exactly cover the hairy part of my
legs.
1990s: boy-leg swimmers, I never need to trim again.
The twenty-first century, stick-on pink merkins on
YouTube.

.....

....

.

A fine line of dark hair climbs up a smooth belly:
I’m entranced, follow it with lips and fingertips
Soon after, she leaves me.

Boys become bushrangers, lumberjacks and patri-
archs

Bewhiskered, muttonchopped, or at least perma-
nently stubbled

I wonder, do they still wage war on fur south of the
chin?

Eurovision, a glamorous Austrian drag queen wears
my merkin on her face, and wins.

I take advantage of a long winter

And the devotion of my beloved

To see how long my armpit hair can grow:

About five centimetres, fine and fluffy as the
first hair on a baby.

I stroke it at night, two small nestling cats

I can almost hear them purr.

Summer comes:

I shave off my furry friends

Victims of fashion.

.....

....

.

Loren Thomas

Back Roads

Soak it in
 An unwanted visitor in the night.
 like alcohol seeping into that 70s rug.
 Let smoke embrace you.

The moreporks and cicadas
 tussle with the rhythm and bass.
 Puff out your chest.
 Break your rib cage.
 Whistle through the night.

Kick up
 dust on the gravel road.
 Saturday night drinks,
 Sunday night sleep ins.

Forget the nine to five
 and your parents next door.
 The disappointing glare
 of wasted academia.

Don't worry
 about the residue
 congealed under your nails
 or the chips and bottle caps
 nicking the skin off your
fingers.

Let it bathe you
 Bathroom tears.
 Bedroom cussing.
 The rustle of the backyard bush.

A rusted trampoline

Our cosiest mattress tonight.
Forget about the bugs
 nestled under your frame.
Sleep in
 until next week's
 comfortable repeat.

Norman Franke

On the early films of Yasujirō Ozu

- Sword of Penitence* (lost)
- Dreams of Youth* (lost)
- Pumpkin* (lost)
- A Couple on the Move* (lost)
- Wife Lost* (lost)
- Body Beautiful* (lost)
- Treasure Mountain* (lost)
- Days of Youth* (earliest surviving film)
- Fighting Friends, Japanese Style* (14 minutes survive)
- I graduated, but...* (10 minutes survive)
- The Life of an Office Worker* (lost)
- A straightforward Boy* (short film)
- An Introduction to Marriage* (lost)

**Accidental poem on a Genitive website (Mind Mars,
Moses, Sands and Grace)**

A long day's journey into the night.
A twenty minutes' delay.
1968's music was great,
so was Tallis'.
He dropped his keys at her bed's feet
for righteousness' sake.
The series' first game;
the goalpost's leg was broken,
the wet, slippery field's grass prevented us from
scoring.
The Smiths' house.
The Burnses' field.
The Martinezes' backyard.
The Marxes' daughters.
This computer's networks will be down.
These computers' network will be down.
Yahoo!'s chief executive went down.
The quarto edition of
Loues labors lost
used no apostrophes.
Double genitives' possibilities:
He is a political associate of the President's.
Héloïse's and Peter's personal letters.
The Love of God.
Mind Mars, Moses, Sands, and Grace.

Tori Mitchell

critical

You told me boys don't like girls who read too much
so I got my own library card
and carried Oscar and Virginia like a shield
You told me to cover up
so I wore the shortest dress I owned
and crushed the hands of anyone who touched me
You told me I was beautiful with my mouth closed
so I showed no hesitation in speaking my mind
and I would never become soft silk for you
*(I once loved a man who confused me with vodka,
half-poison, half-goddess
he tried to water me down
sweeten with honey
stamp out the fire
so I left him behind)*
You told me girls should be delicate and dainty
so I turned up with bloody knuckles in combat boots
and spat teeth of steel
You told me being a writer isn't a smart career choice
so I filled journals with a garden of words
and made sure people finally heard me
You told me nobody likes public displays of affection
so I kissed my girlfriend in the middle of a crowded
street
and a big neon *Fuck You* flashed above our heads
*(what you meant was
two teenagers can make out on a bus
but god forbid two girls hold hands)*

You told me it was her fault, she was asking for it
so I linked my arm in hers at the police station
and forced them to listen
You told me that bodies covered in tattoos aren't
pretty
so I illustrated mine with bluebells and snowdrops
and spilled ink into swirling scripts
You told me that my hair looks best when straight
so I wore it curly
- *girl, princess, warrior, queen*

freedom

free·dom

/'fri:dəm/

noun

1. there is no elixir like the salted waves.
2. all I know is smoothed shards of shattered bottles and splintered wood, laying a path towards atlantis. I am not a stranger, the tide floods through my veins, my heart is anchored to the ocean floor.
3. the sea is not a sad song. the waves do not care for weeping.
4. i kissed a boy who turned into seafoam before my eyes, leaving a trail of sea glass like a welcome mat. I kissed a boy in a crown weaved of coral and pearls. I kissed a boy and tears don't matter when you're made of saltwater.
5. poseidon is calling me home.

Hazel Brooking

Willing to Wait

I am the hand with nothing to hold
I am the story that nobody told
I am a writer without any ink
I am the heart that's refusing to sink
I am the ice-cream that's starting to melt
I am a buckle without any belt
I am a letter without any stamp
I am a seed in the dark and the damp
I am the joke that nobody got
I am an arrow about to be shot
I am a dancer without any track
I am tired of being pulled back
I am a bird on the edge of the nest
I have an engine that won't let me rest
I am a dreamer with far too much night
I am a soldier stepping into the fight
I am a dress that's never been worn
I know the veil has already been torn
I am a line without any bait
I am the one who is willing to wait

Conor Maxwell

Helena Road

Got stories, eh.
Tales-for-days.

I'm a hard man.
At 8pm on Helena Road my brain is a tidal wave and
what I got is
vodka-on-the-shore.
The rocks
are cavorting with light bulbs
and tin sticks shut up with black Gaffa.
Tie your bed sheets
double-Windsor and
choke me, Doctor.
Wild Moose on the other
side of someone else's spearmint
tonsils
and nicotine.

Sharing is
dopamine. An orgy
of mouth-holes
and tentacles with taste buds
Denim crushing on poly
Index and ring against my
white-red collar.
Vodka
-on-the-cabbage-tree.
Dirt in her hair.

I ain't like Lemon Squeezy;

dis integrate

we're at the 'now what' stage
the 'we need to talk' stage
too late to book an ambo it's raining pennies
and passion is hot-pink
like sunstroke or
blush
my arms on either side of your shoulders
(comfort-like)
while i somersault astral
 reach
with mutant lust
for artists wearing hoodies that aren't theirs
chimaera's fires will never go out
but flesh burns hotter than mount and
i melt
on your footpath
 while you hold the bucket
we're current
not slick like water not electric
your touch is static but
i'm rubber
cased in wood
staring oaken at your amber fog
 your shield of teeth
rougher than bark
the course of entropy is constant the cause is
you
looking at me
like i'm ambrosia

Rose-glass

Shoot up a polaroid.
Scrapbook a collage, a mosaic of places, of moments
that scream of her:
Counting love bites
and footsteps in ever-wet concrete,
citrus smiles from a mannequin
that moves like Tinkerbell;
A capella Radiohead in a dressing room with no heat.
 She's textbox empty
 nail polish on a vanity
and she's looking dead through me
like Rayban periscopes
on an empty street.
She's got me on my knees
 rope burn on my throat
 string between my teeth.
Finger painting is catharsis;
communication through zinc,
lead,
arthritis,
but lovers weep in letterheads:
 Bookman for scholars
 Garamond for head cases.
Cupids etched in margins
of a diary—
the permanence of fountain ink
and typewriters
falling prostrate on beds of scorpion grass.
Box wine and daisy chains.

The all-working arborist
bleeds cursive through spider bites,
snips the heads of succulents,
adds salt to the thorns.
I am rose-glass
in the back pocket of an Instagram model.
A voice cloaked in tartan,
unzipped in darklit boudoirs.
I'm the curtain rail daredevil,
the stardust on her cheekbones
yelling through yellowed gauze;
 yes, you are pretty
 yes, you are special.
A social refugee
shipped out in a handkerchief
that burns with jasmine,
that claws at my clavicle
 the way she used to.

Scott Carroll

Cameras

Ears are listening

-watch out.

In glades of the waxing tideline on the shales

I sit aside him like we're destined

to be together, but

I'm barely past the drinking age.

It doesn't have to be so serious, does it?

7 years on

watching cityscape processions waft along;

vapors white, exhumed like smog from those coal

chimney stacks.

My heels clacking against the sidewalk;

my stockings pulled up in the reflection of an empty

shop window;

my eyes adjusted if ever I'm thought to be watching

oncomers.

5 years on

he won't stop crying

but I do love him.

9 years on

a bottle of red,

some finger food,

maybe that cheese later on.

Wayland Davick

Understand

A girl curled into me like the claws of a cat's comfort. I thought her harmless, but I was between teeth. Canine. She didn't mean to be. She wasn't cruel.

Some people live in bear-traps.

This girl was both soft and hard. She had strong hands, strong fingers. I admired her. She had so much energy. And pain. She couldn't have loved me, but she wanted to. She wasn't strong like that. I thought I might help, that maybe all she needed was to be cared for. I thought.

I saw the straight lines on her thighs, cut out of sight to avoid minds.

I might have married her. I could have. It would not have gone well for us. I loved her sisters, they might have been my own. I respected her mother and that's a place love grows.

I don't remember the faces of her family. They are brushed from blurs, touches of colour, brown eyes, fair skin, dark hair; somewhere there is the shape of them.

Her two sisters, one who bubbled with laughs and smiles and chatter. I gave her something precious to me, because it seemed she didn't know what she was worth. The other possessed a silence of unspoken thoughts and hidden things. She was a certain kind of beautiful; lean curves with dark detail, a poise that whispered lonely. I saw boys give her their eyes and put their thoughts in her pockets.

The mother was a school principal, stern. She managed their home, gave it order. She held it together with primordial force: gravity, thunder, flood. Someone had to.

The little brother. Shrill tantrums ill-fit. He wore them stretched over too many years.

This girl. I remember the taste of cigarettes on her lips. I remember her balled fists. My shoulder grew damp when she was near, perhaps because I was gentler than she'd ever known. Or just because I was there. I was no gentleman.

Watch.

See her father, with his hand, ram her head into the wall-switch of a light for failing to turn it off. I remember - she told me - but I saw.

I saw his hands lift violent, and come to rest on his daughter. I saw his eyes flick from disdain, to restraint, to shame like my own father switched the channels of his television. He was hesitant. He did not strike her, not then. But his eyes, in my memory, were feral.

He looked at me in the moments after. Nervous, hoping I had not seen.

I still see.

His hand rises to beat a drum. It halts. Then it falls strange, half-gentle; as though he'd not plucked strings, never found the soft chords of affection; more familiar with red knuckling drums. Then I felt the length of silence on my skin. Saw the pressed lips. A lovable girl's shoulders braced against a blow. Her sister's eyes. They flit to faces and places between. They look at me, they look at the floor.

I understand every single cut she wrote in her thighs.

Trevor Hayes

What it Feels Like

A boat weighing anchor.
Sunken treasure. A boot
full of electric guitars. Eels
in a dark pool. Any material
being ripped apart. A tuneless
whistle or melancholic whale.
A dying camel, drying enamel.
It feels like the latest orgasm.
The roots of trees – birds
alighting from their branches.
It feels like OUT FOR GOOD
BEHAVIOUR! Like a sea shell
listening back. It feels like the light.
It feels like right brain left
hemisphere, north and south, the edge
of reason, like I'm out of season.
It feels like the shrift from the short,
the long from the tall, like nothing before.

Rebecca Tegan

I am not my diagnosis

My diagnosis is Bipolar Disorder, type 1, rapid
cycling
Bipolar is an elusive cat and a blue cocaine caterpillar
I want out of Wonderland
My diagnosis is bipolar disorder, type 1, rapid cycling
The attempted suicide rate for bipolar is 60%
Symptoms include grand delusions
Bipolar is an elusive cat and a blue cocaine caterpillar
The suicide rate for bipolar is 60%
The pills come with the label Eat Me
To survive I need the red queen hypothesis
Symptoms include sexual indiscretions
The medication comes with the label Eat Me
I make my mother cry
Lithium is eating yellow paint
To survive I need the red queen hypothesis
I make my mother cry
The hatter knocks, won't you come play with me?
The doctors took thirty years to find me
Lithium is eating yellow paint
The hatter knocks, won't you come play with me?
Sip poison from laced filigree china
I am not my diagnosis
The doctors took thirty years to find me
Sip poison from laced filigree china
Nibble exotic pills for afternoon tea
My body a voodoo doll, self-inflicted pink pricks
I am not my diagnosis

Dadon Rowell

Mingled Memories

Sam's kisses melt on my tongue.
Silk sheets stick in my throat.
Squashing flowers makes me feel decadent.
A man in Venice bit my thumb.
Purple nail polish makes my pulse giggle.
Canberra winters give me see-through wrists.
Book pages stroke my skin.
The black cat asked what it felt like.
Saying sir vibrates my skull.
The Madonna's face was stained red.
Melted chocolate looks good in my hair.
Peep-toed shoes make me cry.
The doctor waited to assemble the pieces.
Rose petals burn my fingertips.
Visible brushstrokes tickle my thighs.
I wore the smell of coffee to Paris.

A History of the Body

The body was not a whore,
She was more than an accessory of your rib.
The body was not a receptacle,
She was not designed to be filled with the sticky
black tar of your sermons.
The body was not dirty,
She bled to give you the life that you spent calling her
unclean.
The body was not a canvas for handprints,
She did not willingly wear the mottled adornments
you gave her.
The body was not a gravestone,
She was more than your daughter, your wife, your
mother.
The body was not a chalkboard,
She did not need your personality written into her
skin.
The body was not a witch,
She bled red when your knife slashed her.
The body was not a dog,
She did not need your name and address on her collar.
The body was not a virgin,
She had to bleed to make room for those extra lives.
The body was not silent,
She could now tick the ballot box with the vocal
chords she had wrestled back.
The body was not a lady,
She was allowed to fuck too.
The body was not a mother,

She could fence her womb with the pinstripes on her
grey suit.
The body is not perfect,
She is designed pocket-sized and sky-scraping.
The body is not a whore,
She owns each pound of flesh and it's her strip-tease.
The body does not belong to you.

Hamish Ansley

Notes on a Razor

The blades are the kind that drug dealers might use to cut coke and they come in little foil packets, discretely wrapped like Cadbury Roses. Secret blades. Thin, flat, double edged blades. Surgical stainless, platinum, or anti-friction coated, with names like Shark, Sword, Feather. They come in stacks of ten or twelve in a little cardboard holder or sometimes plastic, no bigger than a matchbox. The plastic one is spring loaded. A mini concertina pushes each new blade up through a slot at the end so you don't slice your thumb open. The blade is wrapped like chewing gum; foil tucked at the corners and folded over, held only by the memory of its creased form.

*

My father uses an electric shaver. The size of a McDonald's cheeseburger with two spinning turbines that hack his stubble short. It has a curly telephone cable and lives in a black moulded case with crushed velvet interior, little dark hairs like the clipped fibres of a paintbrush embedded in the burgundy lining. I'm six and standing at the bathroom sink, watching him roll the thing across his face. Back and forth along his jawline, downwards underneath his chin. He slides the back of the shaver over my face, the smooth black plastic side. It buzzes against my skin and I shudder as the tingle arcs electric between my shoulder blades.

*

The handle is coal-coloured resin and the comb triple-plated chrome. The blade is sandwiched between the comb and the head plate and curves like a wing or the edge of the atmosphere. The handle screws the whole exploded diagram back together.

*

My father never taught me how to shave. How to guide a razor over my cheekbone, how to navigate the terrain of my features, crest the ridge of my chin. How to avoid taking a chunk out of my earlobe.

*

The pedestal basin is full of hot water and the badger brush hangs patient in its plastic tortoiseshell holder. The bowl of shaving soap is levered open on the side of the vanity and the smell of oat, flax, and green tea rises, buoyed by the steam misting on the mirror.

*

There are many things my father never taught me. He bent the training wheels up on my bike but when they no longer touched the ground I was the one who fetched the twelve mil ring-spanner from its outlined place, hanging on a nail on the garage wall, and took them off. When I learned to drive he failed to explain the intricacies of the clutch; how to release it smoothly and how to let the brakes do the work before I slot down from fifth to third and glide through the give way.

*

Dunk the brush into the sink. Scrub your skin in crop circles to soften the bristle; twirl the brush in the bowl of soap like beating an egg. Paint your face white with lather. Wet the razor in the geothermal water and watch the moisture bead along its hungry edge.

*

He calls to ask me if I've got a girlfriend yet. To him, getting a girlfriend is like getting satellite TV or the flu vaccine. My father never taught me about women either.

*

Take the razor up. Grip the cold handle, feel its heft and weight. Start at your sideburn. Hold the blade parallel to your skin, press firm and slide. Feel the soft scrape, hear the flick and crackle; hundreds of tiny hairs being sheared. Carve the lather away in slow stripes.

*

My father never had the patience to show me how to mow the lawn in straight methodical lines, uniform as a bowling green. A cricket pitch.

*

Now underneath the swinging hinge of your jaw. Close to the jugular where your pulse beats a bass rhythm beneath the surface. Where the curve of your neck and the straight razor fail to meet. Nick your skin with the corner of the blade. Watch your blood gather and drip into the basin. Watch it curl like pink smoke in the standing water.

Four Simple Steps to Becoming a Successful Writer

1. Be miserable.

Writers are chronically unhappy people. If your disposition is a naturally sunny one, you should consider an alternative occupation. Tax accountant. Careers advisor at your local high school. Psychopath. If your view of the world tends more towards the lugubrious, welcome. Accentuate this part of yourself by wearing black; traverse your days like the letter S in a hood and Doc Marten boots. Sit on park benches and outside art galleries in sullen contemplation — like you've looked into the void and seen it wink come-hither. Like you're pissed at being stuck in this two-dollar-shop existence, shuffling about in your meat suit — a vessel wholly unsuitable for the satellites of artistic brilliance orbiting the starry dome of your mind. Your writing should reflect this misery. Dolphins made of toffee and the miracle of childbirth are subjects strictly off limits. Instead, discuss the stark realities — the lump of flesh missing beneath the dolphin's eye socket from an underwater street fight; the perineal tear caused by the ten-pound-two behemoth baby's crowning head. If possible, have a full mental breakdown — the kind requiring medications whose names sound like chewing old licence plates with tinfoil teeth. Take a lengthy stay in an institution — preferably the kind where they ask you to sign over your power of attorney. Have them prop you in a battered old wingback in front of a tall window where you can watch the topiary animals roam the wide plains of lawn.

2. Develop a substance abuse problem.

All the best writers are addicted to something. If you're not starting the day with a couple of bottles of Jack and a six pack or at the very least splashing a mugful of Baileys in your cornflakes, you're never

going to be a great writer. The best inspiration is ninety-proof and comes in a paper bag with the top twisted like a German pastry. Replace the bottles of shampoo in your shower with bottles of beer (the cheap stuff will do; it's revolting at any temperature). You'll do your best writing through a fug of whiskey after a forty-eight hour bender that leaves your head feeling like a bowling ball balanced on a knitting needle. Speaking of needles, there's always that route. If you're not struggling weekly to get good purchase in a Swiss-cheesed vein, you're not living the life of a writer. If you're lucky you'll die young and someone will sell your unfinished manuscripts on eBay for a song. The story of how you were found bloated and alone, upside down on the piss-soaked floor of a crack den should cement you in the public memory.

3. Hate yourself and everything you write (including the things you haven't written yet).

Self-loathing is the successful writer's default position. Except, you're not a writer at all, really. Just a sub-par humanoid masquerading as one. Take every available opportunity to make absolutely clear your hatred for what you have written. Describe how your bones vibrate, how you rattle the foundations of tall buildings with the current of disgust that runs through you. You can feel the hot acid taste of bile in your throat when you read the shit you've flung at the page or clawed onto your keyboard. Describe how you've seen better writing carved on the walls of a public lavatory. Package it up with a knowing laugh, a self-pitying chuckle. Oh the irony. You decided to be a writer but everything you pen is dirt. Less than dirt. Just chicken scratches on A4, double spaced. Despite being so prolifically awful, continue to assault the page and publishers' in-trays with your offal-scented scribblings.

4. Don't work very hard. At all.

Writing is not supposed to be hard work. You've written four lines of poetry today? Tomorrow, try three. If you feel the urge to write, put it off for a couple of hours. Sink some more liquor. Finish that carton of Marlboro Gold. Read the morning newspaper again (including the sports section which, let's face it, you don't give two

shits about). Become enraged at their failure to wield the em dash correctly. Pry open a copy of Ulysses and tot up the frequency of each word; including ones like ‘the’ and ‘and.’ Have a mid-morning nap. Braid your hair. Unbraid it. Make freaky notes out of the pages of women’s magazines and send them to your neighbours (WE ARE DISCOVERED; FLEE IMMEDIATELY). Count the number of Smiths in the telephone directory. Recount them. Rub one out in the shower. Go to parties and family Christmases, tell your friends and relatives that writing is a cinch — that you don’t have to do anything (it won’t be hard to convince them). Tell them you spend most of your days horizontal in a pink bathrobe, scratching your underparts with a number two pencil and waiting for the writing to come.

Actually, there’s a fifth step

5

Ignore the previous four steps altogether. Write the tough stuff — write about the black, suffocating curtain of depression or that time your sister tried to let all the blood out of her arm with a piece of broken glass after some guy forced himself down her throat. Absolutely use writing as catharsis. Write the page black and blue with descriptions of trauma; that time you sliced your thumb open to the bone, or that time you decided to take on a truck and trailer in your Honda Civic. But don’t be deliberately unhappy. Don’t limit yourself to just the bleak details. Write the whole spectrum. Absolutely write about sunsets and rainbows and the swimming pool smell of new-borns. Write about that girl or guy you kinda like who challenges what you thought of as your ‘type’ and how the colours rush past whenever they’re around. But don’t be anywhere near as saccharine and boring as that. Find a new and surprising angle. Avoid antidepressants and tenures of any length in mental hospitals. Obviously, take the ADs if you need them (they often come with a whole cyclone of side-effects; useful fodder for writing), but do all you can to avoid total psychological atrophy; depression is not typically very productive. If listening to Vanilla Ice on repeat or leaving pink Care Bears™ in unlikely places around the house (inside the salad spinner, the vegetable drawer, behind the toilet cistern) is what keeps you sane, do it.

Then write about how it feels to have hauled yourself out, the happiness you found; it deserves as much space on the page as your pain.

Except where doing so will lead to a breakdown, you should absolutely drink and experiment with drugs. You're a writer; it's your job to experience as much as possible and that includes getting lit and tripping balls. But don't rely on substances for your material; there are plenty of other ways to find things to write about. Cycle down to your local industrial park at night, lever yourself over the chain-link fence, and climb to the top of the crane. Be present in the world. Go to cafés with a journal and record all the middle-class conversations; observe the Cold War tension between couples, the escalating crisis of the latté bowl crashing onto the saucer. On the subject of coffee, this is really the only substance you should be addicted to as a writer. Thundering back tequila might well be fun but your reader can only tolerate so many descriptions of the interior of the toilet. If you do manage to write anything of note when you finally emerge from your whiskey-cocoon, the potential cirrhosis of your liver or the exploded veins from all the needles you've been jamming will probably knock the shine off just a tad. This is worst-case-scenario stuff, of course, but you should learn from all the other writers and artists who died inordinately young; go, have fun, but slamming jet-fuel night after night after morning after night is not the path to a long career.

You should absolutely scan your writing with a critical eye. But don't flat-out hate your work. Don't write down or give voice to those thoughts you have that your writing is shit. You'll only make them real. They'll drop down on you like spiders from a car's sun visor, and you'll yank the wheel and wind up in a ditch. Put them in a box and shove it down the stairs. Being a self-loathing writer is so last century. Instead, take that euphoric feeling — that shot of confidence to the jugular when you've finished a piece — and fashion wings out of it.

Above all, you should work hard at writing. Don't just sit back and wait for the magic to happen. Go looking for it and, when you find it, kick it hard in the back of the knees and drag it home with a pillowcase over its head. Perversely, the way to go looking for writing, the way to make it happen, is to get your backside on a chair

and get it there often. Your arse and that seat should be intimately acquainted with the precise texture and terrain of each other's surfaces. If you need Pisces to be rising over Saturn, the right barometric pressure, or a book of wallpaper samples to run your fingers over, you're probably never going to succeed as a writer. Proper writers don't whinge about not having the perfect conditions; they just get on with it. Most of them have real, busy lives to contend with. Baby's wiped turd all over the curtains again. Girlfriend's in a coma. You have a deadline in seventeen minutes. Worrying about having the right pair of writing slippers just wastes time, so be disciplined. Up at seven; at your desk by eight. Tell this to your rich bitch aunt when she passes you the Christmas ham and asks you what you do with your life. Tell her you work 24/7. It's true. Writers never sleep.

Contributors' Notes

Dr Tracey Slaughter lectures in Creative Writing in the English Programme at the University of Waikato. Her work has won numerous awards including the 2010 Louis Johnson New Writers Bursary and the 2004 BNZ Katherine Mansfield Award. Her collection of poems and short stories entitled *her body rises* was published by Random House.

D.A. Taylor is a graduate of Tracey Slaughter and Catherine Chidgey's creative writing programme at the University of Waikato and deputy editor of *Mayhem Literary Journal*.

essa ranapiri /// writes about the world coz they live in it /// gets words out coz they aren't dead yet /// not a man ; not a woman ; they them theirs /// came in to this world with a scottish whaler on tainui

Rebecca Hawkes is a painter and perpetual student. She completed an MA in non-fiction writing from the International Institute of Modern Letters last year and has immediately reverted to lyric poetry.

Luana Leupolu is in her third year of a violin performance degree at the University of Waikato. She is originally from Otahuhu, Auckland.

Bob Orr. Born in the Waikato. Adult life mostly spent in Auckland working as a seafarer on the Waitemata Harbour and Hauraki Gulf. Has published eight collections of poetry. The last was 'Odysseus in Woolloomooloo' (Steele Roberts, 2014). Was awarded the Lauris Edmond Memorial Prize in 2016. Writer in Residence: University of Waikato 2017. The poem 'Z' submitted to Mayhem is from a new collection all but complete except for a title.

Bronwyn Laundry is in her final year of a Bachelor of Arts that began as a Bachelor of Laws. She is one of the co-editors of *Nexus*, Waikato University's student magazine and her last name is definitely not a pseudonym.

Evie Birch is finishing up her undergrad study this year and hopes to pursue a publishing based career in the future. She's a self-confessed cat lady with a bone to pick with anyone who doesn't enjoy chocolate or a nice brew of tea.

Rhys Monkley: I love writing horror and humour, and hopefully mixing the two together! Massive fan of everything freaky and funny, and greatly enjoy any opportunity to let others read my work. A lot of my stuff is inspired by the real world, be it through stories in games or real life experience.

Ash Dorgan is an aspiring writer studying English at the University of Waikato, specialising in Creative Writing.

Nikki Crutchley currently works as a freelance proofreader. She has been published in *Mayhem Literary Journal* and *Flash Frontier*. She also has a piece of flash fiction in the anthology *Fresh Ink*. Nikki has just published her first novel, *Nothing Bad Happens Here*, a crime/thriller set on the Coromandel Coast of New Zealand.

Lee Kimber's quals are in Science and Adult Education, but her dream is to write her life away.

Alyssa Miles is currently a second-year English student at the University of Waikato. She is a part-time cashier and aspiring writer.

Mark Houlahan: I first remember my own words in print for the school magazine, St. Peter's College, Epsom, 1971. They were late; and not as good as they should have been. So it goes. I'd like to recall the past clearly; & then be open to words arriving out of blue skies.

Tania Collins: I am currently embarking on post-graduate studies in English. Previously, I lived in England for four years where I loved, lost and hopefully gained a little wisdom. I also may be ever so slightly obsessed with all things Shakespeare.

As an avid childhood reader, with a librarian for a grandmother, **Brittany Rose** loves words and stories. Between marking essays on YA fiction, and hosting Writer's Club in her classroom (since she's now an English teacher), Brittany sometimes reviews stuff for *Nexus* because she secretly misses being the 2016 Editor. Published in *Poetry New Zealand 2015* and *Mayhem Anthology*, Brittany will not cease in submitting to *Mayhem Literary Journal* and yearning for days spent drinking coffee on campus.

Calum Hughes is a 3rd year English and Theatre student. He is a Sir Edmund Hillary Scholar, an actor and writes every now and then. His background in Shakespeare, acting and old British comedies gives him an obsession with rhythm, wit and the sound image of words.

Emily Campbell grew up all over the Pacific, and can't quite remember how she got here.

Mark Prisco: I'm an honours student of English Literature at the University of Waikato.

Eefa Yasir Jauhary is a lover of all things feminine, and yet is oddly fascinated by darker themes which she explores in her writing. A poet since young and hopefully a published author in the future, Eefa spends most of her time painting, writing or indulging in the latest happenings in pop culture.

Naomi [N R Pelham] is a single mum of two teenage girls, finally catching up with her lifelong dream to be a writer and currently studying towards a Bachelor of Arts (in English) at the University of Waikato.

Jenny Price: I am currently in my second year of studying a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science (Tech) conjoint. I am majoring in English and Psychology under my BA side and Biological Sciences and Environmental Science under my BSC. I have always had a passion for writing and plan to do so in the future of my studies.

Andrew T. Lyall is an actor, playwright and an English/Theatre double major in his second year at The University of Waikato. He found an almost sexual passion for poetry in Dr. Slaughter's classes this year and hopes that the inspiration to write never runs out.

Hi my name is **Jamie de Jong**. Thanks for reading my poems!

Chloe Francis: I am 33 years old and am studying Honors Psychology. I am an artist and singer. I have three children. I have been happily single for 3 years.

Andrew Lacey is studying a Bachelor of Arts majoring in History and English at Waikato, after having spent most of his previous life as an avid, though unofficial student of history and literature. He has a fervent passion for writing and is currently working on his debut novel.

Carmen Penny: A twenty something year old uni student who majors in Psychology, English and depressing shit. After ten or so years of living with PTSD, Carmen has resorted to passive aggressive writing.

Aimee-Jane Anderson-O'Connor is completing an honours degree in English at the University of Waikato, and was recently announced as the co-winner of the 2017 Monash Prize for Emerging Writers. Her work has appeared in *Starling*, *Mayhem*, *Brief*, *Poetry New Zealand*, *Landfall*, and *Verge*. She writes thanks to the tireless support of some of the best people on this great watery rock.

Maryana Garcia: I am a poet fascinated by quotidian miracles and deeply appreciative of the fact that everything great began from something small. I regularly contribute my word experiments to the cloud under the Twitter handle @bosonbrain.

Steve Outram: I am a mature student in the final year of a Media and Creative Technology degree, and have been able to come to university with the wonderful support of my family. By chance, I happened upon the Creative Writing paper, and have appreciated the opportunity to write without boundaries again.

Holly McLeod is a former student of Waikato university having graduated from her masters in 2017. Holly now works as a teacher and is passionate about art and culture. Holly really doesn't like talking about herself and finds writing this short bio really difficult.

Maria Teresa arrived in NZ from Italy via Australia. She's been an under-age winery guide, flight attendant, broadcaster, blogger, cookbook writer, & almost a lawyer. She's doing postgraduate English/Writing Studies at the UoW, attempting to understand chickens, see lots of New Zealand, & maybe one day get paid to write.

Loren Thomas has previously been published in *Mayhem* and *Poetry New Zealand*.

Dr Norman P. Franke writes poetry and novels and makes pastel drawings and documentary films while listening to Brahms 4th Symphony, Herbert Grönemeyer or Kate Bush over Darjeeling Tea. As a Conjoint Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW, Norman is involved in several research projects, including one focussing on the friendship between Albert Einstein and Upton Sinclair. He is also one of the co-organizers of the up-coming Reformation 500 conference at the Meteor Theatre in Hamilton.

Tori Mitchell is an avid reader and writer who finds poetry a lot more cathartic and cheaper than therapy.

Hazel Brooking is a student at the University of Waikato majoring in English and Writing Studies.

Conor Maxwell is an actor, writer, director, and high school teacher. He likes to swear in his writing, because he's not allowed to use that kind of language at work.

Scott Carroll is in his final year studying for a Bachelor of Arts. An expat from the UK for over 9 years, he has dreams writing some decent novels. He recently self-published his first book *All Besides I*, and is working on more to come.

Wayland Davick enjoys cups of tea, talking to himself, and applying scathing stereotypes to cockroaches. Other interests include ontological contemplation, fingering guitars, and imagining himself wearing the shoes of others. What he wants most in life, at its end, is to be sure that the world is a better place for him having lived.

Trevor Hayes: I studied at Waikato University in the early nineties. I now live in Punakaiki. I have just had my first chapbook published by Seraph Press.

Rebecca Tegan likes sunsets and long walks on the beach with hand bag sized dogs. She enjoys a glass of Syrah, preferably bought out of her price range, and equality. She is a professional amateur interpretive dancer, practices regularly, and pretends she can sing like Mariah Carey circa 1996. Her preoccupation with living in the moment often leads to unfinished tasks and comfortably lives with the knowledge she has no idea what she wants to do when she grows up. She hates wasabi.

Dadon Rowell is in the last semester of her English-History degree. She is also a part-time librarian, and has learnt that saying her majors and job title make her dynamite at parties.

Hamish Ansley is a writer of short fiction and sometimes poetry. He recently completed a Master's thesis about masculinity in contemporary fiction. His work appears in *Mayhem* and the forthcoming edition of *Poetry New Zealand*.

Submit to *Mayhem*

Mayhem is the flagship annual publication of The Never Press Project, Kirikiriroa Hamilton's newest publishing house.

Mayhem invites submissions of creative prose and poetry from across Aotearoa New Zealand, and will consider all original, previously unpublished works that have not been simultaneously submitted elsewhere. Send us writing that's strong, alive, urgent, dynamic, risky, human, informed.

We publish annually in the last quarter. Works must reach us by the 1st of September to be considered for that year's issue.

prose

Short fiction, creative non-fiction, creative essays or contained excerpts of longer prose work to a maximum of 5000 words (each). Limit of three prose pieces per submission, please.

poetry

Up to five poems per submission, on any theme and in any style.

submitting work

Check our website for details on submitting. Here are the basics:

- Email your submissions to **editor@mayhemjournal.co.nz**
- Use 'Mayhem submission' in the subject line
- Attach a single document in a plain text format (e.g. .docx)
- Include your (pen) name in the format <Surname>, <First name>
- Include your mailing address and a contact number
- Include a short bio (<60 words) for publication, should you be successful. These are best started with your (pen) name.
- We prefer simple formatting: 12 pt font, Times New Roman, double spaced.

We'll let you know when we've received your work. As part of the editorial process, expect that there may be some minor editing or copy suggestions.

You can find more information on submission requirements on our website mayhemjournal.co.nz or by contacting **editor@mayhemjournal.co.nz**