

THE BOLT NEWS

Art | Poetry | Short Stories

CHICAGO IS SO TWO YEARS AGO

by Taylor Jevning

"Do you ever just think about running away?" He spoke absentmindedly, bitten fingernails picking at something nonexistent in the fabric of his jeans. The way the moon hung low in the sky, outshining the street lamps, made speaking without thinking feel all too simple; the words left his mouth one instant and dissipated like clouds an instant later.

"Where would you want to go?" She replied a moment later, breaking the silence that accompanied the palpable stillness in the night. He chuckled slightly under his breath, mouth curving into a half-tuned smile as he adjusted his sitting position.

"I guess I never thought that far." He wasn't lying. He wasn't planning on starting this conversation and wasn't prepared to finish it. There was something about being awake past two in the morning that seemed to unearth unsettling thoughts from parts of your mind you were barely conscious of.

"I'd go to Chicago." She spoke surely, the certainty in her voice starkly contrasting the weight of the air surrounding them.

"Chicago."

"Yeah, why not?" She brought her legs closer to her body. The cold cement of the sidewalk beneath them had stopped being relevant a good part of an hour ago. The soles of her skate shoes were on the road in front of them, and he wondered for the first time that night about why they chose to sit on the curb when there was a bench ten meters in the distance across the road. Lighting a cigarette and handing her one, he inhaled the smoke in the pause of the conversation.

"I've never been to Chicago." He handed her his lighter.

"Me neither." She spoke with a smile, huffing air out of her nose and taking a drag from her cigarette. "It just seems like people speak of Chicago with a sense of nostalgia that makes me want to understand what it means to live there, I guess." He contemplated this statement for a moment, realizing that although she had never answered his initial question about whether she'd ever thought about running away, this appeared to be something she had thought about in depth.

"Like Ferris Bueller or something?"

"Something like that, yeah. I feel like if people are constantly paying homage to a place, it must be worth seeing." He couldn't help but agree with her, glancing at the dusty road in front of them, the patches of snow littered with coffee cups and other discarded belongings. The construction zone next to where they were sitting was vacant due to the lack of daytime workers.

"Why not somewhere like New York? Or London?" he continued, not because he wanted an answer to why she didn't want to be in these places, but because he wanted to know more about why she'd respond so adamantly after such little thought.

"Because if the city never sleeps, then neither will I," she joked, and he smiled, knowing the irony was that they had spent many nights awake until the early hours of the morning even though their city was everything people spend their lives trying to get away from. "There is a sense of importance, I think," she continued, "that comes from being somewhere that people write entire movies and perform songs about. Sometimes when I listen to songs that mention living in Chicago or wishing they could see the city, I feel the same. The way I relate to the music I listen to makes me feel that if all these people see so much in one city, that maybe that's the place I'm meant to be."

He considered this. "I just feel like sometimes I'm trapped in this routine, you know? Like, the weight of people's expectations is overbearing. Sometimes I think

the only way to stop being accountable to anyone but myself would be to leave forever and never come back.”

“Then why don’t we do it?” she challenged, making eye contact with him for what felt like the first time all night. This seemed more like a rhetorical question, implied by the fact she asked not only about him, but about herself as well. He thought about this for a moment, realizing that the words, when spoken aloud, sounded much more like a pipe dream while at the same time holding an air of importance in the context of the situation.

“Those same people’s expectations are what keep me here, I guess. Sometimes I wake up, show up at classes, go to work, and socialize as if it’s a robotic motion I’ve been programmed to perform. I have no autonomy over my own choices, and I think I’m just longing for a place where I’m not accountable to anyone.” She didn’t respond to this, or maybe her silence could be taken as a response in and of itself. “It’s stupid, I know.” He dialed back, but the way she listened indicated that she didn’t think what he was saying was stupid at all.

“So you don’t necessarily want to change where you are, you want to change your situation.”

“Maybe. I’m not sure,” he admitted, flicking the ash of his cigarette onto the road. “A change of scenery could be nice.” Tossing the cigarette into the snowbank, they sat in silence, cars from the boulevard providing white noise for the setting while he pulled the sleeves of his black hoodie over his hands. She took a deep breath before speaking this time and he listened intently.

“I feel like if there are parts of the world you want to see now is the perfect time to think about it. When we graduate this year, we’re going to apply for jobs where we hope to get two weeks of vacation per year and hope our salaries are enough to get us somewhere. It’s almost like people spend most of their lives working to be somewhere they want to be for short periods of time instead of being somewhere they want to be all of the time and just making it work. I guess this is the time in our lives where we have to make the decision about which of these two people we want to

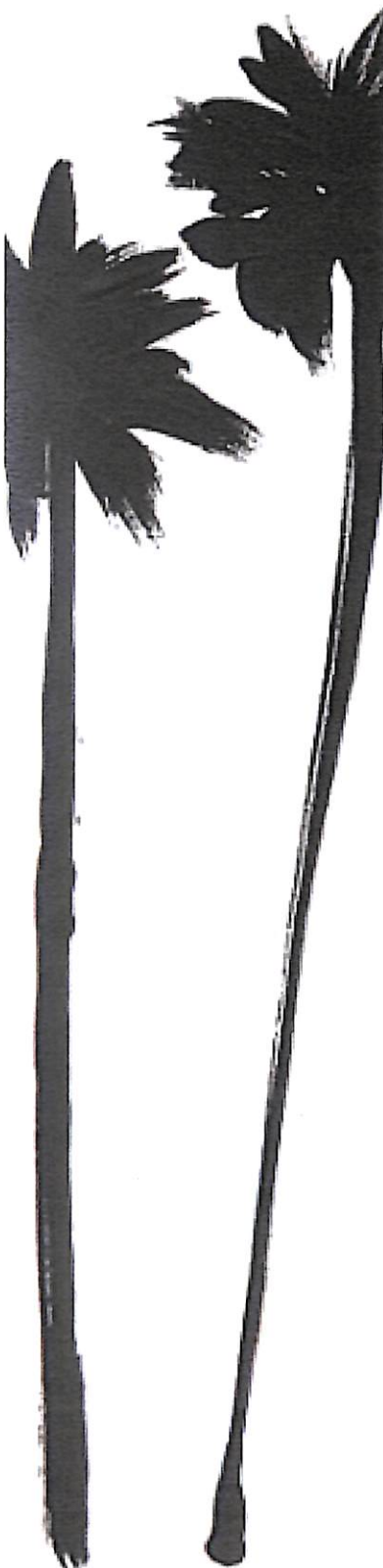
be.” He agreed silently, resuming picking at the fabric of his own clothing as she finished her cigarette.

“I wonder if there’s anyone else in the world right now sitting on the street having the same conversation we’re having right now.”

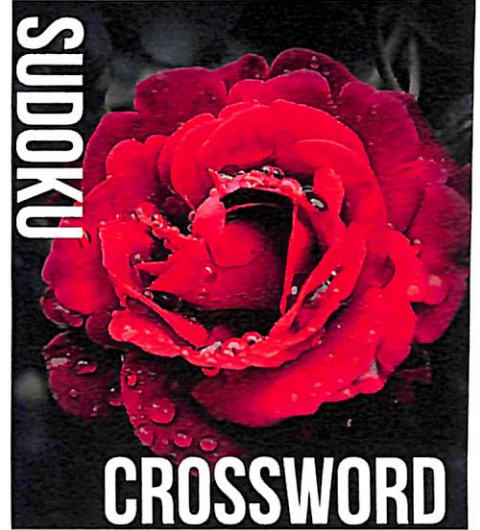
“I think there must be. It’s just a symptom of the disorder of the human condition.” She reassured, and for a moment, he felt entirely understood. In the same familiar way when you listen to your favourite song, he felt comforted in his own experience, as though he wouldn’t be the first to feel this way and certainly wouldn’t be the last. The incommunicable nature of the night felt like a metaphor for the conversation, yet he had a feeling that even if the sky opened up and collapsed upon him, he would still feel the same. If tonight he laid in his bed and the roof flew off and he was sucked up into space, it would still feel like the night went exactly the way it was meant to go. “Where would you go?” She inquired, meeting his gaze in the moonlight. “If you could go anywhere, I mean.”

He thought briefly, never having come to a conclusion to this dilemma on his own. He considered briefly that if this feeling was, in fact, a symptom of the human condition, that maybe no matter where he ended up he would still feel a longing to be somewhere else. This realization was unspoken, but he was sure she understood without it being said that there was no certainty anyone would ever feel like they were in a place where they belonged. Maybe he would wake up in five years in an entirely new place with an entirely different life and would still be sitting on the street at night with a McDonald’s coffee in one hand and a cigarette in the other. For an instant, he considered that the place he so desperately wanted to get away from was the place he was meant to be right now, though this consideration brought no satisfaction or closure to the knowledge that he’d be waking up in five hours and considering whether or not leaving his warm bed to go to a class he didn’t care about was worth it. She waited patiently, no pressure for a response, until he was able to break from his abstraction and look at her. “I hear Chicago is pretty nice this time of year.”



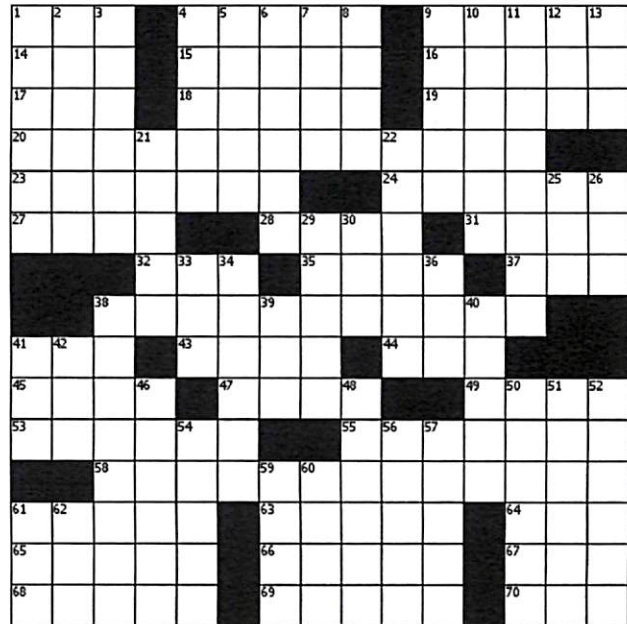


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Across

1. Commercial-free network
4. With Picchu, a place in Peru
9. Creature known for its keen vision
14. Grain in a Salinger title
15. Where van Gogh lived for a while
16. With less moisture
17. Old cloth measure
18. What all manual products need to work
19. Doomed one
20. Classic sports film
23. Very old
24. Oil-rich peninsula
27. Loser to VHS
28. Visited Davy Jones' locker, in a way
31. "Song ___ Blue" (Neil Diamond hit)
32. It comes before a dropped name
35. Spaghetti recipe word
37. "Norma ___" (1979)
38. William Faulkner work
41. Money player
43. Sources of problems for prima donnas
44. Restorative resort
45. Handle without care
47. Word with bug or misty
49. The better part
53. Piercing, as a sound
55. Muse of lyric poetry
58. Donkey or ox, e.g.
61. Pirate's potables
63. Fur trader John Jacob
64. The six of "Little Nellie Kelly"
65. Boleyn and Rice
66. Hopeless
67. Steak partner
68. Opera villain, often
69. Does a database chore
70. Timothy Leary stash



Down

1. Built before shipped
2. Credit for a crossword constructor
3. Jukebox verb
4. Norman Lear show
5. Smokey the Bear's nightmare
6. Fissures
7. Drover's charge
8. Superpower until 1991
9. Poe or Degas
10. Starbucks emanations
11. A Supreme Court justice
12. "Enter the Dragon" star
13. Be imperfect
21. Tarzan's swing
22. "The Gross Clinic" painter
25. Words with jiffy or pinch
26. Wine improver
29. It voids warranties
30. Easter prelude
33. Obsolete preposition
34. Marx colleague
36. Tip of a pouring spout
38. Some whiskeys
39. Baby in blue
40. One who assigns an identifying word
41. Parliament VIPs
42. It's a bit of cheer
46. Feudal lords
48. More skillful
50. Trying experience
51. They can be hot, cold or dry
52. Became taut
54. Stock-acquisition aid?
56. German craft
57. Ottoman Empire inhabitants
59. Starts a paragraph, electronically
60. Capital of Norway
61. Social one's gift
62. Genetic initials



POETRY

by Ester Latif



Slow Enough

He's driving fast enough to pass other cars,
But slow enough for me to see him close his eyes
momentarily
And sway to the music ever so slightly.

He does it so perfectly; he is so happy,
And I can't stop staring,
Because this moment is lovely
And so is he.

He's driving fast enough to pass other cars,
But slow enough for me to fall in love.

Red

The boldness of a familiar hue
Encompasses the eye with just a stroke.
One stripe—enough to catch the eye;
Familiarity becomes an antidote.

Earthen colours hold their comfort,
Delighting us all with nature's shades;
Comfort is gained when we are accustomed
To seeing black and white blur to grey.

There is a place for what is natural,
And there is a time for brown and green;
However, I must confess that Red
Is the most vivid colour I've ever seen.



Grow Old

I keep thoughts to myself most days,
for I'm too serious, they say.
I'm much too young to be set in my ways
and think of turning grey.

But what's so wrong with being sure
of who I want to be?
My intentions are pure—is it so bad
to do what's best for me?

When I am old, will I look back
and regret my choices at twenty?
All the experiences that I lack—
will I wish for them at sixty?

Window

I've packed all the boxes
and put them away.
I've locked them in storage,
combinations estranged.

I distance myself
from those fateful thoughts
and all the discomfort
that they had once brought.

I spend all my time
as far as can be
from all of my feelings
and those memories.

Yet, with all these measures—
I'm still in a limbo.
The doors are all shut,
but I sit at the window.

Night Flight

When all I can do is sit where I am
In solitude late at night,
The roar in my chest begins to digress
And stars take me up in flight.

It's hard to let go when all that I know
Is holding onto my fears.
The sky forces me to let my soul be,
And fireflies dry my tears.

The wind becomes one with my breath
As it beckons me to a place of rest.



Conventionality
All expected, some gained
Of red tin foil and paper roses
And chalk hearts with words ingrained

Candlelight and dead flowers
An expectation of intimate dues
It's the season for cheap romance
Coloured in feminine pink-y hues

They coo, they giggle and gush
About plans and promises made
Hallmark cards with sweet little words
Masking alteriors laid

I'm not one for a season as such,
Of corporate demand for love
Making up a year of neglect
Into a single day with cramming and a shove

CHALK HEARTS

by
Nicole Beaver



Cheap chocolate boxes,
Chalk Hearts stamped in ink,
Little cards with cheesy messages
Overrated, I think.

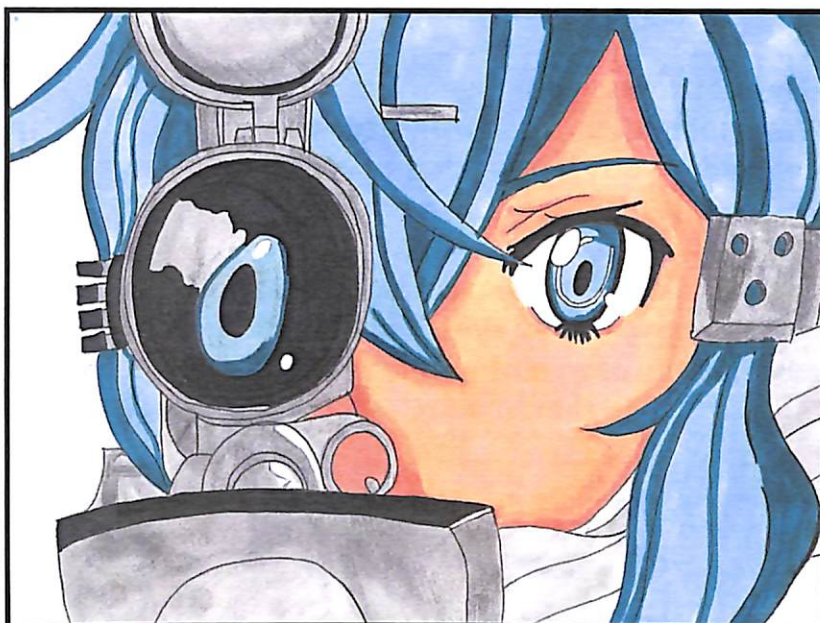
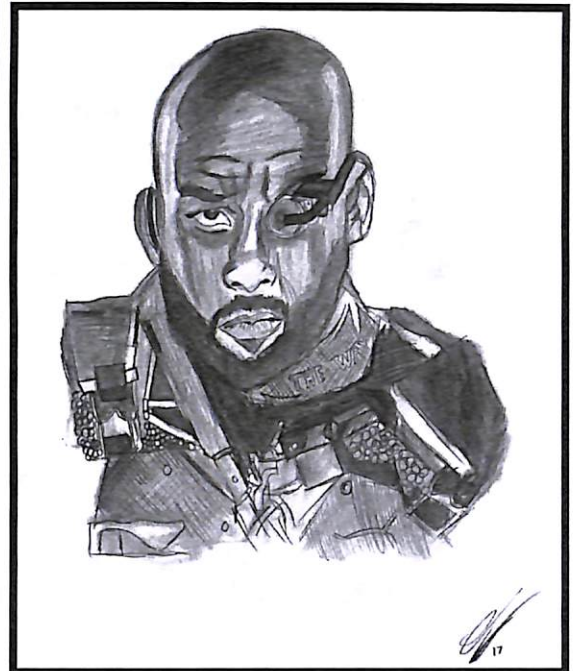
Why not profess your love when it counts,
And not wait until a corporate holiday
Instead we buy love with a single merit
And waste it on a day

So with Chalk Hearts we will choose to adore,
With Cheap Candy eyes we will feast
On Memorial Day of a saint executed for true love.
Let's keep that in mind at least.



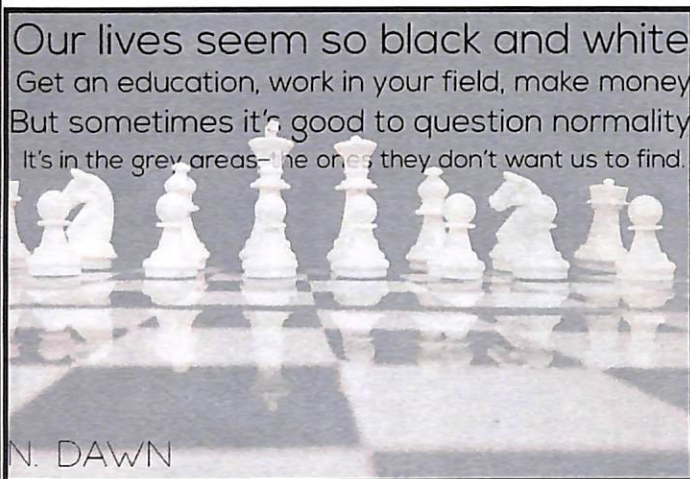
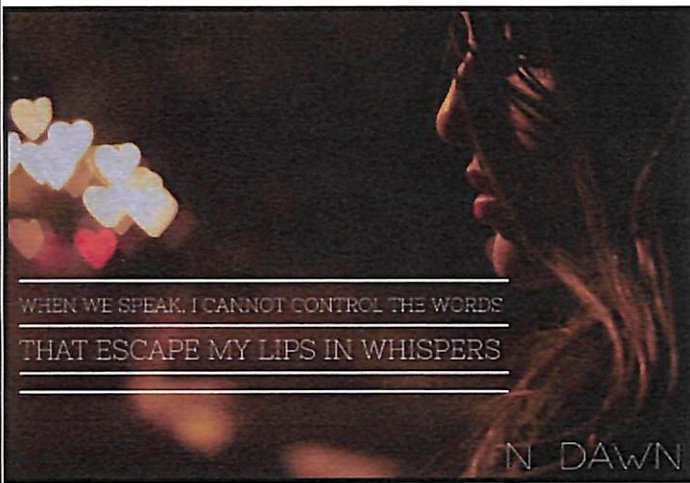
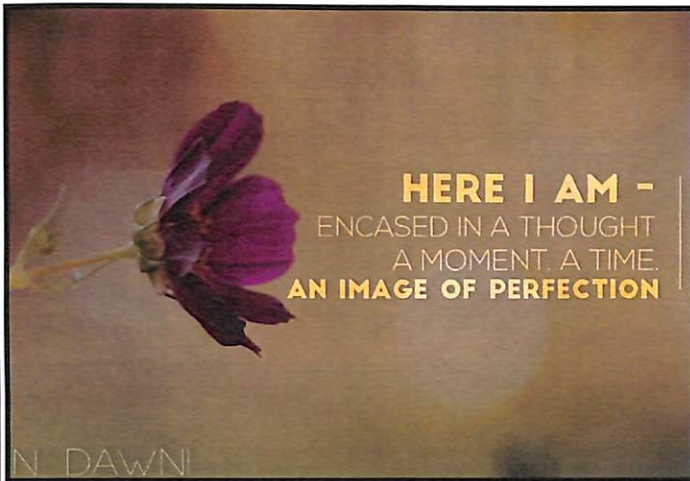
ILLUSTRATIONS

by Dylan Haslam

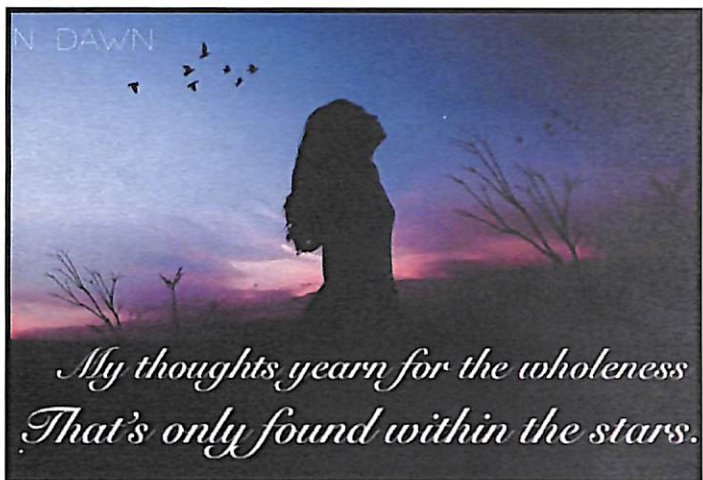


POETRY

by Natasha Miller



STILLNESS, IN A WORLD THAT'S CONSTANTLY MOVING.
TIME THAT CONTINUES, WHICH LETS YOU BE EVER CHANGING.
PEACEFULNESS—THAT CAN BE FOUND WHEREVER YOU LOOK HARD ENOUGH.



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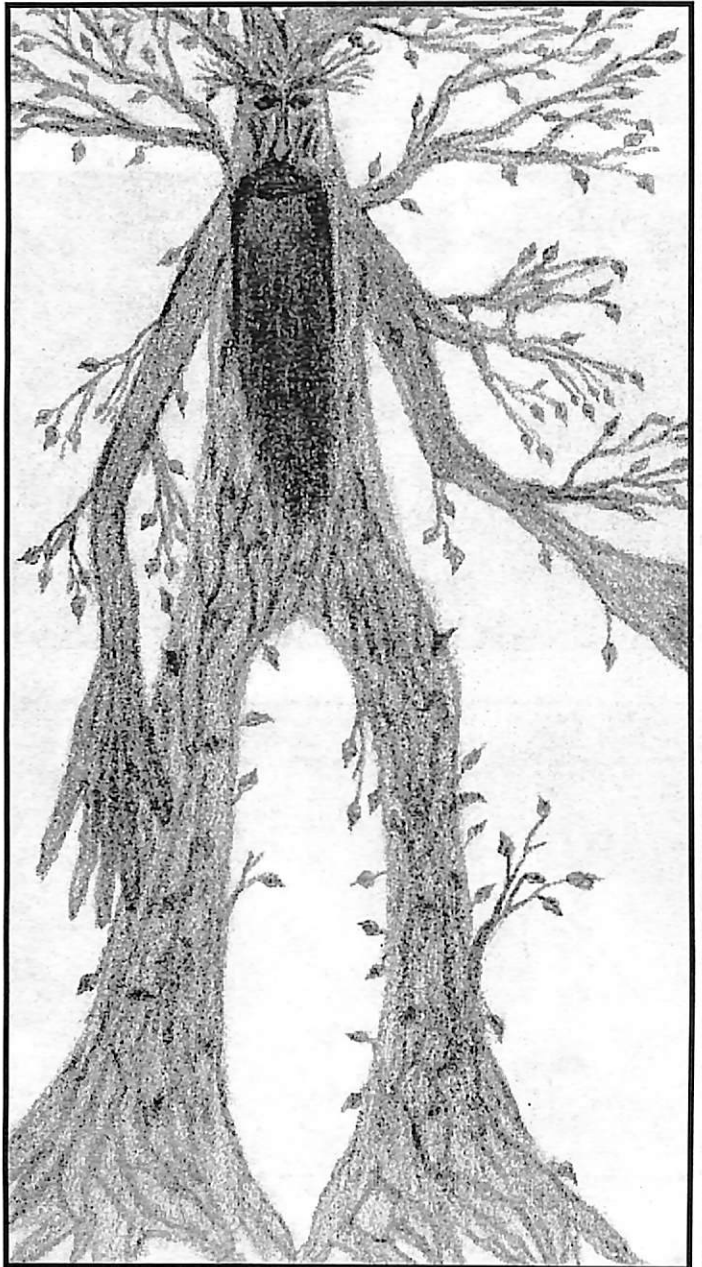
ILLUSTRATIONS & POETRY

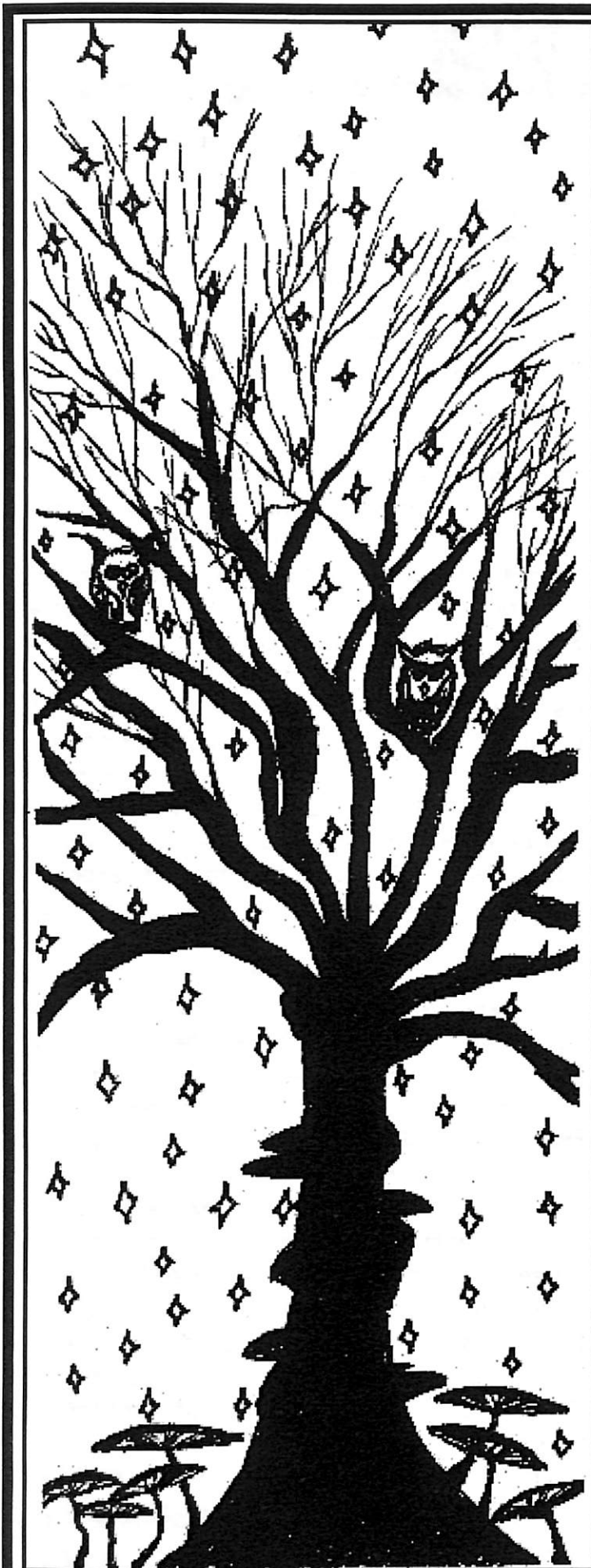
by Kohan L. Eybergen

**Canadian Summer Night
(Below)**



Fangorn (Right)





A Woodland Dream

Nothing is more sure to please
Than taking a walk beneath the trees.
Be it dark, or be it bright,
I'll be out wandering tonight.

Neath the boughs and under the birds;
A night too still to spoil with words.
Owls watching in the tees up high
Calling softly as I pass them by.

Above the leaves blows a calming
breeze,
Sheltered by the trees I walk with ease.
The stars in the sky are all alight,
They truly make a wondrous sight.

O'er hill and o'er stream,
I wander through this woodland dream.

by Kohan L. Eybergen

THE GLASS BUTTERFLY

by Jacob Burgess

The light from Emily's computer lights up her face in an otherwise black room. She rubs her eyes and looks around her, realizing the sun has gone down and she's been sitting in darkness. "How long has it been?" she thinks to herself. She checks her watch. It's close to 6:00; she hasn't left her desk in almost four hours. "I better go check on dad." She reaches for the lamp standing by her desk and twists the knob, sending light flooding into her office. Empty cups of instant noodles and a half-drunk cup of cold coffee rest by her open laptop. She folds the computer closed and gathers the mug and the empty containers. As she descends the stairs, Emily can hear muffled voices coming from the television set in the living room. The house is as dark as her office was. She flicks on lights as she makes her way to the kitchen, passing old family pictures that she never even notices anymore. Emily is just a newborn in the first photo, about nine months old or so. Her mother holds her in both arms, and she has a soft, caring smile on her face. Her father has one arm around her mother's shoulders and they share the same smile, almost as though they had practiced it with each other. Emily slowly gets older as she passes each picture, but the last photograph stands out from the rest. Her father sits in a chair, and the smile he wore in the previous pictures has faded. He seems distant; his eyes trail off and avoid the camera lens. Standing behind him is Emily; she has her hands placed on her father's shoulders and her eyes speak of deep emotion. The picture is of only the two of them. Before she enters the kitchen, Emily notices it for the first time in a long while. She can't remember exactly how old she was when they had it taken, but it must have been close to five years ago, so she

figures she would have been around twenty-four. She had decided not to have any more family pictures taken after that one, as her father's condition was degrading and she didn't want people to remember him the way he is now.

Emily throws out the noodle cups, washes the coffee mug, and starts preparing some soup for her father. As she stirs the soup, she examines the frost on the edges of her window, creeping slowly towards the center. She pours the soup into a large bowl and walks carefully into the living room with it steaming in her hands. A film adaptation of *Mansfield Park* is playing on the television. "You can't be enjoying this," says Emily as she places the bowl on the coffee table. She picks up the remote and changes the channel to the evening news. Her father makes a quiet noise with his mouth and lifts the fingers of his left hand. "Oh I'm sorry, I'll switch back to it. I made some soup for you, it's cream of mushroom!" Her father tries to smile at her; his lips only quiver but there is love in his eyes. Emily pulls up a chair and tucks some paper towel into her father's shirt collar. She scoops up a spoonful of soup with a teaspoon and blows on it gently.

"I'm sorry I left you alone for so long. I've had so much work to do lately it's been difficult to keep track of time." Emily's father closes his mouth on the spoon, and a little bit of soup runs down his chin. She wipes it up with the paper towel. "Do you remember my friend Jennifer? She and Tom are gonna have a baby boy! I'm so happy for them. She told me about it while we were having lunch a few days ago." Emily feeds her father another spoonful of soup. "They wanted to keep it a secret until they had a name picked out. They're gonna call him Raphael! Isn't that interesting? It sounds so civilized and proper. Raphael. I really like the sound of it. They asked me if I would like to organize the shower, but I don't think I'll have time unfortunately." Emily's father shifts in his chair. "What's the matter? Is it the soup?" Emily dips

her finger in the bowl and tastes it. "It's cooled down a little bit, would you like me to warm it up?" He shifts his eyes from left to right. "Okay." She sets the bowl back down on the coffee table. Emily runs her fingers through her father's hair, guiding it behind his ears and tucking it in place. He tries to say something to her, but all that comes out is a noise that sounds like

"Ma . . . ma . . ."

"You want to hold mama's butterfly?" He shifts his eyes from top to bottom. Emily smiles at him and removes the paper towel from his shirt. She takes the half full bowl of soup into the kitchen and places it in the fridge after covering it with plastic wrap. Then she makes her way into her parent's bedroom and turns on the lights. Across from the bed sits her mother's old armoire where she kept all her glass figurines. In the center of the armoire is a picture of her mother, and in front of the picture is a delicate glass butterfly resting on a red cushion. She opens the doors and picks up the butterfly, and as she looks at it in the palm of her hand she is reminded of the day the accident happened.

"She was clutching this against her chest. We don't understand how it could have survived, frankly," said one of the nurses as she placed the butterfly into Emily's hands. "Your father hasn't woken up yet, but you can see him now." The nurse led her into a small room and left her and her father alone together. Bandages covered most of his face and he slept peacefully. Emily sat down in the chair next to him and traced her fingers along the grooves of the butterfly wings, trying to understand what had happened to her. She had only heard the news a few hours ago, and she still hadn't had the chance to speak to anyone about it. She was left alone with her thoughts. Emily knew she had to be right here when her father woke up, so she could be the one to tell him the news. Part of her wished he didn't have to wake up at all. She took her mother's

butterfly and folded it into her father's hands. Emily closes the door of the armoire and walks back into the living room. The credits of the movie have just begun to roll down the screen. "Here, daddy," says Emily as she sits down. She closes her father's fingers around the butterfly and kisses the back of his hand. "Should we find something else to watch?" Emily picks up the remote and flips through the channels, until she finds one that is having a Twilight Zone marathon. After a few episodes Emily's eyes begin to get heavy, and she looks over to see her father fast asleep in his chair. She pushes his wheelchair over to him and gently strokes his cheek. His eyes open slowly. "Time for bed, daddy," she says as she takes the glass butterfly and places it on the coffee table. Then she carefully lifts him up and sits him in his wheelchair. He is already asleep again by the time she wheels him into his bedroom, and he only wakes again momentarily as she lays him onto his bed and tucks him in. Before she leaves the room she kisses her father on the forehead and whispers into his ear. "Goodnight daddy, and always remember, you could never be a burden to me."



WINTER WANDERINGS

by Lang MacDougall

There's something incredibly calming about watching snow. Maybe that's why there's so much literature written about snow, ice, and other such things that come with winter. The world in winter is quieter, simpler. Less noise in the brain, more space to think, and the mind gets to wander. I was walking downtown during what should have been a busy part of the afternoon. Clearly, the cold that snuck through my scarf was enough to keep some of those busy people inside. So, rather than pushing through throes of commuters, dog-walkers, and volatile hot-drink holders*, I was able to take my time and enjoy everything around me. It was snowing a little more than the flurries that had been forecasted, but I had dressed warm and had good boots. Not a problem. Snow drifted down in fat flakes, coating any upwards-facing surface as well as my hat. The plows had yet to come out, so the rush hour traffic had churned the roads into a mess of snow, sand, and ice. The clouds hung low, dimming the lights on the street. I waited patiently for the light to change so I could cross, watching the few pigeons that braved the cold flit around a waste bin. Traffic stopped, so I stepped into the street.

I was still thinking about the pigeons when the bus hit me.

People say that just before you die, your entire life flashes before your eyes in a matter of seconds as

* I once ran into someone who had just come out of a coffee shop with a tray of hot drinks. Or perhaps he ran into me. Either way, both of us got nicely scalded by the contents of those cups.

all your neurons fire off one final synapse. I'd like to clarify that that is, in fact, complete bullshit. There was no flashback. Nor is it painless—though that may have had something to do with the fact that I was being hit by a bus instead of passing away in a bed surrounded by loved ones. I saw no tunnel, and as far as I know, there was nothing resembling my soul leaving my body. Instead of my life flashing by, I felt each little instance of pain in agonizing slow motion. My arm accelerated from relaxed by my side, to trying to inhabit the same space as my ribs. The bus's bumper took a swing at my legs, cracking bone. My knee made a sound not unlike pulling the cork out of a wine bottle. My head snapped towards the bus, then hit the bus. The world became entirely white, and then I died.

It's not like going to sleep; there is no peaceful, gradient transition. Dying is an immediate darkness, a complete absence of anything. That's really the only way I can put it. It's like slowly rolling down a hill, and then boom, off a cliff, and as you go down over the cliff, everything stops. One minute you're there, the next you're not. Either way, being hit by a bus was enough to kill me. I wasn't pinned beneath the bus. Quite the opposite, in fact. A thorough Internet search will still bring up the dashcam footage of me flying through the air like some kind of mangled ragdoll. This final flight placed me conveniently out of the path of being crushed by the bus. Less conveniently, it also put me in the path of oncoming traffic.

It wasn't entirely the driver's fault. Roads were slick, traffic was busy, and there were cars parked in the turning lane. I hope they got ticketed. He might not have seen me—I certainly didn't see him. Maybe the brakes were bad. As far as I know, it was deemed an accident and the poor guy had to go to therapy to get over things. He was gone by the time I woke up. I came to with a man straddling my chest. He was significantly heavier than any other person I'd had straddling me before. My warm, protective winter coat

had been cut and torn open—I liked that coat—and I could smell burning plastic. Or maybe it was skin. Perhaps it was both. I had always wondered what it was like to be shocked with the paddles. Having experienced it, I can safely say, I'd like to keep it as a one-time-only experience. Sometimes I can still feel a phantom tingling in my fingers from being pummeled by a couple hundred volts. Around me, people were shouting and someone was crying. The snow, still falling, peppered my face with pinpricks of cold. I think there may have been a cop there by then. Any effort to lift my head was met with what felt like a foot on my throat, so I stopped trying and blacked out again.

What happened between then and now is confusing. I'm okay with not remembering much—I've nev-

er liked hospitals. I do remember lying on a table. A cold table, for that matter. My family came to see me, even some I hadn't seen before, so that was nice.

I've somewhat gotten back into routine. I don't take as many walks in the snow anymore; I tend to take the bus instead. Sometimes, I even see the driver from that day, but despite how often I ride, he never notices me. I keep to myself, mostly. I always get off at the same stop if I can. Walk a little past it, and there's a memorial bench I like to visit. It's a recent addition, and it's become a frequent hangout for people that like to sit and feed the pigeons. It's not too fancy, and hardly anyone stops to read the plaque.

But at least they spelled my name right.



DADA POETRY 101

by Tyler DeWacht

Do you know about the theatre production at Concordia coming next month? It's called The Dada Play, and it centers around the Dada art movement. Occuring during World War One, it arose in Switzerland as an artistic protest against the conflict. Thriving on chaos and anarchy, anything could be considered Dada art if it was strange enough. Random brush splatters on a canvas? That's Dada. A brush glued to a canvas? That's also Dada. Signed urinal? That's especially Dada. The only real restrictions are that it can't be traditional art, and that it should be somewhat nonsensical in nature.

A signature part of this movement were the Dada poetry events, popularized by Tristan Tzara. How do you write Dada poetry? You can't, not in the way poetry is normally written. In order to make Dada poetry, you mix up old content in a new way, making it unique to you and different every time.

How exactly do you make Dada poetry, then? First, take some written text that you can destroy. The medium doesn't really matter all that much, but newspapers are the most typical since they offer a great variety of words. Just as an example, I'm going to use the recently updated lyrics of O Canada. When you have something, cut it up into fragments. The smaller, the better;

you only want small sentence fragments. When you're done cutting, throw everything into a bag (or some other container) and shake it up for a couple of seconds, randomizing everything.

Good job, now you have a bag of jumbled words! What now? Pull them out and start reciting them in the order which you draw them. Alternatively, you can spill them all onto the floor and pick them up in the same manner. Doesn't matter if the words formed make no grammatical or contextual sense--Dada doesn't have to make sense. Repeat until you're out of words or until you get tired. There you go, you've just performed Dada poetry! Feel free to try it with anything you want. Here's how my O Canada rendition turned out:

O Canada.
Land our all wide true hearts guard of thee.
Thee Canada!
O god free! land! home o.
Command strong.
Canada thee rise free! we.
On for thee guard native.
We canada glowing;
The guard o;
Far and;
For and.
Glorious patriot our in see stand north for we on
and keep us;
On with from;
Stand true we;
Stand and love

If the chaos of Dada interests you or if you enjoy theatre, consider coming to watch our production of Mieko Ouchi's The Dada Play next month! It's not your average play--as a cast member, I can tell you that much. I hope to see some of you there!