

News from the Feminist Caucus, by Anne Burke

News from Sharon Singer on her World Premier; of Alice Major, and others who contributed to *Inward* (the Inaugural Women's Verse Revival Class at Alexandra Writers Centre). This month reviews of *Onion Man*, *The Saddest Place on Earth*, and *The Purpose Pitch* by Kathryn Mockler; *the whole and broken yellows: Van Gogh poems and others* and *October Notebook: of night I made a commonplace* by Jennifer Zilm, with a glimpse of her forthcoming *Waiting Room* and *Ephemera*; *Leaving the Island*, by Talya Rubin and *Kingdom*, by Elizabeth Ross. The U. of C. Culture of Consent Campaign to Fight Sexual Assault. To close: a Candlelight Vigil for a pregnant young mother (my neighbour) whose memorial of teddy bears is left behind by/for her two young children. **Trudeau re-commits to national inquiry into missing, murdered indigenous women.**

Alice Major, Jamal Ali, Edward Burton, Sue Hunter, and Irene Naested contributed poems to a chapbook titled *Inward* which were written as part of the Inaugural Women's Verse Revival Class at Alexandra Writers Centre. The course was instructed by Laurie Anne Fuhr. Alice was the Poet Laureate of the City of Edmonton and was President of the League of Canadian Poets and the Writers Guild of Alberta. Her *Standard Candles* was released by the University of Alberta Press.

**World Premiere of "Isis and Osiris" Opera April 1, 2016 and April 3, 2016**

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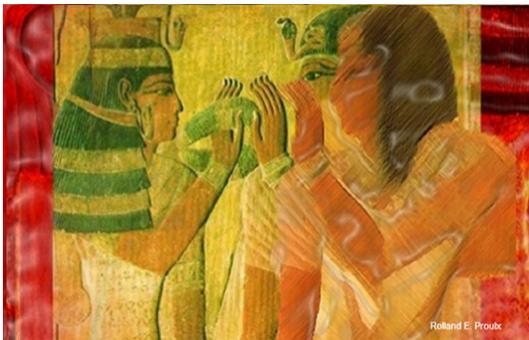
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Review of *Onion Man*, poetry, (Toronto: Tightrope Books, 2011) 128 pp. paper; *The Saddest Place on Earth* (Montreal, Quebec: DC Books, 2012) 69 pp.; and *The Purpose Pitch* (Toronto, On.: Mansfield Press, 2015) 96 pp. paper (all by poet Kathryn Mockler).

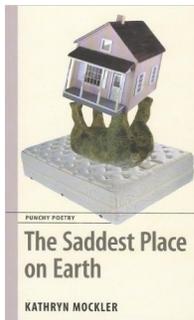
For the first-mentioned title a disclaimer is attached: “This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance of characters to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.” The prose poems resemble the languorous style of J.D. Salinger’s short stories. The tone is flat, matter-of-fact, with a strong sense of hopelessness. The unnamed female narrator could be Franny from *Franny and Zoey*, his short story "Franny" and novella *Zoey*. The two works were published together as a book in 1961, having originally appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1955 and 1957 respectively.

Mockler's husband provided the cover art. The League of Canadian Poets selected an excerpt for second place in the Chapbook Competition, April 2015, marking the 17th National Poetry Month in Canada. The League of Canadian Poets was pleased to announce that the theme for National Poetry Month this year was "Food and Poetry". The 2010 CBC Literary Awards selected an excerpt as a poetry finalist.

With mind-numbing and body strain from repetitive strain disorder, this is ostensibly non-unionized workplace poetry, the male-dominated factory floor, a warehouse amid the din of forklift drivers. "That's/it. It's that boring." The alternative is a loud bar scene. Her physically and emotionally abusive boyfriend Clinton is a staple. Management remains unforgiving. The encomium of words stacked high like canned corn to the ceiling. There is a hierarchy, "Being on/ the machines has/ more status than/ sweeping the floor." The goal is navigating a maze. Her violent family is estranged. Her mother is a hoarder (for whom she feels obligation) who drinks heavily; as her daughter, on occasion, may feel like God, aware of the dangers. A.A. is useless, like recycling. Even the therapist just wants to feel important. The death of a black cat may be an omen. Patients strapped to their chairs. The dress code is hairnets, white coats, hard hats (white and red).

The eponymous "onion" man is so called due to his habitual peeling of said vegetable before eating it like an apple. His son dies in a traffic accident. This causes guilt feelings among some of his co-workers, while others steal from him. She sits across from him at lunch break but, "He's in/ a country where/ he doesn't speak/ the language." As a nonconformist, he is solitary, "wears/ pressed practical clothes". The locale is London, Ontario, while the principals want to move west, to B.C., but that option is cancelled. Even smoking is gendered by brands. She astutely observes, "They/ all give you/ cancer anyway." Furthermore, "One person can't do a/ thing, I say." She considers abortion and an intervention, before a motorcycle accident. Her furtive writing is hidden in her closet. She also conceals her emotions, at least most of the time. He unexpectedly approaches her when she is asleep on the job. She imagines the "onion" man is regal, a former business man, "I wonder/ when he'll decide he's had enough. / I wonder when he will give up." This prompts her to imagine when he and his wife just moved to the city, likened to the newness she felt as a child, about alleys, before "you realize they're just/ spaces people park cars."

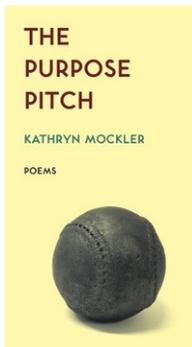
She befriends Stacey and her new boyfriend. She experiences clinical depression but rationalizes that, "In all, / the world/ is just/ really/ sad and/ lonely." She and Clinton break up. Then she and the onion man feel a sense of solidarity, until he dies at the factory (a probable suicide). She avoids the blood and nobody, at least from work, attends his funeral. She dreams of his blood spreading out. This will lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. The treatment centre does not seem to surprise her grandmother. Life is definitely depressing. Karaoke interposes but Clinton abandons her. She fears an incurable disease. She fears an uncertain future.



Subtitled “Punchy Poetry”, illustrations again by David Pootman, *The Saddest Place on Earth* was composed as a response to *Start As You Will Go On*, and there are two video series based on the poems, with displays of found art as digital drawings or share-ware of, for example, a heavily pregnant sow. The poetic forms read like oral storytelling, hence the “Punchy” or punch line. The Skinheads of *Onion Man* rate three prose pages. The North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) forces a break through a force field when a dying teenage daughter commits suicide. An actual rat tail was surgically sewn into a man’s neck. A hiding place from shootings is in the air vents. Pot-bellied pigs operate by malice because they are cops racing bottle caps on the backs of stray dogs.

This disclaimer is offered: “This is a work of art. Names, characters, places, and events are either products of the author’s imagination or are employed fictitiously.” The mood moves from contemplating murder, a lucky rapist, a strip mall Chinese restaurant. She is superstitious. Colour television was not a metaphor for what culture came before. A stranger engages her in conversation about the use of anti-depressant drugs in psychiatric treatment. Sibling rivalry. She personifies Deep Sadness with Contempt. The minions of a Queen Bee. She was not amused by a poem for the President (even while dreaming it). Rock-out vs. Reincarnation. A teen boy whose mother had a lobotomy has invaded her garage. Global Warming a topic at a cocktail party. Her phone account is in arrears. A popular prom queen reduced to “a fat bitch”. (“Ugly Girls”) A tornado brings together an evangelical Christian and the postman (whose aunt died alone). Mass suicide results from sterilization to eliminate serial killers. A strange dog accompanies her to the Laundromat where they become a tableau. She personifies Country, Suburbia, and Big City. (“The Country Fair”) Legislation dealing with snakes and there is a policy against them in bars. The Devil and God attend a wedding. A bad case of environmentalism is a disease. Gunshots bring a robber and the narrator together. A woman has no more tears for humanity. Hurt Feelings and Anger rent a cottage. A subway may become inconvenient. It is boring worrying about what the government is doing. God is a middle-aged woman with blonde hair and glasses. (“Bookstore”) Alternately, God appears on Oprah in order to propose marriage to her. There is grand illusion that time has stopped and no one dies. (“Ghost” and the programme “Wheel of Fortune” on television). The Map and the Lightbulb are personified. An incident with two unusual policemen causes her to reconsider the murderer and the role of the media, especially newspapers. Worry about yourself, not an injured pigeon. She attends a party hosted by an armless woman married to a white snake (the male principle). Rage, poor impulse control, rape are all impolite realities.

A banker commits suicide. Buddha joins Weight Watchers. "We Don't Usually Act This Way" (pp. 44-50) is a short short story about the perils of war, a soldier whose girlfriend Sally tried to commit suicide. The training camp leads to the battlefield which resembles a football field. He encounters a nudist colony. The task at hand is "killing as many as we can as fast as we can." A would-be rapist and his probable victim are rattled by a bomb. The ship captain's lead is to "death by corporation".



In *The Purpose Pitch, Poems*, the poet demonstrates playfulness in a self-styled erasure poem based on "Roughing It in the Bush", by Susanna Moodie. Another poem was part of the Plays vs. Pipelines protest playwrighting relay. A third was comprised of scrambled lines from Joni Mitchell's June 2013 *Q* interview. There is a serial poem "World I, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8". She decries political opportunism, "Baby Kissing". "The Angel At The Bus Stop" is probably about a homeless man but the inventiveness extends to a woman who was working a job for which she is overqualified and underpaid, a typical situation, and the two-person scene would be fine dramatized. A similarly staged scene "Bus Ride" provides a semiotics of public transportation. "The Blob" is a familiar cinematic device. I needed to research Brautigan's line ("Pardon Me") because it is probably from *The Tower*, by Stephen King. The explosive prosthetics ("No Legs Or Arms") a séance goes horribly wrong ("Spirits") followed by the conversational "The Séance" a Q-and-A session. Decades of personal development are telescoped in "Harper". The cosmic collective consciousness is a trope ("Mexico"); she addresses "Poetry" in the second person. Also "Your Poem Should Have Four Legs" is a three-page how-to instruction guide rant. Poetry is ironically associated with pettiness. "Don't Disturb Me I'm Writing A Love Poem" is merely a series of excuses for what she/he should have been doing. An exchange from "A Bird", and destruction ("Birds"), exposing misogyny ("Skyler"); an introvert borderline misanthrope ("I Always Want To Be Alone"), a Conspiracy is reduced to list making. Sexual Assault is detailed in headlines or texting ("April 30-May 31, 2014) an endless recurrence (pp. 52-62) The male principle in "Bee" replaces the masculine pronoun "he" by an insect usually associated with the Queen.

She posits: "I am not a feminist. / In a way it's a lie to get you to see the truth" which can be variously interpreted. ("You Look Like a Puppet") God is merely a character. Dying birds are unorthodox. That character is theatrical. Negativity about unhappy women or wives. A physician is actually an English Major who enjoys rhetoric not medicine. ("The

Hospital”) an extended April Fool’s joke. Itch depends on suffering; a dream of unknown children she is raising.

Kathryn Mockler is a poet, fiction writer, and screenwriter. She is the author of three poetry collections, the Toronto editor of *Joyland: a hub for short fiction* and the publisher of the online literary and arts journal *The Rusty Toque*. She teaches creative writing at Western University.

POETRY PUBLICATIONS <http://www.kathrynmockler.com/cv.html>

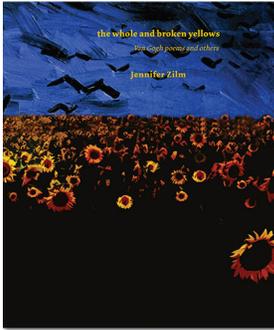
- "When the World Ends," QWERTY, TBA
- "The People Skirt," Longlist, Montreal International Poetry Prize, August 2015
- "Your Poem Should Have Four Legs," Geist, 97, July 2015
- "The Bed," Matrix Magazine, June 25, 2015
- "A Woman Was Sexually Assaulted: April 30 - May 31, 2014" Advent 2014, Delirious Hem, Dec. 25, 2014
- "The Dream House," Poetry is Dead, F/U/T/U/R/E , Issue 10, Vancouver, BC, p. 43, November 2014
- "The Lamp and The Lightbulb," published in The Associative Press, Yukon, p. 5, Spring 2013
- "Environmentalism," "Twister," and "Pigeons," 49th Shelf, February 25, 2013
- "White Snake," Papirmasse, Issue 38, January 8, 2013
- "Malice," "The Country Fair," and "Air Vents" in the new Lemon Hound, online, Vol. 1, September 21, 2012
  
- "Bus Ride" and "The Dog and the Laundromat," Pilot Pocket Books, Toronto, Issue X, p. 57-59, Aug 23, 2012
  
- "Jesus Christ" and "Oprah," Descant, Toronto, ON, Issue 157, p. 33-34, June 2012
- "Anti-depressants," "Rat Tail," "Ugly Girls," "Subway," and "Lucky," The Windsor Review: Filth Issue, Windsor, ON, Vol. 45, No. 1, p. 12-17, Spring 2012
- "Pipeline," The Capilano Review, Ecology Issue, Vancouver, BC, No. 3.16, p. 67, January 2012
- "Twister," Rattle Poetry's audio archive, 2012
- "Companion," Geist, Erasure Poem Contest, Short List, Van., BC, Jan. 27, 2012
- "Jackie Gleason," Montreal International Poetry Prize, Longlist Anthology, Véhicule Press, online, 2011
- "Bookstore," HTMLGIANT, Sunday Service, USA, online, November 27, 2011
- "Don't Take It Away," The Antigonish Review, Antigonish, NS, Issue 166, p. 98, Summer 2011
- "Pipeline," Enpipe Line, online project, 2011
  
- "Ghost," Feathertale, Toronto, ON, online, February 1, 2011
- "About a Bully," The Toronto Quarterly, Toronto, ON, Issue 7, p. 23.

- "Twister," Rattle Poetry, Canadian Tribute Issue, San Francisco, CA, Issue 35, p. 100-, Summer 2011
- "Swimming Lessons," Prose-Poem Project, Shelburne, VT, Volume 1, Issue 4, p. 1, Spring 2011
- "Global Warming" and "Gun Shots," The Puritan, , Ottawa, ON, Issue 9, online, Winter 2010
- "The Wedding Reception" and "Rock Out," La Petite Zine, USA, online, Issue 23, 2010
- Various, Audio, Wordsalad, 2009
- "Thin Blue Snake," nthposition, October, 2009, online
- "Weights" and "Cross-eyed," This Magazine, Toronto, ON, Vol 43, No. 1, p. 15, 2009
- "Skinheads," Geist.com, Vancouver, BC, 2009, online
- "Weight Watchers," Sub-TERRAIN, Vancouver, BC, No. 51, p. 29, 2009
- "Skinheads," Pilot Pocket Books, Toronto, ON, No. 4, p. 62-72, 2008
- "Lesley Aimes," The Antigonish Review, Antigonish, NS, No.154, p. 64-70, 2008
- "Murder," Carousel Magazine, Guelph, ON, No. 23, p. 56, 2008
- "Pillsbury Factory: 8 poems," Carte Blanche, Montreal, PQ, No. 7, online, 2008
- "Pillsbury Factory: 3 poems," Misunderstandings Magazine, Toronto, ON, No. 9, p. 22-24, 2008
- "The Saddest Place on Earth," The Salzburg Poetry Review, Salzburg, Austria, No. 13, p. 104-107, 2008
- "McGuinnis Lake" and "January," Descant, Toronto, ON, Volume 37, No. 2, p. 89-91, 2006
- "Jim 1940, 1950, 1980," Pottersfield Portfolio, Sydney, NS, Volume 22, No. 2, p. 29, 2002
- "Pillsbury Factory" The Fiddlehead, Fredericton, NB, No. 209, p. 32-41, 2001
- "Untitled," Utne Reader, Minneapolis, MN, reprint, No. 84, p. 18, 1997
- "Untitled," Geist Magazine, Vancouver, BC, No. 25 & 26, p. 5 & p. 32, 1997
- "I've Seen This" and "Mid-February," The Antigonish Review, Antigonish, NS, No. 25, p. 148-149, 1995

Note:

Surrealism surpassed the brutality and destructiveness of the First World War with a negative art and literature to destroy the false values of society. Without forethought and intention a revolt against any constraints on free creativity was engendered by automatic writing (the promptings of the unconscious mind) exploited dreams, between sleep and waking, and induced hallucinations. Free association, broken syntax, non-logical and non-chronological order, dreamlike and nightmarish sequences, the juxtaposition of bizarre, shocking, or seemingly unrelated images are all such effects. This black or sardonic humour is a feature pervading the work of Mockler. Although analysis of the obsessive and complex concern of male surrealists with the female body, there were two female surrealists (and we can add one more a post-surrealist?)

p. 310-10 *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, by M.H. Abrams (Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999).



Review of *the whole and broken yellows: Van Gogh poems and others*, by Jennifer Zilm (Victoria, B.C.: Frog Hollow Press 2013)

The Van Gogh Poems begin in "Four Rooms in Amsterdam", and follow chronologically with "Room One: Paris 1886-1887", "Room Two: Arles 1888-8889 [sic]", "Room Three: Saint Rémy", and "Schoonheid in Veelvoud."

The second section is "What a Queer Thing Touch Is: The Therapeutic Notes of Vincent van Gogh and M. Peyron." Correspondence inspires "1. Vincent: Epistle to Theo", his brother, and "2. M. Peyron: Session Notes On V. van Gogh", by one of his physicians. The latter is a pattern poem which appears to take on wings and alights from the right-hand page.

The third section on "Dr. Gachet's Walk" begins with "1. The Day of Vincent's Death", "2. Memory: The First Session", "3. Dr. Paul Gachet, CV" which is literally a list of his education, interests (in painting), and Notable Career Highlights. He cared for van Gogh for only six weeks (from May 1890-July 1890) and had just completed a sub-speciality in the disease of *Melancholia*, in 1885. In "4. Colour Therapy", there are "The whole and broken yellows" of the title spoken by van Gogh followed by the apt and ironic "His diagnosis always flowing".

The fourth section on "Exosomatic Materials: translations, fragments, a postcard, a sonnet" comes opposite a self-portrait, which is fitting given the subject material. Handwriting is paralyzed, a prose poem is a monologue. "Wish you were here" appears on a postcard found in Amsterdam. The allusion is to The Trinity (Russian: Троица, also called "The Hospitality of Abraham") is a Holy Trinity Icon created by a Russian painter Andrei Rublev in the 15th century. The form of "Fragment (2)" can be read vertically and/or horizontally. An Easter sonnet contains "My mis-text" in addition to "Impressionist face".

The epitaph on possible digitalis toxicity from the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* discounts this diagnosis, since van Gogh was an impressionist painter, not a realist. The painting in question is a digital collage of the sky from "Wheat Field with Crows", 1890. Some other details are from 1887 and 1890. Another theory is that van

Gogh had some sort of ophthalmological disorder. Such are our fevered brains that we attempt unsuccessfully to reduce genius and inspiration to aberration and disease.

Zilm graduated from the University of British Columbia with a B.A. and M.A. in Religious Studies before doing doctoral work at McMaster University, where her published research focused on gender, prayer, and conversion in Early Judaism and Early Christianity. She is also trained as a librarian and archivist and graduated from SFU's Writer Studio and Humber College's School for Writers. She is a member of Canadian Women in the Literary Arts, as well as of *Room Magazine* Editorial Collective.

Jennifer Zilm writes poems that have appeared or are forthcoming in journals across Canada including *The Malahat Review*, *Prism*, *FreeFall*, *CV2*, *Prairie Fire*, *Grain*, *Arc*, *Vallum* and *The Antigonish Review*. Her manuscript "Waiting Room" was shortlisted for the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry and will be published by BookThug in Spring 2016. A second collection *Ephemera* will be published by Guernica Editions in 2018.

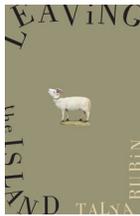
In addition to the chapbooks she has two full-length poetry collections under contract. *Waiting Room* is 70 pps. with the van Gogh poems but so much more. Overall, she satirizes dentists, doctors (medical and academic), assistant and associate professors, using original and documented sources. In addition, she expresses the predicament of Women's Health Care, especially psychiatric (mis) treatment, which is a variation on van Gogh's experiences as an artist, simply because of gender and the historical (even ancient) stereotypes stacked against us.

The typescript of *Ephemera* is 56 pps. and adopts some of the archival theme (including *Cataloguing Notebook Oct.: of night I made a commonplace*) by the use and intentional misuse of texts in a series of found poems. Other poems have international, European, and ancient world sources ("Reading Rilke" and "Greek Tragedy 101" are excellent examples of her diverse and divergent voices). She draws on her Biblical studies for "Job's Daughters" and W.B. Yeats for "Ephemera", playing with the notions of Library Science, replete with constraints and almost archaic language which is painfully behind our explosive worldwide information highway. Still she reveres postcard literature, the sestina form, as much or more than the cantos she wrote for *Waiting Room* (e.g. van Gogh which vaguely reminds me of Ezra Pound and his sanitarium experiences). She lives in East Vancouver and works in libraries and social housing. Her website is:



<http://jenniferzilm.com/>  
<http://www.dancinggirlpress.com/about.html>

The epitaph from *October Notebook: of night I made a commonplace* (Chicago Fine Arts Building: Dancing Girl Press and Studio, 2015) is from Virginia Woolf. The topic is how Western libraries have catalogued books on a notecard "5 by 8 inches of pulp thickened fibre". The catalogue has come unbound. A translator is converted to a different field of vision. A how-to note on organizing colour resources apportioned databases according to domain. This custom: the poem. Transliteration steeped in Hebrew and mysticism. She collects a Commonplace (a reader's advisory). Vinyl is one of the Museum Objects D'Art. Genre of bibliography cum duotang. She observes: "A screen is not a page". A Timeline by the poet explores the interiors and exteriors of her journey from Biblical Studies to Library Science.



Review of *Leaving the Island*, by Talya Rubin (Montréal, QC: Véhicule Press, 2015) 87 pp. paper Signal Editions <http://www.vehiculepress.com/new.php>.

The poet as peripatetic traveller whose odyssey involves Scotland, Australia, Canada, and Greece identifies, for example, parallel St. Kilda sites ("Lady of St. Kilda" and "St. Kilda Pier"). Among the acknowledgements there are multiple research sources, some on Scotland and others about Australia. One clue is an epigraph from *A Late Voyage to St. Kilda: Undiscovered Scotland* (1698) by Martin Martin, "He himself was born in one of the most spacious and fertile isles in the West of Scotland". The Preface introduces: An Account of one Roderick, supposed to have had Conversation with a Familiar Spirit, and pretending to be sent by St. John the Baptist with New Revelations and Discoveries. Chapter I "The Motives for the Voyage"; Chapter II "Of the inferior Isles and Rocks"; Chapter III "Of the Inhabitants".

On "Leaving the Island", the persona reflects on the absence of humans. The inhospitable climate suits the wildlife and feral livestock. The poet is situated in imagination, how the women are roughened by the lifestyle despite their Gaelic Bibles. The barren land "serves as a canvas", much as the blank book pages invite the scribe. A female auk serves as a harbinger, until the omen is roasted into instinct ion. The Stone Age was peopled by wildlife which the poet catalogues. Navigational aids are primitive. Rock-climbing was an art not a science. Men plunder the sea, while coupling pairs of geese abound. An itemization of 16,000 eggs, 22,000 birds, and 5,000 birds lost have to do with "Fowling", a double-meaning with a homonym ("Fouling"). A first-person speaker laments being stranded. Mothers resemble egg-nesters. Indeed, "This is a place for dying". Hence, the mass immigration to Australia, during which several died at sea.

Some of the poems are ballads, a narrative form. The Lady of St Kilda was a schooner which served from 1834 before being shipwrecked off Tahiti shortly after 1843. In the region, the name was adopted for the municipality.

The date changes to the "garish" 1950s wallpaper but with a realization that that period has passed. The menu is enumerated. The male persona observes "skinny pairs of women", presumably prostitutes, a female dancer "like a carrion bird". Then a daughter

was warned by her mother by a payphone call home to Canada. "Pahran" is an aboriginal word for an inlet. The Pier is situated in 2003. The eye is on the past and the present, using onomatopoeia, "clack, clack, clack, clack."

Re: "The Golem", in Jewish folklore, a *golem* (/ˈɡoʊləm/ GOH-ləm; Hebrew: גולם ) is an animated anthropomorphic being, magically created entirely from inanimate matter. He appears on the 96 tram. In 1992, the Jewish Museum of Australia purchased a building in Alma Road, St Kilda, opposite one of Melbourne's most beautiful synagogues, the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. "Soul Road" is replete with significance. "11 Mason Avenue" is the persona's location which she alleges was named for a cult. The other streets honour poets. That was in the 1800s. Following the route Brisbane back to Sydney was a driving trip fraught with risk.

"Montreal, Canada" (without the accent) has an avenue des Pins side. A bereaved speaker addresses the deceased, in this elegy. The dead speaks, her grandfather. An individual is self-described as "Runt". Grey Gardens is the story of penurious relatives of Jackie Kennedy. Christopher Reeves was crippled, since playing the movie role of Superman. The nostalgia for "The Good Years" is muted, with Ronald Regan, in 1989; the 1970s Polaroid pictures, if only the past could be revisited, then a suicide in 1981 might never have occurred. The Ice Storms in Quebec are legendary and brutally cold. My immediate family survived at least three of them (1998 the most recent) in the dark coldness of winter. The hydro poles are sprawled across the snow, with electricity in the wires crackling, sparking, and extremely dangerous. Cape Breton ("The Grand Banks") passes for home. So, too St. John's, Ship Cove in Placentia Bay. However, Crescent Street and the St. Lawrence are familiar downtown Montreal landmarks.

A traditional Greek Funeral Liturgy stands in for Santorini, Greece. A series of prose poems range from "The first thing you see" (albeit 3600 years old), a memory of entering a cavehouse. Katabasis or catabasis (from Greek κατὰ "down" and βαίω "go") is a descent of some type, such as moving downhill, the sinking of the winds or sun. There are a How To, by a painter, "This is how you will live", Minoan men and their elephants, ghost hands and dead hands, children follow the donkey paths, horse tails are entertaining; donkeys speak in their own language(s). An inventory of various "eyes" make it clear that the island is on alert. "The Island is calling your name". A Snail's Pace is appropriate. "We are all buried here", meaning the bones we walk on. The archaeology of bones has stories to reveal. Two cypress trees are personified. The eternal recurrence appears in "return", an ideal poem to complete the collection.

The poet is also playwright and theatre creator/performer. Her poetry was short-listed in 2011 for the Winston Collins/*Descant* prize for Best Canadian poem and was a finalist for the Montreal International Poetry Prize. In addition, her poetry won "The Battle of the Bards" poetry competition, Harbourfront, Toronto, 2015 and the Bronwen Wallace Award for Emerging Writers.



Review of *Kingdom*, by Elizabeth Ross (Windsor, On: Palimpsest Press, 2015) paper 79 pp.

Ross has a Masters in Fine Arts in Creative Writing from UBC and a Bachelor of Arts with Majors in Creative Writing and English from Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, B.C., 2008. She was Poetry Editor of *Prism International*. Some of her work was in *Best Canadian Poetry 2013* (Barrie, On.: Tightrope).

This full-length collection is dedicated to the poet's family and is prefaced by atmospheric rain in a dreamlike sequence. The first section "Out of Body" begins with teenage angst amid a triad of social workers. ("Hinge") A memory of cells percolating, "besties" engaged in play, ("Duet") a friend drowned, ("Subdivision"), nightmare about her brother ("Find"), a poem "The Promise" dedicated to her brother. The church controls pubic girls and she confesses lust. She learns how to lie. Her faux diary entries: "lock/cock", "suck"/"squeezing"; "so I lay down". She is moved to puke. ("In the Family Way) a euphemism. Mad Love pursues her. A gang approach to topology. ("Sighting") Backpacking. The ducts resembles a home invasion. ("Register") Punk takes a Ladies' Shopping Trip. ("The Sweater")

The second section "What Cures" introduces a wasp arc, housebound, she penetrates the lie of "big-city anonymity" ("Terminal City") Rooflines merge. Dusk, the deck, and our voices are posed in a prose poem ("Bowen Island") The angle of vision is filtered by glass and sensation triggered ("Gin") an invitation to bathe ("Vanity"), a headline accident is reworked, as "spot and stalk". Night animals involve "Tea, sex, and whiskey" ("Placebo"); Primal heat ("Transference"), Fear of pregnancy ("Late"); under observation "like a pesky eyelash" ("Periphery"). She suffers from anxiety no painkillers can quell. She embraces "neon wraith", rather than worship, "*holy, glory*".

The title section closes the collection with poems devoted to the poet's father, his aging and consequent cataract surgery; ironically, the speaker's heart which "feathers, scales, is hard to focus". The comparison is based on the totem Tortoise both old and new. As a single man in 1965 he achieves "a turkey crematorium" ("Thanksgiving") at least which she imagines. She compares moon and tortoise with walking a mastiff "like walking night/ into sun", as though from a Roman coliseum. Veterinary science borrows from human medicine. The animal seizes as though it were a man and may be dangerous. Zoo elephants in Toronto teeter and mourn their dead. Road kill of Alberta deer disturbs the suburbs. She places her faith in miracles for her mother's recover. An abandoned baby

("Found"); an abusive threat overheard; a family road trip; the heat wave causes us to prey on and stalk. The title poem weaves a route to salvation. Tables are more than furniture; "barrel-chested" they act as tableaux of our incidental belongings.

Essentially, she limns images and uses story to delineate family dynamics, her relation to its members (dysfunctional parents and social service workers). The poet passes through puberty with early memories and risks that add to her development as a whole human being and writer. The prose poem, faux diary entries, tightly woven or loosely scattered, all contribute to our understanding of a sensitive soul who fears separation as much as she craves intimacy.

**<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/sexual-assault-prevention-program-focuses-on-consent-1.3295366>**

The co-founder and past-president of the Consent Awareness and Sexual Education Club with the coordinator at the Women's Resources Centre have joined forces. University of Calgary student leaders have teamed with the Women's Resource Centre to stop sexual assault.

**<http://www.metronews.ca/news/calgary/2015/10/29/university-of-calgary-launches-consent-based-programming.html>**

"Culture of Consent" is funded for three years, to empower students to create change on campus, support peers, and eliminate victim blaming. Survivors need to feel supported, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, and relationship status. There are campus-wide campaigns, educational workshops, and speakers. The number one form of sexual assault is acquaintance sexual assault. Victims open up to those closest to them.

See: *Calgary Metro News*, Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 2015, p. 8, "Education", Helen Pike.

A Coda:

## **Trudeau re-commits to national inquiry into missing, murdered indigenous women**

Posted by: [Bill Fee](#) October 20, 2015 in [News](#) [Leave a comment](#)

Canada's prime minister-designate has re-committed to a national public inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women.

During a news conference Tuesday, Justin Trudeau says he plans to meet with First Nations representatives and move forward quickly on an inquiry, although no specific timelines were given.

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This month I am closing with a sad, sad story about a young pregnant woman (a neighbour) who was murdered in her home. Along my daily walk I pass her suburban home and where the children played in the green park space, there are police investigators standing guard with their vehicles parked and yellow tape tied across the trees tagged with the Crime Stoppers imprint. Not Halloween but true horror.

Instead of this lovely mother there is now a memorial with four teddy bears (two of them obviously well-loved), unlit candles, with dried and silk bouquets of flowers. The photographs (some from online) are framed as a collage of someone who will never reach her twenty-seventh birthday. She was pregnant at the time of her brutal murder. It was over the Thanksgiving long weekend, on Sunday, October 11, 2015.



A “loving” mother of two was found beaten to death in the basement of her home on Sunday. Her father, who came to visit his daughter’s residence with her children, found her body. At a press conference on Wednesday afternoon, he described his daughter Christa Cachene, 26, as a devoted single mom, who loved exploring nature with her kids. “ She was a very loving mother... (She) was taken from us too soon,” he said.

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