



the uc review

gener- ation



the moon, Photograph, *Kashi Syal*

the uc
review

gener-
ation

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Fungi

Pen on paper

Nikki Watson



“Everyone has to scratch on walls somewhere or they go crazy. And you?”

– *Michael Ondaatje, UC 1965*

Readers,

I want to warmly welcome you to the Spring 2018 edition of the *UC Review*—“generation.”

Generation: growth; a period of time like the Xs, Ys, and Zs; the gap between mother and daughter; and a word malleable to prefixes and suffixes—regeneration, degeneration, or generational.

I feel the need to make a confession: when, as a masthead, we were brainstorming how to advertise our call for submissions, we had the bright idea to list, in large, bold type, all the words that “generation” could become and the meanings it could take on. One of these words was “millennial,” for our generation. The copy went from our Design Editor to our Chief Copy Editor and then to me. We all loved the poster, and I printed off 100 colour copies of it on 11"x17" paper—very foolishly. We had failed to notice a small, but very meaningful typo: “millennial” has two ns. Fuck. Of all the mistakes to make, the millennials misspelled the name of their own generation and wasted paper in the process. Typical.

I digress. The contents of these pages include works that span the meaning of generation, and are sourced from generations of UC students. We solicited work from alumni, and were amazed at the outpouring of support we had from the past generations of people who walked the same halls that we do now. Some of the works will make you laugh, and some will move you very deeply. All of them, I hope, will make you think more critically about your position in your own generation.

I have worked on the *UC Review* for three years, and leading this publication has been one of the greatest privileges of my time at UC. As Editor I’ve seen how deep the talent runs at this university, and I know the Review’s thirst for works will be quenched for generations to come.

With that, I urge you to dive into the pages ahead.

Yours,

Jack Osselton Denton

millennial mistress

mercedes killeen



**siren songs turn to secret snapchats. time-sensitive titties. ephemeral.
fleeting.**

pussy is power.¹

① Kendrick Lamar, Mani Strings, Bilal. “untitled 03.”
untitled unmastered, Bilal, Lamar. 2016.

My Mother's Eyes

Laibah Ashfaq

There was an unwavering sadness in her eyes

Steady and patient

She inherited this from her mother

and her mother inherited it from her mother

Every woman in this family wears this shade of melancholy

And I was no exception

I was told this colour suited my complexion

Grammie

Lena Schloss

Sun-faded lamp sends spirals across shadowed wall.
Grammie lives in a 365-day heated apartment (alone).
Elderly piano plays prized possession
in the middle of the aged room.
Tenth floor apartment is a painting
and my grandmother is a bowl of fruit,
sat on a pedestal, waiting.
She waits for help (for...
things).

My Grammie has five brunette grandchildren
and one blondie (pictured in perfect stroke,
in frames next to the bowl of fruit in framed
painting).

My grammie remembers
(she *does*)
how she paid \$20 to get her silver polished
and how my father
took polish
and fixed the candlestick
and the centrepiece of aged glass.
He preserves the painting.
He preserves the (alone) fruit
that receives help
that was never explicitly
asked for.



Wendy
Ink and pen on paper
Nikki Watson

NUMBERS

Rachel Evangeline Chiong

Numbers is the fourth book of the Bible and one that I butterfly under my thumb every time. I know that it was important at one point in history, but having to recreate those units of measurements into some conceivable object in my mind bores me. My eyes glaze over figures in my textbook; stats mean nothing to me. Back in high school, in international business class, we learned that charities and not-for-profits knew about this universal sentiment. So advertisers converted their cause into singular, personal stories from Khari, who became a mother the moment she was strong enough to carry her siblings, to Li Wei, who starved as a child labourer in a factory to feed his family.

I think about that a lot now. When I sit on the subway, staring at a poster of an African girl, her eyes large and hollowed, paint tapered onto her forehead, I notice she's not staring back at me, but somewhere behind me.

I have another reason why I hate numbers.

On the inside of my right arm, near my shoulder, is a timestamp. At first my parents thought it was a birthmark. But once I met the person who became the love of my life, the 'birthmark' started to shift. It turns out the mark dictated the next time I would see him again. The moment I put two and two together, I became obsessed. Counting down the days became counting down to the seconds. Sometimes, I would try and trick it and purposely avoid seeing him in order to force the prediction to fail. But no matter what, he'd either bump into me on the street, return a book I lent him, or attend the same party I was at. We would always meet at the exact second imprinted on my arm.

These days I hide it with a bandage. Because truth is, numbers mean everything to me.

But sometimes the bandage can get uncomfortable or clash with my outfit. With today's particular humidity and high of 'stay-indoors-or-die,' I slipped on a white sundress. I knocked out last night; we stayed up far too late walking around downtown, almost forgetting that we were both invited to a get-together our friends had planned for this morning. My phone went off, the screen displaying a text that said he was already on his way.

I glanced at myself in the mirror. The timestamp usually looked pretty cool, sort of like a tattoo. On more than one occasion, it had elicited a compliment from a stranger. Raising my arm, I wondered if it would look punk next to my sundress or if I should go find a scarf to wrap around it. I discovered I didn't need to find a scarf. I didn't look punk either. It wasn't there.

At first, I was confused. Maybe I was looking at the wrong arm? I gave myself too much credit sometimes. But it wasn't on any arm. It was gone.

Now the panic hit my body, chilly torrents raining down my spine. My stomach began to hurt. Where was it? What did it mean? I looked stupidly down at my arm, hoping maybe the numbers would float back onto the surface of my skin. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I realized that this was the first time in my life I had seen my arm clean.

My heart jumped into my throat and my head grew light. Where was he, was he safe? All of a sudden, scenes of car accidents, terrorist shootings like I had seen trending on the internet, and all the other painful and tragic ways of dying flooded into my mind. I grabbed my phone, my sweaty fingers sticking to the touch screen. I texted him in a frenzy and called him without waiting for a reply. It went straight to voicemail, the beeping thunderously echoing into my ear.

He had said he was on his way. He must have left the bus a few minutes ago, so that would mean he'd be walking over now. I needed to go intercept. Ironically, I found myself trying to trick the timestamp by running towards him, instead of away. The uncertainty made my feet light, my fear escalating with every scorched step on the pavement.

I didn't notice the heatwave even when it slapped my face. Blindly, my mind tried to grab for anything to keep me sane. I thought back to the girl on the poster staring not quite at me. *Did she live?*, my stupid brain asked. *Or did she become a number in some stats that no one would ever care about?*

Would the love of my life become a fatality digit in a car crash or be added to a textbook years from now under a chart of the most shootings per year? The bus stop was across the street.

Numbers is the fourth book of the Bible, and I never read it because I didn't care. The numbers on the crosswalk began counting down the seconds. But I was never one to pay attention.

What cannot be said

Norman Liu, UC 1994

More alien
than my father's truculent Shanghainese,
your dialect flexes richly, nonchalantly,
and I have
no idea what you're saying.

So, what other language must I use
but the one of smiles and held hands

to tell you that

this proud, monosyllabic scar that took a lifetime to heal—your surname,
not his—is the one I choose to bear,
the one I had carved as my seal?

To tell you that

my first name too has survived scorn, erasure, replacement,
and that at times
the one who scorned, erased and replaced was
Me?

But my hands also know how to ask if,
today, you feel a bit sad
to be 100—the ballooning digit you had to reach before
you could finally gather us all in one room.

Your answer: the grasp-ungrasp of papery fingers
that, in their youth, pinched a million dumplings and ruled
the mahjong board.

The second I entered the musty room, you read my eyes: I bring you
no great-grandchild
to sweeten a life spent on others,
and no marriage will ever bind me—at least not the kind you know.

Duì bùqǐ, sorry. This, too, cannot be said.

That tiny knitting together of a brow so much
broader and smoother than Mao's,
that pre-Revolution way you have of laughing and
gaping at the same time,

I know this means:

Too few days like this, in the few I have left.

When we share a private grin and a slow, level blink,
you know this means:

I wish I could have watched you
amaze your future father-in-law with your mastery of the v tiles.
He saw you swiftly laying out
a century of strategy, and sensed
that the male line needed a quick thinker.

He must have sensed too
that on a bone-cold night in 1937, a starving-mad Japanese soldier
would burst bayonet-first into your
kitchen just as your family were lifting their
chopsticks, and you'd be quick enough

to deny them the fried *jiaozi* you'd spent all day
folding, so you could gently push every
last succulent dumpling down his shaking mouth

drown his hatred with all the rice wine meant to last a winter
wait for digestion, shame and exhaustion

then order your husband and neighbours to drag the sleeping body far,
far from the house, leave him under a tree. I owe some of my existence
to your quick hands
and your frying pan.

But how could your father-in-law have known
—could *you*?—that all these delicious arts of war
would end with me, and that no strategy
can predict where love will bloom?

Oh, but we have our language,
you and I—

silent, tactile,
it bypasses words and names. What cannot be said
can be grasped, ungrasped.

It is all we have,
but in very little time, just enough of it,
we have become fluent.

For my grandmother, Liu Shu-Yun





moments in the blue hours

Photograph

Albert Hoang

In Many Peculiar Women

Patrick E. Morris

I owe everything to my mother, and the generations of mothers in my family. I wrote this for them.

My grandmother had plates thrown at her.
Fractured porcelain the shape of Pacific islands flew everywhere.
To my grandmother it must have seemed
like the great bombs dropped in the war before she was born.
Shrapnel, manmade and natural, flying above the crystal blue peace.
The H-bombs that proclaimed victory
even when surrender was imminent.
Needless suffering by her own United States, her mother, Kathryn.
It leaves marks.
Even if the bombs don't hit you.
My grandmother was punished with porcelain.
She would fire the clay that would be my mother a different way,
one day.

My mother had nothing thrown at her.
Though apathy cannot be dodged in the same way a plate can.
My grandmother loved her so much.
Where is the time to say it in words
when you have to raise two kids on your own, go to school,
work full-time?
If no one tells you,
sometimes you don't believe it.
My mother was a swimmer back then, but even with her powerful
legs and lung capacity (Scottish heritage, she would later tell me)
She was caught in a rip tide that drowned her in isolation.
My mother choked on a flood of words left unsaid.
She decided that there would always
be something to say to my sister and me, one day.

I had nothing thrown at me, ever.
Not words, not objects.
My mother's word is her bond, it turns out.
The only language my parents ever spoke was love.
My dad wanted to name me Angus.
My sister's middle name was dubbed Kathryn, for my great-grandma.
Scottish namesakes.
(Penance for the name she would give away for my father, I suppose.)

Most people don't mean to cause pain.
My parents certainly didn't mean to.

But there are a lot of things,
my sister and I would later decide,
we never wanted to be
because of them.

I got my voice from my mother.
Sweet, melodic, powerful.
So that I may never leave something unsaid.
I got my stubbornness from my grandmother.
Obstinate, strong, courageous.
So that I may stand up with shards cutting my proud face.
From an unknown woman in Scotland many generations ago,
I got my doughy face, skin. My faint freckles.
My disposition for butter and fried food.
My awful sense of humour, from them all.
Probably.

In every peculiar woman was me.
To some degree.
They suffered and strained so that I may be an unfathomable luxury.



I have decided here and now
that my daughters will be strong voiced,
strong willed
Have awful senses of humour.

My daughters will never know pain
the way every peculiar woman in my life
always did.
I don't want them to be me.
I have decided, here and now,
They will be so much more.

The Generations

Ross Johnston

In 2017, I spent six months of my life in a massive depression, amounting to arguably the most difficult time in my life. I exhausted myself with work, isolated myself in Toronto, and broke myself every day in the hope I could do something better. I missed home and I needed to put a direction to my life. During a visit in February, my father struggled to remember my name for the first time. He was diagnosed with chronic progressive multiple sclerosis nearly three decades ago. This put me in a panic to know more of who he was and how he saw me.

In late August, I went home for the first time in six months. In Elliot Lake, the summer still felt fresh compared to Toronto. With all my old friends long gone, I was alone in my childhood home, doing my best to recognize and to clarify what it meant to be there.

I visited my father, a broken man, who struggled to recognize me. I told him about my life, the new friends I've made, and the pain I was in, but he couldn't find words for much more than "I'm sorry." I struggled to imagine who he was before he got sick and I hate myself for not spending more time with him, or talking to him frankly when I still could. Mom always told me to talk to him when I was growing up. She knew I would have appreciated it now.

I never gave my mom enough credit for all that she knew about me. She knew I had depression for a long time and tried everything to make me better. She knew long before I did.

Back in Toronto, I still felt empty, cold, and tired. I threw myself into work again, over and over. I have good friends here though, people I love, but my sickness made it hard to be here.

October rolled around. The leaves turn quickly in Northern Ontario, and I caught them perfectly on bright sunny days of calm blue skies when I went home. Being home was better this time. I turned my thoughts to my hometown. It was dying. It had been since I was born. Degenerating over years, homes abandoned, and pain in every family were the hallmarks of every street.

When I visited my father, I didn't ask him questions. I sat with him and watched television, played bingo, and showed him how to use my phone. I've given up trying to pry stories out of him or learning more about the man he was, because, to me at least, that was never who he was.

Growing up I knew him as a pained soul who needed help, who loved me but never had the words or ability to say it. I struggle to count the number of times I've picked him up off the bathroom floor soiled, exhausted, and ashamed. I have lost track of the number of times he struggled to remember the day, or how often I had to ask him not to call my grandmother for

the eighth time in a day. I remember when an old friend called to tell him one of his old buddies had passed. I told him as he was in bed. He cried. Within an hour he was okay. I asked if he was fine. He had already forgotten. I told him again, and he cried.

From what I know, my father was a very “Canadian” man. He was practical, a bit too proud, and intelligent as far as his education took him. I’m a lot like him. I’m told I look a lot like him. I act like my grandfather who I never got to meet. Dad grew up, lived, and will most likely die in Elliot Lake. My father and Elliot Lake are the same in my mind: once proud in what they were. Today, degenerating with few around to witness and fewer who truly care; as he ages, so does the city: its streets crack, its pipes burst, and its stores close. I’ve spent the last 20 years of my life watching them slowly die. I’ve tried so long to put meaning to each of them, to understand what extent they’ve moulded and defined my life—but I’m too tired for that now.

December was cold in Elliot Lake. It was good in some ways to be there. The way the wind stings every vessel in my face reminds me of the people there. They are resolute, and apathetic to pain. I can see it in their faces, in the cold stressed skin that endures. My father spent some time in our home over Christmas. He didn’t speak much. He was quiet and, I hope, happy.

It was the first time he saw my sisters and me together in over a year, not that he remembered the last time we were together. I would often look at him as we sat in the living room blankly examining the space that my mother renovated, and although he had seen it before several times, it would always be the first time in his mind.

Multiple sclerosis is hereditary. I will always live with the fear that one day I won’t remember my friends’ faces or the names of my children, that I’ll struggle to dance with my children at their weddings, as my father did at my sister’s wedding. This weight rests on me, that puts me in panic every time my hand shakes, and every twinge in my legs exhausts me.

January was pleasant. I celebrated my birthday; trying to put things in place on my own is difficult and I’ve never felt as though I’ve been in the correct place at any time. Of all the paternal figures in my family I am the first to go to university. Both my father and grandfather were mechanics in Elliot Lake. They lived simple lives, with stories and family and excitement. I am like them in many ways. I wish I could live a simple life, comfortable and content with calloused hands and a sore back, but this isn’t where I’m going, nor do I think it would make me happy.

I know now that I would never find myself through my father—I feel more comfortable with how things degenerate and memories fade. It’s a painful peace that I needed to make, I need it to move forward.

February is cold. I’ve lost my balance a few times. My hands shake worse than ever.

I haven’t been home in a while now, and I have no current plans to do so. My MRI is on the 18th of March.





Strain

Acrylic on canvas

Seo Eun Kim, UC 2017

The Nudist

Sana Mohtadi

A nudist froze to death last week
The funeral—open casket—was held indoors

The parishioners braced themselves in wool and furs
Bearing lilies and gladioli

They bowed their heads in mourning—
His death invented Shame

He would walk up and down Main Street
They knew his body like the back of their hands

How the scoliotic curve of his back
Smiled at them from behind

That hairless child's chest
Hidden under a grey suit, hands folded across

Shirt tucked into jacket
Jacket buttoned over pants

Pants belted by black belt
Black belt matching black shoes—

Black shoes hiding blacker toes
Ten frostbitten headstones

A casket ensured
That the chill of winter wouldn't reach him

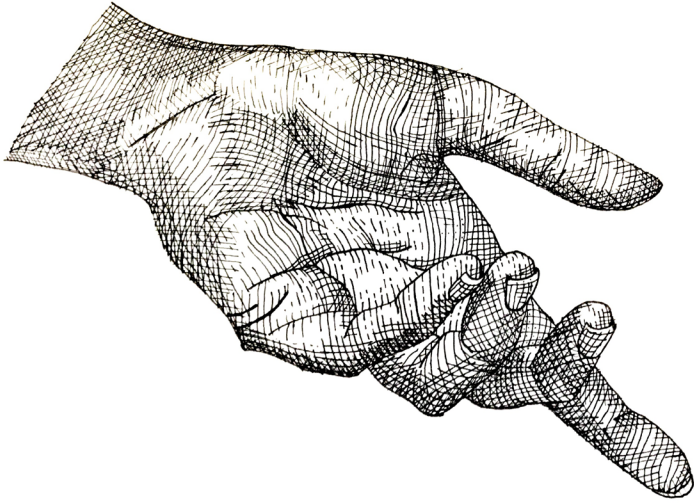
That Propriety shall keep him warm
Each gloved finger laced in the straightjacket clasp of prayer

The Morning After

Alex McCulloch



**We knead each other
Like bread
Then rise like yeast
For bacon and eggs**



The Gracious Hand
Pen and ink
Stephanie Vranichidis

Guangzhou*Rachel Chen*
~~~~~**China sings**

where I call and it is indeed a ringtone,  
not just a ringtone,  
where the microwave whistles  
and the doorbell won't stop crooning.  
The TV belts out in song when it turns on,  
and the elevator music is so very real  
in that place—  
the place where an effort is made not to simplify  
the everyday,  
but to make it an event—  
where the sun doesn't bring out the darkest shades,  
but rather the most colourful umbrellas  
that you don't even see in Vancouver rain,  
where high heels are reserved for hiking and shopping,  
but also going on dates,  
where communist concrete construction—  
aged by wear and tear and quickly fading—  
is obscured by so many living plants  
and colourful laundry for all to see;  
my grandma expertly avoids walking along the side  
to evade getting rained on  
by a watering neighbour.

**Cream***Kelly Aiello*  
~~~~~

Considering that the stories Mamma told me of my grandmother feel legendary in my mind, I'm still not exactly sure how much of it was true. Mamma tended to embellish. Profoundly. She couldn't end a story at normalcy if she had someone's attention in her grasp. Gramma, Mamma had said, was a woman of female revolution who never seemed to pick up on social decorum appropriate for a woman her age. Even into her early sixties she'd sashay into a room, sweep the premises with one shrewd gaze of her amber eyes, and own everyone and everything in it, men and women. Platinum hair twisted with piles of hairspray, she'd size up prospects like fruit at the grocer's. And without a hint of movement on her face. Impassive. Imperial. And completely crazy. Heads turned when she sauntered anywhere she went, wide, round hips swaying, and she had men gasping for the breath right from her peppermint-scented mouth. Before she met Jerry, Mamma's stepfather, Gramma was a single working mother—a disrespectful and slightly offensive vocation for a woman in the early '60s.

Men often frequented her house, leaving while straightening their neckties and blowing kisses her way as she'd wiggle her fingers to them from the front porch. Mamma told me Gramma's nosy neighbours saw her whole affair with a married man and that rumours rippled up the street like pebbles in a pond.

"Let the Mary Kay wives talk," Gramma had said with a wave of her hand. "Gives the old hens something to cluck over. They should thank me really." She shrugged her shoulders. "I keep them happy. Coming home to them."

I heard my grandmother had earned her fortunes by backbreaking work—*on-her-back work*, as Mamma had put it. I had no idea what that meant, while Mamma would laugh that short bark of a laugh she had when she really didn't mean anything funny. In 1961, Gramma was hired at an international diamond manufacturer as the receptionist in the Jewish district on Eglinton. Within a year, she was promoted to Vice President of Sales and was often seen exiting Lionel Metz's office, tucking in her blouse or hastily reapplying her Coco Chanel lipstick. He was her boss and he made play of giving her a crisp bill to slide into her silk pump. She could only have it after she'd walk on it all day in her shoe.

The job came with fortunes and opportunities which would serve to set her up quite comfortably for the rest of her life—precious gems of her choosing, a beautiful new Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz, and international holidays to Rome, Budapest, Geneva, and Istanbul, which Gramma still

called Constantinople even though it had become Istanbul well before she was even born.

And the parties—oh the parties she'd throw. I even attended one when I was a girl. Glittery women draped in silk and exploding with colour. Men in fine jackets with brandy snifters, and music blaring from the Marantz record player as they all swirled around the vast rooms of my grandmother's home. Ladies danced, kicking up their skirts, and pressing against men. Throaty laughter as they tilted their heads back, intoxicated with bourbon and jazz. My grandmother always loved jazz. Anyone who walked in the double oak doors of her massive home—a stately farmhouse with all the latest technology dovetailed with the most lavish, expensive appointments—could have sworn they'd stepped straight into prohibition rather than the era of the King of Pop and Def Leppard.

I remember standing there, in the midst of all the exotic heat and blaring music, barely seeing above the cinched waists pressing in, revelling in it all. I remember watching one couple off in a dim corner—the woman with her glossy dark hair coming untethered locked in a passionate embrace with the older man. She giggled as his hands slid over her charmeuse-clad bottom, squeezing it with a growl. He pressed his pelvis into her thigh with a faraway look on his face while he kept her heated gaze.

I remember wandering through the marble hallways leading to the massive, twenty-one step staircase. I relished the *click-clack* my patent leather shoes made on the floor. The sound of a real lady's shoes. I forced my little heel down hard to hear the *clack* above the music and laughter.

Beyond the staircase, adjacent to the parlour, I saw Mamma and Gramma seated at the sixteen-seat bocote table among billows of cigarette smoke and empty bottles of expensive French wine. I tiptoed carefully forward, not wanting them to know I was there, standing almost on my toes. The excitement of witnessing adults together was like an unattended cookie jar to a little girl. *What did they discuss among themselves? What do they do that they seem to enjoy so much?*

I'd never seen Mamma smoke before. I was curious. I loved this secrecy, witnessing the adults at play, in their own recondite world that a six-year-old girl like me was not permitted to see. I could just hear what they were talking about, their heads tipped close to each other, red-painted fingernails tipping ash from their cigarettes into the jade ashtray on the table. Smoke swirled around their heads, leaving the luxurious room in a haze. Silk damask paper covered the walls. And Mamma looked different. Somehow, she looked female. Not like a mother, not like my oversized, always slightly sweaty Mamma. Her lips were swollen with red lipstick, eyes smoky and slightly glazed behind the rose-tinted glasses she wore. Dark green silk draped across her breasts and clung to

her girth. She looked impressive with one elbow propped on the table, the other nonchalantly holding a cigarette away from her face. Effortlessly. Like she was born into this world and had abandoned it long ago for diapers and dishes. I was so accustomed to Mamma wearing cotton day dresses, aprons, and a perpetual sheen of sweat that would cling to the tiny whiskers of her upper lip.

“Darling,” I heard my grandmother drawl—*dah*-ling—over her shoulder to someone in the kitchen. “Be a lamb and bring us girls more wine, will ya?” I saw Jerry enter the room from the kitchen, bowtie undone and dangling across his shoulders. He leaned in and pecked my grandmother on her powdered cheek. “Sure thing, pumpkin.” I crept closer, small hands bracing along the papered wall.

A few years back, Jerry reluctantly had given Papa a job when Papa couldn’t find work. Mamma had never liked Jerry much, she’d liberally and frequently proclaim, and both my parents resented the fact that Papa had to work for him. It stemmed back to one late night, when Mamma was pregnant with me. Jerry and Papa had had it out over something or other that men have it out over. Gramma and Mamma started yelling and then everyone was yelling at everyone and then fists were flying between the men. Mamma got in the way of Jerry’s fist. It was only when Papa trained his Winchester on Jerry’s head that Gramma and Jerry took their leave.

Mamma once told me that when she was young, Jerry had come at her with a two by four. Beat her to smithereens while Gramma turned the other way, she said. I’m still not really sure how true that was. Like I said, Mamma had quite the proclivity for embellishment.

I focused my attention back on Mamma and Gramma at the table and the smell of cigarette smoke curling into my nose.

“And that—” Gramma turned back to Mamma as Jerry left with a pat of her hand on his rear “—is how you get a man to do what you need.” She tapped her cigarette in the tray, brought it back to her blood-red lips and pulled hard. Her eyes squinted, wrinkles breaking over her rosed cheeks. “Men are simply a means to an end, honey. Your heart never belongs to them so never give it to them. Never give them what they need—that’s the only way you’ll keep that husband of yours. Always keep them needing more.” She shrugged in a soft rustle of expensive fabric. A shriek of laughter emanated from the front parlour. Etta James was belting out of the record player about stormy weather. Gramma smiled at Mamma. “Why would they buy the cow when they can get the cream for free?”

Mamma smiled back. Glanced out the floor-length windows to the darkness beyond the brocade drapes.

“But you might want to consider shedding a few pounds, honey. A fat woman is a little unseemly, don’t you think? You don’t want that gorgeous

man of yours to trade in for something smaller.” She leaned into Mamma and pinched her belly fat. “Something *tighter*. Men like it tight, darling. Don’t forget that.” She pointed a diamond-encrusted finger at Mamma. “*Honestly*, with all the diets I put you on as a child, it’s a miracle you actually turned out as fat as you are!”

A hand on my shoulder roused me from my observations and I quickly spun around. I looked up into the eyes of a man, youngish with dark hair and a face ruddy from exertion and drinking. His jacket undone, tie abandoned to who knows where.

“Now what do we have here?” he said in a lowered, conspiratorial voice. He raised his hand and brushed his fingertips along my cheek. Delicately. Softly. I shook my head silently, mouth agape. “You’re a pretty one. You like Etta James?” His tongue snaked out and licked his bottom lip. I watched the lip coat with sheen. I nodded. He remained silent and for a moment I thought I was going to get in real trouble. Then he said, “Now you go on. Run upstairs. This isn’t no place for a young lady such as yourself.” He winked at me. “Go. Scoot.”

With my fancy party shoes clacking on the granite floor, I ran off, the scent of cigarettes in still in my nose.





River Boy
Photograph
Yasmin McDowell, UC 2017

millennial pink

Shania Perera



subtweets require subtext
maybe I'll be understood
each time my anxious thoughts
cloud the recesses of what was once
a noble brain.
I think I'll always say I needed you.

Incoherence

Avneet Sharma
~~~~~

Incoherence takes over my body, my psyche, my breaths.  
Leaving the faded memories of soft sleepy eyes in the morning after,  
He peers at me with melancholy; a vague or unsure comfort,  
His warmth, his snore, his fingers become my focal point  
                          through which Lakshmi delivers her luxuries.  
Deliver me a long distance from my body.

Where is the fumbling of the cigarette?  
Where is the arched back against the gas pipe?  
Where is XTC?

This feels genuine; not unlike a fantasy, but grounded still  
But my disbelief or lack of senses aren't lost  
And all I want is everything, but he fills my world with nothingness  
Beautiful, handsome nothingness  
That I wrap my limbs around; an unnecessary action quells  
                          a necessary fear

Unburdened by the demure appearance of a solemn text message:  
“I look forward to future encounters;  
you  
and your soft sleepy eyes.”

**The Selfish Gene**  
*Mark Halpern, UC 1980*

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## I

Had I known that Mr. Spencer was less human than even Mr Lemerck, I would not have taken the job. So far as I can tell, Eugene D. Spencer lacks a single nanoparticle of affection, compassion, sympathy or good will toward any other human being. You might say “sociopath.” Most people say “brilliant, charming, successful.”

What other assessment is possible for his few visitors these days? Once ascending to the 45th floor of Aoyama Hills, they trek through the lush plain of Spencer & Lemerck’s sparsely populated interior before crossing into more austere elegance at the threshold of its furthest office. There, the Chairman greets them with graciousness and bonhomie. There is still power in the wrinkled hand that pats their backs, and in the wrinkled voice asking to be called Gene.

At the low African blackwood table near the window, they partake of sweet *wagashi* served with dark, bitter *maccha* tea, perhaps astonished to be taking in their hands a bowl fashioned by, say, Raku Kichizaemon XV. I am introduced with a casual ease that leaves unimpaired the setting’s dignity and exquisiteness. My typical role is to take notes. My unvarying role is to do exactly what Mr. Spencer says. His is the personality of an impersonal force. What does this make me?

Until recently, Mr. Lemerck seemed to be grooming me to eventually run the business as his successor. A man of culture, he recognizes some intrinsic value in other people. If merely to the extent of their learning and tangible accomplishments. But now, existing within Mr. Spencer’s domination, I sense all higher aspects of humanity vanishing from my self.

On the 25th day of each month, a grotesque bulge materializes in my bank account, replenishing what will have been dissipated on creature comforts. No nest egg accumulates. I sometimes wonder what else Mr. Spencer believes holds me here. He must perceive something. Otherwise, he would not have appropriated my time from Mr. Lemerck.

## II

We call ourselves a “trading company.” Microscopic compared with Mitsui or Mitsubishi or other great *sōgō-shōsha*, but like them, in principle, traders in potentially anything. And we are always on the lookout for random market variations that may prove advantageous. We are utterly, unrelentingly opportunistic.

Several years ago, Mr. Spencer, proud of having built an infrastructure for success, relinquished involvement in day-to-day business. He is



content that Mr. Lemerck consult him on financing and strategy. The two men, different as they are, cooperate with natural ease.

Mr. Spencer conceived a business that advances based on relationships between particular individuals. Japan's rapidly changing demography has altered our environment, as has increased global competition for resources. But under Mr. Lemerck, our skills have evolved to meet the challenges, skills being passed on to a new generation of employees.

A vague description to be sure, but that is about all my employment contract would grant me liberty to say.

### III

On Monday, Mimi Spencer, decorated in matching fur-trimmed lime green coat and hat, appeared before the receptionist, asking to see her father. As usual, I was instructed to leave the two alone following initial pleasantries and then listen in surreptitiously, so that I might accurately and efficiently procure what Mimi wants. This time it was a Lamborghini. A certain model and colour. Without delay.

At 36, after one childless marriage, Mimi's role is to take prompt action to ensure continuity of the species. This is Mr. Spencer's foremost concern. He believes, rightly, that he will not live long.

Whims are systematically indulged in order to facilitate Mimi's compliance, but there is little sign of progress except regarding names. More specifically, Mr. Spencer has decided that his yet-to-be grandchildren should bear his surname. Mimi has already cooperated—at a price—to the extent that both her passports now say Spencer.

It was a simple reversion to maiden name for Mimi's American passport. Less simple for her Japanese passport. I engaged a lawyer to change the specification on her family register from Motokawa, her mother's family name, to Supensaa, the target's nearest permissible phonetic equivalent. For a Chinese character representation, Mr. Spencer took time before selecting the bizarre combination 巢偏差亞. It could, at a stretch, be taken to mean “nest deviation: Asia.” Mr. Spencer finds this amusing.

Another step lies ahead, as Japanese law requires married couples to have the same family name. So it remains to convince Mimi's yet-to-be-selected husband to accept Spencer/Supensaa. I foresee little difficulty, as a son-in-law brought into a wealthy Japanese family not infrequently takes the wife's name when there is no one else to carry it on. In the present case, he may even be formally adopted by Mr. Spencer. For tax reasons.

As Mimi was leaving, I saw her from a distance, staring at her reflection in the elevator door. Female staff sometimes refer to her as Me! Me! This is probably out of jealousy, less, I imagine, for her material possessions, than for the intense sexuality she exudes in the presence of men.

The biochemical reaction is perceptible whenever I see her, and I have no reason to think she switches it on just for me. It is, I believe, part of her nature.

## IV

Last month, Mimi showed up wanting a fresh colour-coordinated wardrobe to accompany the newly-arrived Lamborghini. And jewellery. This time, it took three visits for Mr. Spencer to fully give in.

On the third visit, he was called away just as Mimi sat down. I stayed on to ensure she did not prowl among his papers. The experience was not at all unpleasant, unlike my brief attendances when her father was on hand. Mimi inherited the late Mrs. Spencer's striking physical beauty and some of her ability to feign modesty, as well as Mr. Spencer's unlimited capacity to charm. One might well find these traits sufficient inducement to overlook her additional patrimony of incessant acquisitive selfishness. Especially when one factors in all the hard cash Mimi will inherit when her father dies. I have no reason to think Mr. Spencer has changed his will—nor the trust fund arrangement that incentivizes perpetuation of his name through future generations.

We spoke of contemporary Japanese literature, and eventually Mimi moved the conversation towards movies based on books. I sensed that an invitation from me for a night out would be received favourably, but I was unwilling to chance her father's wrath. Perhaps this time it was he who listened in surreptitiously.

## V

There are times when I listen in without Mr. Spencer's instructions. He may suspect I do this.

I have listened when his lawyer came, which is how I know about his estate planning. I have listened when he speaks with his doctor. I listen in whenever I can, if likely to gain information that helps me.

Once I heard Mr. Spencer tell Mr. Lemerck what he sought in a son-in-law: "Essentially, someone as much as possible like me." That, I suppose, might produce a couple who deserve each other.

Or perhaps I will take a hand in causing a different result.

## VI

Upon leaving the office yesterday, I saw the distinctive Lamborghini, still just a few months old, parked in Aoyama Hills' underground lot. As I was walking by, Mimi got out, ostensibly on her way to the 45th floor. I chose to regard this as beyond coincidence.

I admit feeling that I should be the one displaying a powerful, high-status automobile. But it being the 25th of the month, my manly side took over. I asked Mimi whether she might meet for a drink later that evening.

She said yes. That her lipstick matched the car's metallic colour—even pinker than in the catalogue—made her smile all the more intriguing.

A few hours later, the same smile shimmered through faint lighting from across the room at a chic private club. I signalled from my table. As Mimi approached, I stood and held her chair—mating rituals seemingly unknown to Japanese men. “My father must trust you,” she said, before kissing me on the cheek, “but I’m here anyway.” I was curious whether I had been branded by her lipstick.

“I never doubted you had a mind of your own,” I said, reciprocating in the establishment of the evening’s ground rules. We would not make pronouncements that were not literally true.

In the dark room Mimi’s body was gleaming. Yet my self-control was intact—I was still depleted from an assignation the previous evening. During the second half of the second drink, I let three fingers of my left hand rest upon Mimi’s bare wrist. She slowly slid her fingertips inwards along the table between us. And then we went home our separate ways.

## VII

What am I to think about Japanese marriages? Just a few generations ago, they were typically formed in obedience to fathers’ commands. Now, they are often formed—and formatted—in obedience to peculiar norms that seem partly explainable by Japan’s exceptionally short, idiosyncratically twisted path from feudalism to postmodernity. Like many things here.

Arrangements may still commence with an *o-miai*, where the prospective couple meet formally to size each other up, though these days their family members will mostly not be present. Even in the case of *ren’ai*, love matches, some respectable person is usually granted the honorary designation of *nakōdo*, the formal go-between for the two families. Long after the fact.

Whatever idealization there may be of romantic marriage, its roots are less deep and less dispersed than in the West. A truth I wish I had been spared from learning, or at least from learning more than once.

Who is to say whether the general result is less-happy or otherwise less-successful marriages? I do not know whether the chance for true happiness depends on first falling in love. But insofar as it may, Mr. Spencer is exploiting Japanese tradition in an attempt to impose on others a future in which he himself will not take part.

## VIII

Mimi says that after three months, we know each other well enough to decide about getting married. I suppose that is true, and yet it is still a hard decision.

There is a marginally gentler side to Mimi that I had not seen. There is also a consistency in mood and in taste, producing an agreeable predictability in behaviour. Moreover, there is a tendency to yield on miscellaneous decisions, provided all her specific demands for material goods are met fully, precisely and promptly. Of course, all these assessments might result from dissimulation, whether calculated or habituated, on Mimi's part. On my part, I have not sought to hide any aspect of personality, though naturally I have not been fully forthcoming on matters of actual behaviour.

For several years, I have experienced a comforting balance among my work and other obligations, and my pleasures and pastimes. Marriage would puncture that stasis, promising a new equilibrium in which I exist as a happier form of human being. Promising but not guaranteeing. Ay, there's the rub.

All told, as to deciding about marriage, most probably neither of us will ever learn anything highly significant about the other we do not already know. I am more worried about what I may someday learn about myself.

I do not like to envision Mr. Spencer as my father-in-law, but I will not let that sway me. Though he may have once been the fittest man in the jungle, he will not survive long.

Today I listened in surreptitiously as Mimi told him she expected to be married by the end of the year to someone he would find "satisfactory." She did not specify the groom-designate's identity. Am I the only possibility?

## IX

We are married. This became a legal fact through registration at a governmental office. Thankfully, Mimi did not insist on a "religious" ceremony, especially of the most typical modern Japanese sort, at a mock-church wedding hall officiated by a mock-minister. Some bearded, middle-aged American lacking regularly scheduled employment duties.

I would have gone along with a Shinto ceremony. None but a master of the straight face—that is, pretty much any Japanese person—could refrain from laughing while describing contemporary Shinto as a religion. The number of true believers must be even less than for Japanese Christians, in a country where only about one in a hundred Japanese are even nominally Christian.

As for Buddhist rituals, in Japan those are for funerals and other death commemorations. Shinto is for happy times, like the birth of a child. Or—if Western fashion does not intervene—weddings. I wonder if we might arrange a Shinto funeral for Mr. Spencer when that happy need arises.

Meanwhile, Mimi and I are finding a way to live together, and all is made easier by the steady flow of cash from my increased salary and her increased allowance. This too is a fact. Am I wrong to admit it?

As for the business, I will take over someday, when childless Mr. Lemerck retires. The firm's name need not change, as I am now a Spencer. And my children will be Spencer/Supensaa. Perhaps I can be content to live for the pleasures of the moment as the nameless narrator of my own life.

Gene, as I now call him, is both my father-in-law and my adoptive father. In for a penny, in for a pound.

## X

"It all comes down to the X chromosomes," repeats Gene, now rapidly declining in body and mind. He began making this odd assertion upon learning Mimi is carrying a girl. Gene acknowledges without complaint my contribution of one X chromosome. But he believes, and mistakenly regards as a scientific certitude, that a replica of his own single X chromosome necessarily resides within the genetic structure of his unborn granddaughter. He desperately wants to hang on to see her born. He already calls her little Eugénica.

Gene's judgement is fading to nothing, and he has stated outright that he manipulated circumstances—in dozens of small ways—to cause Mimi and me to choose each other. Mimi regards this as a most unnatural form of selection. But at least she does not appear to regret the result.

For my part, I had long suspected that our paths were guided not by the hand of some invisible god, but by the wrinkled hand of all-too-visible Gene. No other explanation seemed rationally possible.





WOMEN / 1.20, Photograph, *Brenda Gomes*





**the ballerina**

*Emily Powers*

---

first heartbreak  
hurts the toes  
                  not the ankles

bend gently  
strong ankles  
and  
          eat the crust  
          the crust will help  
help like the  
way the metal feels  
                  softer  
in the water

the rock warm  
          air undecided  
a valley like two thumbprints in sand  
          bend gently  
and drive slowly as to not miss *it*

*it* being  
          the tap  
                  or track  
                  or taste  
                          I forget

big eyes  
skinny fish  
          letting no one but  
                          frida watch

**Cobwebs**

*Steven Han*

Glistening tendrils of gossamer,  
Unfurled under the cover of darkness,  
Weave the most beautiful tapestries

Tributes to devotion,  
Monuments to neglect

Easy to fray,  
Easier yet to break,  
Impossible to destroy

**Balikbayan // Back Home***Jean Claude Ting*

“Where are you *really* from?”

I wasn't born here. Papers were filed to get me here. I have to file papers every few years to keep staying here.

Home is an 18-hour flight. A family obligation. Two weeks. It's what my job allows. It's what I can afford. Back home, the sun burns. The air is sticky. Motorcycle motors rattle everywhere. I look past the skyline and think, *Was the sky always so grey?*

I can't remember the stops and transfers I used to make for my daily commute.

I've lost my voice and I'm coughing my lungs out. It's jet lag. It's the temperature change. It's staying out too late and drinking too much with old friends from school. I wash the pills down with bottled water; anything else is risky. “Back home, we ate every part of the chicken,” I used to say.

Shifts, semesters, and summers. It's been a while since I was last back. OSAP doesn't cover plane tickets.

“This reminds me of something from back h—” *pause* “—in the Philippines...”

*Rizal definitely disapproves.*

I still have to file papers to keep staying here.

**Paper Cut-Outs***Haley Dobbie*  
~~~~~

Our texts hug the world,
Squeezing it a little smaller,
So that we can talk and hear one another, through the walls
of the mountains.
And our love crushes that mountain and the earth,
so that the whole world may be flat,
Then our Skype calls in our little paper world,
Fold this map so that we may be together.
We're two paper cut-outs,
Holding hands where the paper creased,
It may not be 3D,
But our relationship is as real as real can be.
And someday, soon enough,
The wind will carry us together,
folding the little paper girl and boy into an origami crane,
And as the earth takes back its shape,
We will finally be 3D,
And as we are each a wing,
Can travel around the world together,
Because our love knows no distance.

Technology
Photograph
Aaron Ng





જયોત્સ્ના (JYOTSNA)

Nisarg Patel

She was euphoric. Early in the morning Shanta granted her request to assist during the *Shraavan mela*¹. She had been pleading for weeks now. She was afraid that the silence on the topic was the silence of refusal—the silence that was ever present in their house. But today, after Raman left, Shanta mentioned in passing and, almost in a whisper, her approval to the three-week old request. A deep urge soon swelled inside her to inform Jyotsna about this, but that would have to wait until later in the day.

The *Shraavan mela* took place outside the Shiv temple—the temple of the God of gods who was the central deity for many families of Vadgam and the surrounding villages. Built right beside the major crossroads and standing aloof under the banyan tree, the tiny Shiv temple had been there for centuries; built by, some said, a hermit who came all the way from a southern part of the country. He was 97 years old and had been walking for four years, three months, and 12 days when he reached the village of Vadgam and laid down the *shivling*². He later told the villagers the reason for his arduous journey: a snake visited him in a dream and told him that he must travel across the country to a village named Vadgam to build a temple of his lord. This is how he would reach his last stage of attending moksha, and after the founding of the temple, he very well believed that he had attained it. This was a very old story, nobody knew how many hundreds of years old. But since the founding of the temple, the very last Monday of *Shraavan*, during which people from surrounding villages came to pray at Shiv temple, held the central importance. A ritual that converted to an annual fair at some point.

She was euphoric to assist her mother who, for as long as she could remember, sold paper

① *Shraavan*: Fifth month in Hindu calendar, connected to the arrival of Monsoon. Many Hindu fast on Monday for Shiva. *Mela*: Village fair.

② Symbolic representation of Lord Shiva. Central in his worship.

windmills at the fair. Things were changing, however. The multicolour paper windmill, which would rotate by itself and attract customers with its fluttering sound, found its competitor in plastic toys. Shanta was very much aware of it, like everybody else. But there was no imminent danger to the business, and Shanta knew that too. While they proved to be a novelty, those plastic dogs that barked at the press of their tails or those guns that emitted fake firing sounds were too expensive for most people. A single gun would cost ₹50 and a dog ₹35, while her windmill was 1 for ₹3 or 2 for ₹5—a perfectly affordable toy to satisfy a child’s curiosity for colours which could be bought for the many children in a family. And to add on to this, the windmills lasted long. Those plastic guns stopped emitting sound after a week of use and their lights died soon after the sound. Who knew if this was just a myth created by parents to halt their children from getting obsessed over such an unaffordable toy. Nobody found out the truth because nobody could afford one—at least for the next couple of years. But children were not the only ones at fault. The elders were also deeply fascinated by the sheer variety of those plastic toys. It started with the gun that made a firing sound and only two years later the plastic toy evolved into the walking dog (only on flat surfaces). The walking dog soon turned into the barking dog, then into the doll that could laugh upon pressing her chest, and finally the small soldier who said something nobody could understand: *ଝି-ଝି* (fi-err). The sellers were mostly people from the city who stood in their pride at a corner and looked over everyone who was becoming enchanted—both children and parents—with a superior smirk on their face. Last year, unable to hold her curiosity, Shanta approached the seller and asked, “Do you guys walk all the way to China and come back to sell these toys at *our* fair?” The man replied yes with a faint smile and newly kindled pride, and after a bit added that not only been to China at least a dozen times, but that he even stayed to learn how to make some of these toys. He nodded toward the toys on the ground; the guns, dogs, dolls, and soldiers were all lying there, unsold. Shanta looked at him with disbelief but later disbelieved her initial disbelief: *What does she know after all?*

She was euphoric that afternoon but the hours were passing languidly, extending like the wide-spanning wings of an eagle that traces endless circles in the bare sky of afternoon. Maybe her euphoria was slowing things down and making her more and more restless for Monday. She had twice been to the kitchen (drank water both times even though she was not thirsty) and had filled Lali’s (their only buffalo) bucket with hay and even told her about Shanta’s approval. There was little else to do; she had almost completed her homework. Maybe she would show what she wrote to Jyotsna, her only friend and classmate. Apart from waiting for Jyotsna, who would arrive in the late evening, there was little else to do.

My mother is Shanta. She has very dark skin like Lali in our barn. She limps. Her left leg is short and twisted. She knows how to make colourful windmills. Windmills make me happy. My mother looks like a dark peacock when she goes out to sell them. My dream is to sell windmills. I will be like my mom, a windmill seller, even when both of my legs are fine.

She was proud and doubtful of the last sentence. Proud because she had just learned how to use the comma at school and that she had used two of them in a single sentence. Doubtful because she was not sure if the sentence was correct. Maybe Jyotsna would prove to be of some help, but it was still mid-afternoon and Jyotsna wasn't coming until late in the evening. She opened the back door. Lali was on verge of having her afternoon nap, the hay untouched. There was no one outside; meanwhile the sky was getting dark. *Shraavan* was prone to accidental showers so maybe one was on its way.

When she closed the back door, the darkness engulfed her. There was no sound; even the accidental rustle of Shanta working on her windmills was hushed. She called out Shanta's name but nobody replied. If only she could cross the room into the front foyer, but the darkness devoured everything, even her sense of direction.

This is precisely the moment where my mother always took a break in narrating her childhood story: "Darkness devoured everything, even my sense of direction." On many incidents I have noticed her looking aside, subtly, after she reaches this blinding darkness; the momentum of her narrative cut short. I was 12 when she first told me her story, the story of the day she became an orphan. And I remember perfectly that it was at this very instant—darkness and loss of direction—that she stopped, even then. She died a week ago, a natural death due to old age in a private hospital in Toronto. It was precisely this death—the death of my beautiful mother—that pushed me to write her story.

I have yet to finish my 15 days of mourning, as per the Hindu belief. Belief was the only thing my mother could hold from her past life; the life she lived and knew before I asked her to leave my childhood home in Vadgam to move in with me in Toronto. My mother was getting old and could no longer stand up without support or walk more than 10 steps at a time. And, after all, what was left in Vadgam? Everybody she knew once was dead. Even Jyotsna. I assumed she didn't have much to lose; the move could only make her life easier and maybe a bit happy. I was wrong. I realized this when she asked me where the nearest Shiv temple was and whether she would be able to walk to it. It's a shame I don't believe in anything, even for the sake of my mother.

I woke up this morning from a nightmare. A variation of nightmares which populated the whole of my childhood. I am usually in a room

engulfed in darkness and can only hear a swift sound, a soft rustle. Sometimes something would brush by me, sometimes I would sense something growing before me. “Shanta, Shanta!” I would usually call out, frightened and lost. I never know why it is the name of my grandmother and not my mother that comes out of my mouth. Somehow I always feel that the moving object is my grandmother, whom I have never seen. And it makes sense. It is dark because I have no idea what she looks like. Nothing of her remained when she died, not even her body. It is usually when I start to get comfortable in darkness that I realize the thing which is moving is not my grandmother but a snake. It always is a snake. A cobra—Shiva’s snake. And when she rises before me and opens her mouth, all of my history flows out: the toys that I lost, my school uniform, my notebooks, and sometimes phrases of my forgotten mother language. કેમ છો? સારુ છે. બધા મઝા મા? અરે એક દમ. (How are you? I am fine. Is everyone in bliss? Oh, very much.)

My mother died on Sunday at the Princess Margaret Cancer Hospital. She was 85, had blood cancer, and suffered a lot in her last days. But then again, her life has been a story of suffering. She lost her father before she turned two. He couldn’t pay his debt and died one day of a heart attack, I assume. I can only assume because Shanta, my grandmother, told my mother that “he went to sleep one night and died of the burden of worries that were piling upon his fragile chest.” Raman, Shanta’s brother-in-law, took the family in for they had nowhere to go. Usually, when the younger brother is unwed, he takes his sister-in-law as a wife, but Raman never married Shanta. She was disabled, after all. People in the village believed that disabled women were sexually dysfunctional, as if their sexual appetite was somehow absent. Nobody in his right mind would marry a disabled women, so it was not expected of Raman. But this didn’t stop him from taking on the patriarchal role of the family; he took control of everything within months, from paying for my mother’s school fees to paying visits to her room when she started to show signs of womanhood. His presence was immediately felt in the house, mostly in the form of silence, the stench of alcohol emitting from his body. Shanta granted my mother’s request to assist her for *Shraavan mela* on Sunday, just a day before *mela*, because if Raman knew he would not allow it.

She was euphoric, my mother, during the last conversation I had with her. Maybe ‘euphoric’ is the wrong word; she was as excited as a spreading fire, eager as a snake in the month of *Shraavan*. It was not a conversation, strictly speaking. She was on heavy painkillers and was probably hallucinating and talking to herself:

Darkness devoured everything, even my sense of direction.
Everything was silent, the air impregnated with memories of

the dead, forgotten, forsaken... I called out to Shanta but she wouldn't reply... I was euphoric... Shanta approved my request to assist her tomorrow in *Shraavan mela*... Can you call Jyotsna? I need to tell it to her before Raman comes... Raman calls me sometimes in the evening to show me his snake. He has taught me how to make it large. You hold it and rub it: up and down, up and down. He promised to buy me a plastic doll from mela... The air was heavy when I opened the door. Shanta was bent over the kerosene stove, trying to ignite it. Big bouquet of windmills lying beside her, almost complete... Shanta looks like a peacock when she goes out to sell them... Those windmills were like sunflowers, and those sunflowers were on fire. Kerosene stove, the Sun. Shanta was ablaze, emitted dark strands of smoke from her flesh—snakes coming out of her body and flying towards the sky. Would you please call Jyotsna?

A dark limping dot with a peacock tail.



Five More Minutes

Emma Hastie

The spurious idea of sun,
crawls across the blankets to slip
under eyelids.

Birtherd only by a wanton alarm and
a foolish notion of making it out of bed
before Eos plucks the moon from the sky
and cracks it across the horizon like an egg.

These eyes
will not be attending this morning's labour,
let the sanguine sky witness.
Miracles with spectators become happenstance.

Migration*Alex McCulloch*
~~~~~

**we come quickly, fleeing carnage, carrying father piggybacked  
 stop in Carthage for entertainment, destroy living rooms  
 then descend river, swirl down basin, finally fold  
 x over x  
 to me**

*i'd like to know more about my ancestry, i'd like to go there*

**we don't keep records**

**or tabs, preferring to buy and drink at home  
 we can safely avoid modern developments  
 pesky railroads and stopwatches  
 we become glass blowers,  
 real estate developers  
 (or land-thieves,  
 however you like)**

*don't you know why there are so many of us here?*

**then booze smugglers, horse thieves and, later,  
 warriors wrung out in medic tents, damming blood  
 veterans, limping 'round the cottage  
 cripples staring at stolen bayonet with sad eyes**

*because there is nothing there*

**drunks  
 degenerates**

**literates of half-baked culture here  
 where we have no taste for history or even myth  
 ghost trappers half-hearing dead language  
 magicians at making the tock tick 'till 5**

*what you long for is nothing but marshes and flat air*

**he waits for my laugh to drop shiny needles onto silver sheet  
 but it falls out dull horseshoe onto yellow dirt**

## **timejumps and the things that changed**

*Isaure Vorstman*

the dewy sun is on her way and without even trying  
I jump seven miles and seven Mays and find myself a  
Friday evening; just beginning; barely winning—no more  
beer stains on my shirt—and I could live life differently

they scratch my crumpled back pains; I stay for  
days and days and days and days

I could live my life differently

It whines and whines and whines and there's a weird-sick  
frozen bird stuck in the mushy snow that I unstick out slowly, see, for  
weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks;  
it turns out he was there for me

There are no words that I should cut because these are the things  
I say too much, and if I don't make sense and if the wind's  
too chilly-cold you'll have to come a little closer; and I'll speak  
a little louder; and I'll speak until I translate all the words  
they use today, but that would tire us so we will

sleep for days and days and

shout and I'm an inch away from out of  
breath and yet I send my shrivelled stories  
into a world of homesick people; letters  
on their window-panes

(I was too scared to develop  
I was too blunt to hold back and so  
I sent the messy essay—  
all my poems on the subway

it's not so that I'm not so sure it's so that I'm a lot less scared)

## Beer Run

*Robert Di Pardo, UC 2012*

---

The body shop had as much business as it could handle in those days. That's why I wasn't worried when, a few days after his hernia operation, Dad told us he was quitting. But Mom had already seen the writing on the wall, and as usual she kept it to herself. The same morning as Dad's announcement, she asked him to drive me to work. Anything to get him out of the house. He agreed.

Snow blew across the road in swirls of sandy beads. Nothing was said until we came to the street that slopes down at nearly 45 degrees into the centre of town, where the tall front windows of the supermarket stood grey against the drifting white. By then all I wanted was to get out and walk, so when Dad swung the car to the right I cried out loud enough to make him slow down and look at me through the huge glasses he only wore when driving. I felt his eyes on me as he pulled up in front of the body shop. He could've found his way there blindfolded. He took the keys out of the ignition and said he'd only be a minute. I looked at my watch, then out the passenger window.

Pressing his nose to the glass door of the office, Dad cupped his hands around his face. I watched him swivel left, then right, trying to see through the shut blinds. A cloud of steamy breath surrounded his head while he fumbled for the office key. He found it. When the door didn't open, he let out an even bigger cloud of steam. He tried the key again, and when the door still wouldn't open, he kicked it. The plate glass window quivered; in the trembling reflection I looked like the driver.

Dad came back to the car. The radio came alive with the engine. I remember staring at the gearshift, thinking he was about to take us head-long into the plate glass. His hand shook as he put the car in reverse.

Our next stop was the liquor store. He parked and I remember seeing the store's only customer, a shrivelled old woman with a rope of braided grey hair swinging behind her knees. She approached the solitary cashier with a huge bottle of vodka in her trembling withered arms, paddling the bottle through the air in front of her as if she were on a raft in shallow stream. She kept on paddling until, and even after, the cashier took the bottle from her hands.

"I'm going in," Dad said, his seatbelt already unfastened.

That same morning I had watched him knock three codeine tablets from the bottle and swallow them without water. "You could die," I said. And that was when he said it, in three words that I might've missed if I hadn't switched off the radio just then, because that was the day Dad started mumbling: "I don't care," he said and got out, leaving the engine running and the door hanging open to the blowing snow.

## **I Don't Change My Sheets**

*Rachel Evangeline Chiong*

---

Every night I carve a valley in my pillow  
so pools of overflowing dreams  
can trickle from my earlobes to its seams

Because some nights,

ghosts slip the pillow case off  
tie it at the cuff  
bloated burlap sack

The masked memory hoarders  
sling it over their shoulders  
and find a corner to store them.

I know I shouldn't let them steal,  
but just because I dreamed it,  
doesn't mean I want to keep it.





**Unripe**  
Ink and pen on paper  
*Nikki Watson*

## Degeneration

*Rachel Fagan, UC 2015*

---

The day that I graduated from my creative writing program, I bought myself a brand new set of fountain pens, complete with a pot of ink. They came nestled in a white box stamped with a gold emblem and lined with black felt. There were three pens: one red, one blue, and one black. All beautifully marbled, their tips clean and silver and sharp. Beside them lay the glass ink pot, stout and sealed with a cork. I placed the box carefully on my rickety, hand-me-down IKEA desk, picturing myself sitting there for hours, scribbling my first novel, my big break.

My desk sits in the nicest corner of my bachelor apartment, the only corner with a window. The window faces east, and the morning light shines through the cracks and dances across my desk in fragmented shards. I sit here early morning, every morning, to write before I head to my retail job, helping old women pick out floral napkins and thick terrycloth bathrobes, nodding as they complain about the rising prices of monogrammed towels.

It is morning now, 7 am, just enough time for an hour at my desk before I have to brave the mad dash of rush hour transit. My fingers itch to try out my new pens.

I switch the radio on as I boil water for coffee.

“Millennials: they don’t want to work! What a generation of slackers could do to our economy, coming up after this commercial break.”

I switch the radio off.

Still groggy, but armed with a steaming mug of black coffee and the inspiration of a new, school-free day, I pick up the black pen and unscrew its body. I remove the ink cartridge and—very carefully—uncork my bottle of black ink. For a moment, I stare into the bottle. It is the blackest black I’ve ever seen. It’s almost unnerving, the permanency of its darkness. With shaking hands, I fill the ink cartridge, return it to the body of the pen, screw the pieces back together, and recork the ink bottle. I manage to get only one drop of ink on myself in the process. Satisfied, I open my brand new notebook, with its thick pages and leather cover. I have other notebooks. Notebooks that are barely written in, notebooks that are only half full. But this is a new start. I’m going to be a real writer now. And for that I need fresh equipment.

The scratching of my silver-tipped fountain pen on this rich paper is soothing and I pour my words out onto the page, imagining all the generations of writers before me, their small, cold apartments, their meagre meals, and their eventual success.

Lost in my fantasy, hypnotized by the *scratch scratch* of pen against paper, I don’t notice the leak until it has made a significant stain on my

desk. I grab the closest towel but the black ink has already started to seep into the cheap fibreboard. I do what I can with warm, soapy water but in the end my desk has a large Rorschach stain. My black pen lies limp: apologetic and sheepish. I pick it up, examine it. A long crack runs along the length of the marbled black, the remaining ink still seeping through. It must have cracked in the box on my way home. I thought I was so careful.



In the evening I visit Sarah at her west end apartment, a three bedroom shared by four people. Sarah sleeps on a pullout couch in the living room. She does this in exchange for a small square of living room to call her own, right next to the large window that overlooks High Park. She has sectioned this square off with clothes racks hung with curtains and she has set up all her easels and her paints. “None of the bedrooms have any natural light!” she always says. “I don’t need a bedroom, or even a home. I just need a studio.”

We sit cross-legged on the couch, facing each other, drinking mugs full of cheap wine. On TV, a pudgy, middle-aged man wearing a tweed tie and small, round glasses whines about his upscale Yorkville gallery going out of business,

“It’s this younger generation. They just don’t care about the arts anymore.”

The man’s hair is slicked back in an obvious comb-over. A bead of sweat hangs at the end of his nose. He sneezes and the sweat flies towards the camera, landing gracefully on the lens. For a moment, the man is distorted as I watch him through the droplet. But then a slight jump on the screen and the camera has changed.

“All my paints have dried up,” Sarah says. She had recently finished an art degree and is trying, without much success, to get a gallery show. Her paintings often feature disembodied limbs floating in vast expanses of darkness.

“Just look at this!” Sarah walks the four steps to her studio, throws open a curtain, and bangs her fist on a table covered with dusty-looking pots of paint, dried to the consistency of chalk. At the impact of Sarah’s fist, a fine layer of powder explodes from the pots and encircles us, leaving my skin dull and cakey for the rest of the night.



While I wait for the coffee to brew, I examine the red pen. I turn it all around, run my hands over it. No cracks. I’ve woken up late, head still pounding from the mugs of wine Sarah and I drank for dinner last night, but I’m determined to finish writing this story. This might be the one.

This time, I barely have a sentence written before my hand is covered in black. The ink spreads quickly—my hands, my desk, the floor. When it’s

time to leave for work, I'm left staring at an ink blot the size of a cat on the wooden floor under my window. There goes my safety deposit money.

Luckily, as I sprint into the subway station, my train is sitting on the platform, chiming its closing door warning. I run for it, almost bumping into a young man standing in the middle of the platform, crying. A large, expensive-looking camera hangs around his neck, its bottom sprung open. A long spool of film is in the process of unravelling at his feet.

"I don't know what happened..." I hear him sob to no one in particular as I slide between the closing doors of my subway.

On the train, I try to distract myself from the elbows and knapsacks and purses that jab into my ribs by reading the advertisements on the walls of the subway. There is a neon yellow ad directly in my line of sight. On it is the cover of a book: a middle-aged woman wearing an apron and holding a pie. At her feet sits a teenage girl, staring up at the woman as if in a trance. The pie-bearing woman looks out at me with a plastic smile. In big red letters, the cover reads, *The Mom Cure: How to break your millennial of their bad habits... before it's too late!!!* And underneath, in slightly smaller, black letters: Dr. Marsha Mckenzie, PhD.

Come lunchtime, I realize my packed lunch is still sitting in my fridge at home. I check the balance in my chequing account and then rummage in purse for a stick of gum. I pretend not to notice my manager eyeing the runs in my stocking as I walk back out onto the floor, bracing myself for the irate-looking customer making a beeline towards me.



On my day off, I wander through Kensington Market, inhaling the aromas of fresh bread I can't afford and perusing racks of high-end thrift store clothing that, even if I could afford, I would never have the confidence to wear. In *Courage My Love* I see the clerk watching me so I settle on a beautiful pair of turtle-shaped buttons I will never use and I hand the cashier my credit card.

Outside, I shell out the rest of my change for an overpriced ice cream cone and stop to watch a busker play guitar. He's cute, about my age. Two studded eyebrow rings adorn his pale blue-green eyes. I watch him and I watch the passersby: the punks, the pot smokers, the hipsters, the tourists. He plays and sings into his portable amp, sometimes soft and bluesy, sometimes harder and faster. I watch people bustling by on their way to somewhere else. Nobody stops. And then, with a twang, a guitar string breaks. And then another, and another, until all six strings poke out sharply from the guitar. The busker stands there, surprised, unsure of what to do. A middle-aged woman walks by and mumbles something about noise pollution. A group of children run by laughing and screeching. An older couple walk by, holding hands. No one seems to notice the busker standing there with his broken guitar. He stares at the strings in

disbelief and then slowly bends down, opens his guitar case, and gently tucks his guitar in, as if putting a child to bed. As he snaps the case shut and swings the strap over his shoulder I can hear the faint jangle of a few coins. The busker pauses one last time, then shakes his head, picks up his amp, and walks off quietly.



“Yes, umm... there’s something wrong with these pens I bought here.”

I show her the cracked, broken pens and the crumpled receipt. The cashier, I notice, isn’t old but she isn’t young either. Her hair is bleached blonde but I can see by her partially grown-out roots that she is starting to grey. She, like the other employees, sports a paint-covered smock.

“You know, fountain pens are beautiful instruments. You have to take care of them. If you leave them lying around on the floor and step on them it’s not our fault.”

I stare back at her, trying not to look guilty as I meet her critical gaze.

“Um... so there’s... you can’t fix them?”

“We’re an art supply store,” she says. As if that answers my question. “We do have this other set in, and it’s on sale, if you’d like to *ahem* try it again.”

She points, and I direct my eyes along her slender arm, delicate hands, and long, red nails to a shelf that says *Fountain Pens 20% off! Only \$49.99!*

“Oh, maybe next time,” I mumble. I grab a pack of black Bic pens. “I’ll just take these for now.”

The machine beeps as she punches in \$3.99 and I hand her my credit card.



“Why don’t you move home?” my mother had said over our last family dinner.

“Lots of millennials are doing it now,” my father had said, through a mouthful of mashed potatoes.

Remembering that dinner table now, my mouth waters. I haven’t eaten like that in weeks. And it was true, I had seen the articles. More and more millennials live at home now: *Lazy, Not Good With Money, Avocado Toast-Eating Millennials live at home well into their 20s!*

Tonight, I was eating dinner alone in front of the TV with instant noodles and a vitamin C pill as I watched local news.

“Millennials, the selfish generation. What this means for our children’s futures, coming up next.”

My phone buzzed. Millie’s voice was so hushed I had to mute the TV and even then I could barely hear her.

“I was just practicing on my mannequin head, just a simple blow out and some curls. You know, just so as not to get rusty, I might have an interview coming up soon. But... well... the fuse blew I guess. I only had

the blow dryer plugged in. Electricity shot up the cord. The whole thing is melted. I can't turn my power back on. I don't know what to do. I'm three days late on rent already."

I bring over a box of candles and we sit in the dark, candlelight licking our faces, reading an old pack of tarot cards. On my turn, I pull The Moon, the Two of Pentacles, and the Five of Wands. When I leave, Millie has fallen asleep on the couch. I blow out the candles, cover her with a blanket, and close the door softly behind me.



7 am I cover my floor and desk in a generous layer of paper towels and sit down to write. The blue pen is still nestled sleepily in its felt, undisturbed. I pick it up and gingerly begin to unscrew its body. It crumbles in my hands. Dust. I pick up the paper towels and shake them vigorously out the window, remember to grab my lunch, and check my mail on my way out the door. In my mailbox is a congratulatory letter from my student loans officer—*So happy you've finally graduated! Your first payment is due on the 8th*—and a notice from my landlord—*In accordance with the Landlord and Tenant Board, there will be a 1.8% increase in rent.*

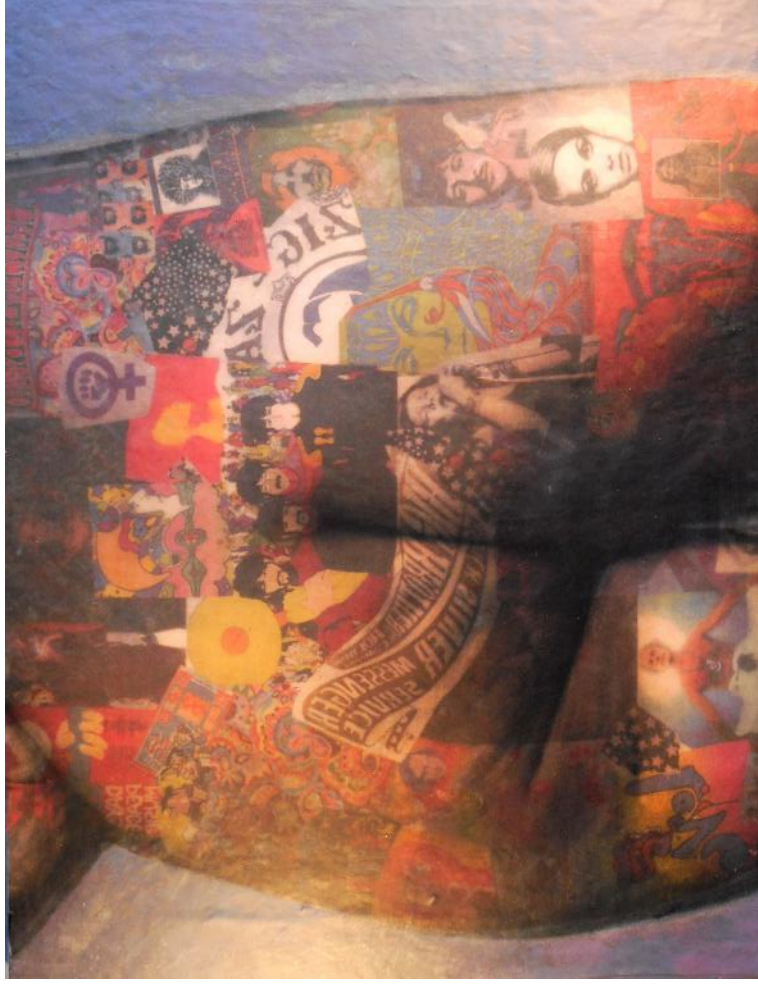
On my way home from work I stop to pick up as many cardboard boxes as I can carry. I call my mom and tell her I'll be home for dinner tomorrow. The bed frame comes with the apartment, and I can't bear to take my ink-stained desk, so this life fits neatly into boxes. Books in one, pots and pans in another, clothes in another, posters and pictures in yet another. There isn't much you can fit into a tiny bachelor apartment anyway. All that's left to pack is my writing supplies. The stacks of notebooks and scraps of paper and inspirational quotes and pens and pencils and hopes. And the white box with its gold emblem and black felt, empty except for the small, stout ink pot. I don't want this, this reminder. I pick up the white box to throw in the trash and as I do the ink pot comes unstuck and falls heavily onto the desk. The glass smashes.

A tidal wave of ink crashes out. It roars over my desk, covering the months-worth of writing in the scattered half-full notebooks and hastily scribbled post-it notes. It washes over the stained floor of my soon-to-be old apartment and seeps into the creaky wooden boards. It splashes up and over the cardboard boxes marked kitchen and bedding and books, splattering the cupboards and walls and window, and cascades over me, standing in the middle of it all.

When it is over, I rub the ink out of my eyes and look around. Everything is bright red.



**Looking behind to the '60s**  
Acrylic; painted collage  
and photo transfer  
on wooden panel  
*Tomy Clark, UC 1991*





**Our Generation, Photograph, *Andrea Macanović***



## **Happiness Is**

*Shezanur Rahman*

---

Is it that little extra pump of hazelnut in your latte?  
Or trying eggplant with a hint of basil and some yerba maté?  
Maybe reading some extant ancient poetry?  
Is it avoiding a trip to the notary?  
Or doing something fun, like going out for drinks?  
I think nothing beats lazy Sundays in.

It could be just going out tonight.  
Tightly holding on to friends  
Ending a day with a smile  
I cherish all my moments

I'll welcome back your closeness  
Glad to call you a friend of mine  
Forgiveness, making amends.  
Happiness isn't that hard to find.

END OF FILM

PLEASE REWIND

**UNDERGRADUATES****Kelly Aiello—3rd Year | Neuroscience, Psychology, English | Woodsworth College**

Kelly's work has appeared in *The Varsity*, *The Mighty*, *Story Blazer*, *Minds Matter Magazine*, and the *UC Review*. She is currently working on her first novel.

**Laibah Ashfaq—2nd year | Immunology, Global Health | New College**

Laibah Ashfaq has many hobbies, from hopping from coffee shop to coffee shop in Toronto, to taking amateur photography pics from her iphone, she sometimes writes and draws on random post it notes and receipts when inspiration strikes. She hopes that her poem, "My Mother's Eyes" resonates with women of colour who feel confined in their predetermined roles in society, and hopes we can all break free of that together so our daughters don't feel the same way.

**Rachel Chen—4th Year | International Relations, English, History | Trinity College**

Rachel is a Chinese Canadian Texan that has been to China exactly one time so far. She is about to graduate from U of T and hopefully continue her pursuit of becoming a journalist; this is her first creative work ever to see publication.

**Rachel Evangeline Chiong—4th Year | Linguistics, Near and Middle Eastern Studies | University College**

Rachel Evangeline Chiong says hello to all the birds and squirrels in Queen's Park. She has served on the *UC Review* masthead as an editor for half of her undergrad, and she will miss everyone very much.

**Haley Dobbie—1st Year | Chemistry | University College**

Haley is a chemistry student who is enthusiastic about learning about all the little puzzle pieces that make up our universe. She likes to write poetry as a way of expressing her emotions, and loves getting lost in the rhythm of music.

**Brenda Gomes—2nd Year | Cell and Molecular Biology, Genome Biology | University College**

Brenda is a music photographer based in Toronto who isn't afraid to go beyond her comfort zone, dabbling in portraiture, travel, and landscape.

**Steven Han—2nd Year | Economics, Political Science | Woodsworth College**

Steven is a fan of W.B. Yeats, Philip Larkin, and Emily Dickinson. You can find him haunting the halls of Robarts trying to finish things he should have started long ago.

**Emma Hastie—2nd Year | Genome Biology, Fundamental Genetics and its Applications | Victoria College**

Emma Hastie is trying to decide whether she wants to be a mad scientist or a mad author, but is certain that the mad part must be included. She likes to write about everyday life, but while giving it the fantastical twist it deserves.



**Albert Hoang—4th Year | Cinema Studies, History, Political Science | University College**

Albert is a portrait photographer based in Toronto, Ontario, in love with people and places and how memory connects them together. He's typically found enjoying a nice huge bowl of soup. You can find more of his work on Instagram via @maywhales

**Ross Johnston—3rd Year | Political Science, Canadian Studies, Indigenous Studies | University College**

Ross Johnston was born and raised in Elliot Lake, Ontario. His writing is inspired by his life experiences in Northern Ontario, struggle with depression, and a rediscovery of his Abenaki heritage.

**mercedes killeen—5th Year | English, Book and Media Studies, Creative Expression and Society | Innis College**

mercedes killeen is a Toronto-based writer and student. Her chapbook of poetry, tulips, is available for purchase at [greyborders.com](http://greyborders.com).

**Andrea Macanović—4th year | Neuroscience, Linguistics | Victoria College**

Andrea can be found in line for coffee at various locations across campus, in a corner of the Robarts stacks or napping in the subway.

**Alex McCulloch—4th Year | English | Victoria College**

Alex McCulloch is a University of Toronto student and part-time poet. She performs regularly as a musician in her very own rock and roll band.

**Sana Mohtadi—1st Year | English | University College**

Sana Mohtadi was born and raised in Massachusetts. The Notes app on her phone is full of poems, unsent texts, grocery lists, and anagrams of professors' names.

**Patrick E. Morris—1st Year | Humanities | University College**

I write sporadically. But only when something in my life really pulls the wool over my eyes, really. I want to explain things without trying to understand them. So they speak for themselves, I guess.

**Aaron Ng—2nd Year | Rotman Commerce | University College**

Aaron Ng is a visual artist based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. His focus is to create images that provoke a strong emotional response in the viewer.

**Nisarg Patel—3rd Year | English Literature | St. Michael's College**

One of Nisarg's many fears include writing his own bio.

**Shania Perera—4th Year | English, Political Science | University College**

Shania is an editor at the *UC Gargoyle*. She writes sometimes and is doing her best.

**Emily Powers—3rd Year | English | Victoria College**

Emily Powers is a third year English student who loves pesto sauce.

**Shezanur Rahman—5th Year | Linguistics, Classical Civilizations, Philosophy | Woodsworth College**

Shez is, in alphabetical order, a barista, photographer, student, and writer. To that list, he's trying to get rid of student and replace it with classicist, linguist, mythologist, philosopher, theologian, and world traveler. He hopes one of those will have "expert," "master," or "professional" next to it one day.

**Lena Schloss—1st Year | Humanities | University College**

Lena Schloss is a poet and UC student from New York City. She's excited to not only work behind the scenes at the Review, but be featured in it as well.

**Avneet Sharma—3rd Year | English, Cinema Studies | Trinity College**

Avneet Sharma is a writer, cinephile, and occasional drag queen. On campus, he is the Avant-Garg Editor of the *UC Gargoyle* and a House Leader at the Trinity College Literary Institute. Avneet's biggest inspirations are J.D. Salinger, Greta Gerwig, and Katya Zamolodchikova.

**Kashi Syal—1st Year | English Literature, Sexual Diversity Studies | University College**

'90s Brit Baby born and raised in South West London. A lover of tea, early mornings, and big cities.

**Jean Claude Ting—5th year | Cognitive Science, Linguistics, Philosophy | Woodsworth College**

Jean Claude is not French and he continually has to explain that he is not French. He doesn't know whether "Jean" should be pronounced /dʒɔn/ or /ʒɑ/ or /dʒin/, so he just sometimes goes with "JC."

**Isaure Vorstman—1st Year | Humanities & History | University College**

Isaure is a Toronto-based Franco-Dutch writer, student and musician

**Stephanie Vrachidis—2nd Year | History, English, Book and Media Studies | Victoria College**

Stephanie has a passion for visual art and culture that has grown exponentially throughout the years. Drawing and painting allows for her to be creative, expressive, and tune into her inner self.

**Nikki Watson—2nd Year | English, Women and Gender Studies | Victoria College**

Nikki is interested in pulling from late 19th- and early 20th-century style illustration and re-working these techniques with a focus on organic imagery and inspiration from the current artist she admires. She hopes to centralize the process of making work as a feature just as important as the product.

**ALUMNI****Tony Clark—1991**

After graduating at U of T, I went on to receive my Teaching degree from Ottawa U, then on to work as an artist instructor with Seniors, designing Art programs in printmaking, painting and wood working for senior residents (some as old as 103) at The Perley & Rideau Veteran's Health Centre in Ottawa. At the same time, I continued practicing as an artist and exhibiting in Ottawa. My work accompanied the poems of Gwendolyn MacEwen (a once writer in residence at U of T), in *The Selected Gwendolyn MacEwen...* still painting, I now reside in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

**Robert Di Pardo—2012**

Robert Di Pardo studied English and Italian literature as a University College undergraduate. He completed his master's in English at Brock University. His academic writing has appeared in *Watermark* (California State University, Long Beach) as well as *IDIOM*. His creative writing has appeared in the *Hart House Review*, *Acta Victoriana*, and the (much-missed!) *Pilot Pocket Book*.

**Rachel Fagan—2015**

Rachel Fagan has a B.A. in English literature and classical civilizations from U of T and an M. Phil in children's literature from Trinity College Dublin. She also blogs, makes zines, and writes stories.

**Mark Halpern—1980**

Mark Halpern has practiced law in Tokyo since 1993 and began writing fiction in 2016. His story in this collection is an homage to the evolutionary theorist Richard Dawkins.

**Seo Eun Kim—2017**

Seo Eun Kim is a University of Toronto graduate born in South Korea and raised in Toronto. Having majored in Visual Arts and Cinema Studies, Seo Eun focuses on healing, rediscovery, and meaning-making processes.

**Norman Liu—1994**

Born in Montréal to immigrant parents, Norman Liu is half Chinese and half French. A translator and newly minted forest conservationist (Faculty of Forestry, UofT), he lives in Toronto. His poetry has appeared in *TOK Book 5* (Diaspora Dialogues & Zephyr Press, 2010) and *The Dry Wells of India: An Anthology Against Thirst* (1989). In this homage to his Chinese grandmother on her 100th birthday, the author gives triple allegiance: to the wrong surname, to a secret language, and to a generation that outwitted history at great cost.

**Yasmin McDowell—2017**

Yasmin is a recent political science and cinema graduate who loves ramen, film photography, and screenwriting (but mostly ramen).

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It goes without saying that the *Review* is indebted to the support of University College and its students. We are lucky to have such a vibrant literary and visual arts community at both our college and the university at large. Your talent is astonishing.

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**the king**, Photograph, *Kashi Syal*



