Vol. 1 - No. 2

Sept. 30, 2026

BookSmack!



Feature Author: *Charity*

Making publishing and writing accessible, one issue at a time!

Edited By A.k.R

Made in Canva

Book.Smack.

Truth and Reconciliation Day

This issue is being released on our National Truth and Reconciliation Day, which carries monumental weight and a continued responsibility that extends far beyond the 24 hours of Sept. 30th.

BookSmack encourages readers to look into TRC practices and how they can honour Indigenous people and their lands that we occupy through ongoing thought, actions, and accountability.

We extend a special thank you to our Indigenous contributors who not only helped bring this issue to life, but also their valuable discussions with BookSmack on the enormous amount of work needed to make the wider publishing world a safe and inclusive space for all writers. Every voice matters. Every child matters.



Letter from the Editor

After a brief hiatus, I'm so stoked to share another issue of BookSmack with the world!

A huge thank you to the people who submitted - both the new and returning contributors. I was delighted to see this many entries, even with minimal marketing for this issue. We wouldn't be here today without all of our amazing authors and supporters.

Just as last time, this literary magazine was made with the intention of making the literary world accessible and safe for all, to break down those barriers of perfectionism and elitism and exclusion to provide a chance to every writer from any background.

Wherever BookSmack heads, that mission will stay forever the same <3

Happy reading!

-A.K.R

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Feature Author

BookSmack! is very proud to announce that our feature author this issue is **Charity**, from Edmonton, AB! Charity submitted a total of six written pieces to BookSmack, each more inspiring and emotion-evoking than the last. Each work explored the complexities of being human, with particular emphasis on self-perception and relationships. We are thrilled to share Charity's extraordinary writings and artwork with you, and look forward to hopefully seeing much more of Charity's work in the future!

About Charity: "Storytelling is something I've held dear since childhood. I have written ever since I could. I fell in love with poetry for its playful lack of conformity. I believe some things cannot be conveyed to their truest emotional capacity in plain word, and poetry provides an excellent means for cognitive exploration and catharsis."

filial cannibalism by **Charity** (1/2)

growing pains:
your bodies
claustrophobic
cry for help.

lick your chops.
grovel, nurture, obey
sing your
neglected swan song.

hollow fingertips,
tracing bruises
and broken limbs.
breathlessness
imposing grin,
weeping broken skin.

terminal lucidity,
bid reincarnated sin.
optimistic and opportunistic,
glistening prospective kin

filial cannibalism by **Charity** (2/2)

conscienceless genesis;
costumed graciousness.
softened foe, comforted waste.
quiet apologetic homecoming

unborn, bore, and born all over again

flower dog by **Charity**



05 by **Charity**

it's your birthday

you sat alone with the flowers on the table
and ate bread while the flowers watched from their pot wishing
they could eat bread too

eat bread with you

i couldn't make it make sense if i tried, if i wanted to, and i don't
but happy birthday,

the flowers wish it too

i might see you on another plain, in the gaps between the hymns
and the flowers singing and
laughing and dancing with the breeze

or i might not, in that case, happy birthday,
the flowers wish it too.

phosphenes by **Charity**



hi baby! by **Charity**

sometimes dirty faces are hard to kiss,

but you're decorated enough to cling to.

i wonder if you even have a mouth at all,

because i can't keep my eyes off of yours.

don't worry, i'll still feed you,

because i can't fit my name into my own mouth.

the look in your eyes is screaming,

i hope you know nothing is more beautiful.

if you wanted we could live our lives,

over and over, in opposite directions.

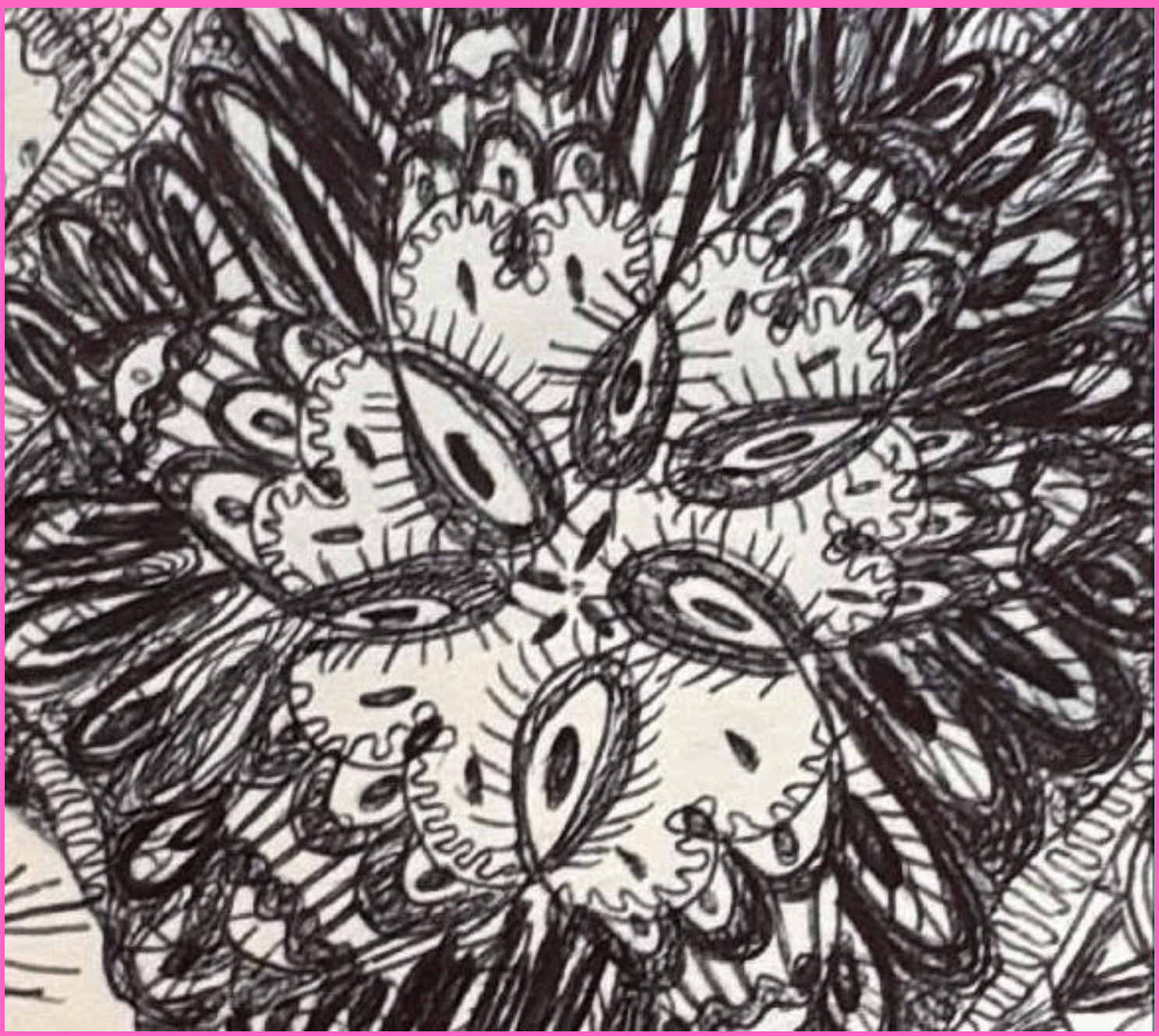
while i'm down here with you i wonder,

"would you still stand beside me?"

i'm starting to see in the dark and i wonder,

"why are we so horrified?"

looking out for you by **Charity**



sideways by **Charity** (1/2)

i mourn loss of
someone who i
know not of yet
yes, the future
will be promised,
for now, but
no, not forever.

i'll try to keep on
hoping for you,
but it's been
harder today,
and it will be
tomorrow too.

a lot of the time,
i feel the gap
inbetween the
dejected door
looking at me.

sideways by **Charity** (2/2)

the other day i stared
back at it so long
that the space grew
bigger, and bigger
and i felt smaller,
and smaller.

i am sad with the door
and i think maybe it's
because we're both
wishing you were
here.

pretty little friends by **Charity**



i feel like i've been here before by **Charity**

i missed you in memories,
sleeping on the cheeks of the shadows
staring in front of me on the sidewalks.

i see you when i see people and i see god,
please stop staring right back at me,
to imagine you is to feign everything.

i hear you, an echo reverberating against
these four walls, swallowing the sound,
i sleep in the idea that i cannot escape you.

deja vu by **Charity**



“god,” as an expression by **Charity** (1/2)

i'm going to live in your head
i'm going to eat you all up

you are my sunshine
my world

my baby
mine

i'm gonna gobble you all up
and hope that you save me

day walking coyote
you are my vampire

thank you for being my friend
because i want to be beautiful

thank you for thinking of you
do you see where i begin?

i speak into your open mouth
i knew you'd lead me in the right direction

what if i cut you open?
what would happen if i cut you open?

“god,” as an expression by **Charity** (2/2)

i want to eat flowers
to taste their skin

i want to infest you
you are my pig

my golden goose
i'm so fortunate to have you

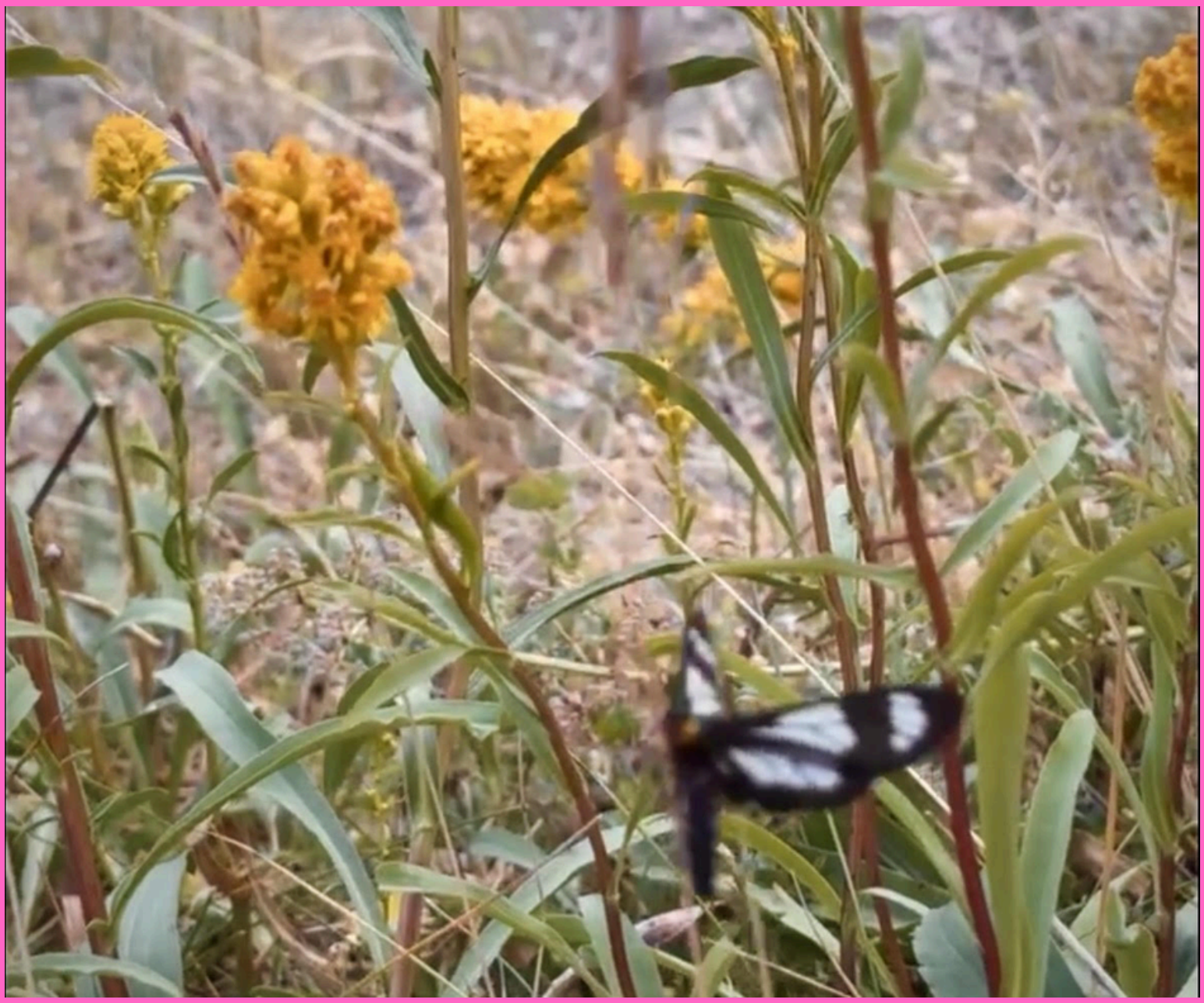
my darkest dream
you taste so sweet

i am a thing of nature
with eyes and teeth

adorn me in delicate petals
with heavy hands

cureless indecision?
i call you "play pretend"

crash landing by **Charity**



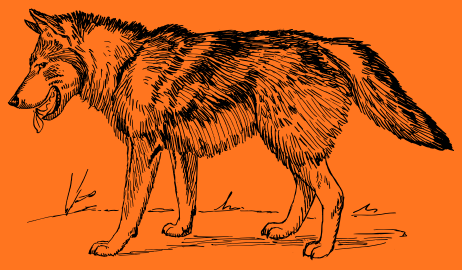
Foreigners by Sharon T.

The wolf crosses the road,
desperate to sink its teeth into something -
Someone, perhaps.

It stumbles across a White man,
screaming closely at a woman with sun-kissed skin
and a long, rich, black braid - "*foreigner!!*"

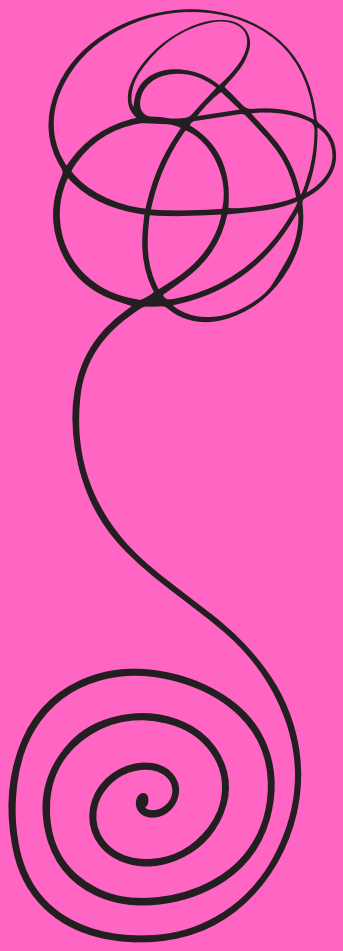
The wolf thinks to intervene,
remind the man that this woman
looks more like the people of this land
than he does - has just as "little right" as he does.

Instead, he returns to his pack,
silencing his hunger;
there is enough bloodshed here.



Sharon T. is an Indigenous advocate and writer. Her works touch on intergenerational trauma and what it means to be outcast in a land that your ancestors always called home.

Countdown by Sandy D.

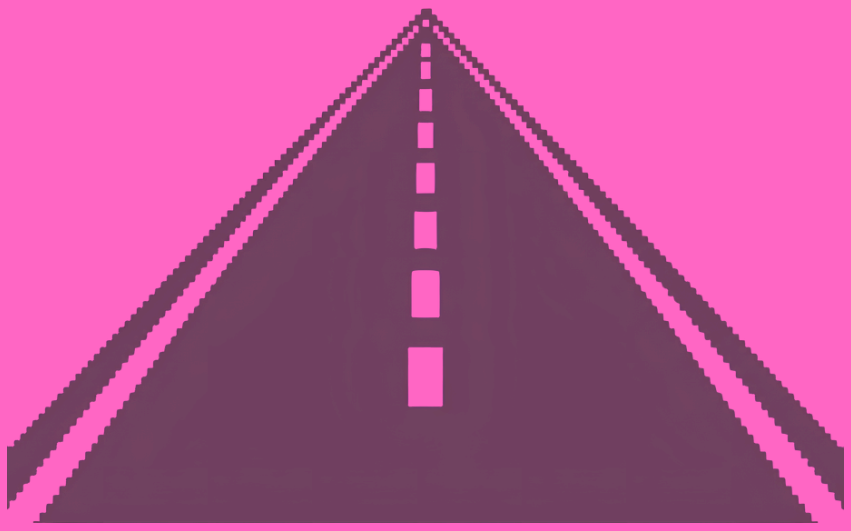


5: your eyes
your hair
the colour red
your furrowed brow
the empty seat
4: my lonely hands
heartache
numbness
the empty seat
3: your laugh
your sadness
your heartbeat
2: your cologne
our handsoap
1: ***you.***

Sandy D. is an MSc student in Edmonton who loves writing, self-help books, dogs, and watching too much TV.

Eyes Ahead by Julia W.

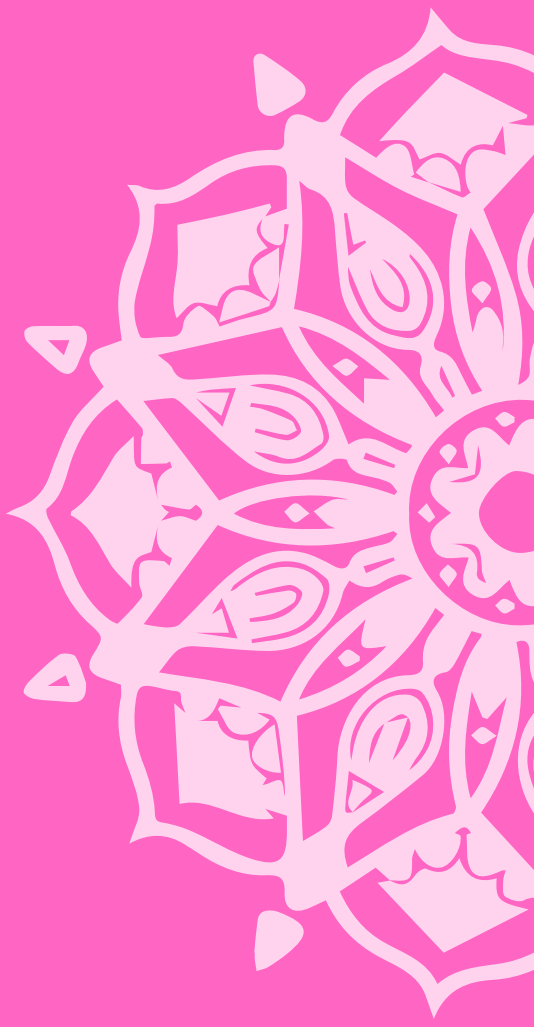
It’s actually not that hard for me - *grief*.
The trick is to
just *never* look
at the spot
they used to sit
or the place
they used to work -
just keep your
eyes ahead
even as the tears pour out.



Julia W. is a part-time BA student and a full-time mom. She loves reading poetry and tries writing it sometimes.

Take A Joke! by P.V.

You share glances at each other
while I open my lunch in the staff room;
You smirk as I speak in another tongue
to my aging mother on my break;
You send me videos
that incite South Asian hate,
laughing as I squirm.
"Oh, c'mon, take a joke!"



It is funny, I suppose.
How you go to yoga,
and you wear our fashion,
and you suggest the great Indian buffet
for our staff dinner.

The same joke you've been telling for centuries now,
about everyone else.
It never ceases to be funny, does it?

P.V. is a South Asian scholar by day and fantasy writer by night. He has been writing since he was 12 years old and, decades later, still finds it to be his favourite mode of thinking and healing.

***PSA* by Narissa L.**

Every Child Matters.

That’s it. That’s the f***ing poem.



Narissa L. doesn’t consider herself to be a writer. She likes to jot down her thoughts - sometimes they resonate with people, sometimes they don’t. She is, however, an excellent baker, and that is a fact.

Fragrant Fragments by Ashlee K.



I don't think about her anymore.
Never ever ever never -
EXCEPT
When I smell fresh alfredo, like she made for me.
or OR someone uses the same laundry detergent
OR or the store sells the perfume she sprayed on her neck
just for me to smell. to taste.
I think of her when I least expect it,
often when I least want to.

I think of her everyday it seems,
finding her in every mundane scent
desperate to relive those
fragrant fragments of us.

Ashlee K. is a writer who recently traded the Alberta winters for rainy days in BC. After finishing her Master's in Creative Writing soon, she hopes to move back to Edmonton and promote her newly finished fantasy novel.

A Kiss is a Kiss by Mark G.



A kiss is just a kiss,
unless you are you,
And I am me.

Then, a kiss is a spectacle
a dangerous agenda
an abomination
something perverse and contagious and ungodly.

Perhaps they're right - a kiss is not just a kiss.
Because when it's you and I,
a kiss is absolving and healing and affirming all at once.

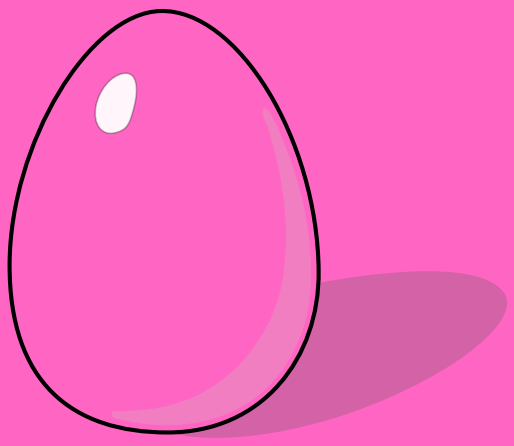
I wish they knew,
there's not a drop of sin
in the taste of me and you.

Mark G. is a gay writer and dedicated activist for queer rights in Canada. He specializes in writing content for and about queer communities. He lives with his partner, their son, three cats, and two dogs.

A Silly Egg Story by Jordan C.

Once upon a time I had an egg.
I bought it all the way from the market, put it in my fridge.
It spent a whole two days there.

I felt no strong love or hate for this egg.

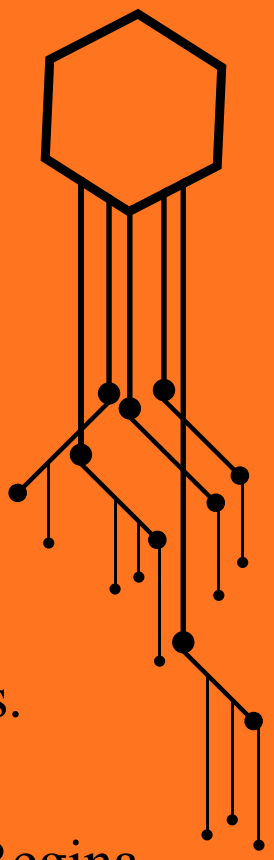


Then one day I got hungry.
I fried up the egg and ate it.
It was scrumptious.

That's it - that's the story.
Sometimes there's not really much else.
Except your hunger and the cracking of
an egg
that you took in but neither loved or hated.

Jordan C. is a Nova Scotian who loves the ocean, library ladders, and the talking candelabra from Beauty and the Beast. If they're not writing, they're usually performing improv somewhere over yonder.

Prompting by Sean C.



Please create a photo of an Indigenous man.

No, that's too stereotypical.

An image of a modern Indigenous man, please.

No. He is not a Chief or out in the wilderness.

An image of a modern Indigenous man, living in Regina, wearing jeans and a black T-Shirt.

Why are there animals riding the bus in the back??

Use this image of me for reference.

Annndddd... we're back to square one.

Sean C. is a Cree writer, artist, and AI cautionist currently residing in Regina. He enjoys playing with different forms of writing and creating immersive experiences that explore Indigenous identity and healing.

Let's Make It Simple by Bella W.



Everyone thinks relationships are complicated, that love is difficult. But it's not, really. Or at least, it doesn't have to be.

I see love around me every day. It's in the way the clouds stretch their fingers in the sky, the way water soaks into my flower's roots, the way my barista smiles as they hand me my order.

It's in the way my friends send me silly reels, the way my mom always buys strawberries just for me, the way my professors send smiley faces in their emails.

It's in the way I smile at strangers, the way we hold doors for others, the way we care so passionately about topics.

Love isn't a big declaration - it's a small series of kind gestures that say "*I'm here. I see you. I care.*"
So, let's stop romanticizing some hard version of love; instead, let's make it simple. As it always should be.

Bella W. is a Vancouver-based creator who finds inspiration in everyday living. She's also a huge Western movie buff!

I Did Try by Raine S.

She told me I was never present,
that we were never really compatible,
that I didn't know the lyrics to any of her favourite songs
while she had memorized all of mine.

She was right - I could never get the lyrics right,
so I told her I was sorry
and we said goodbye.



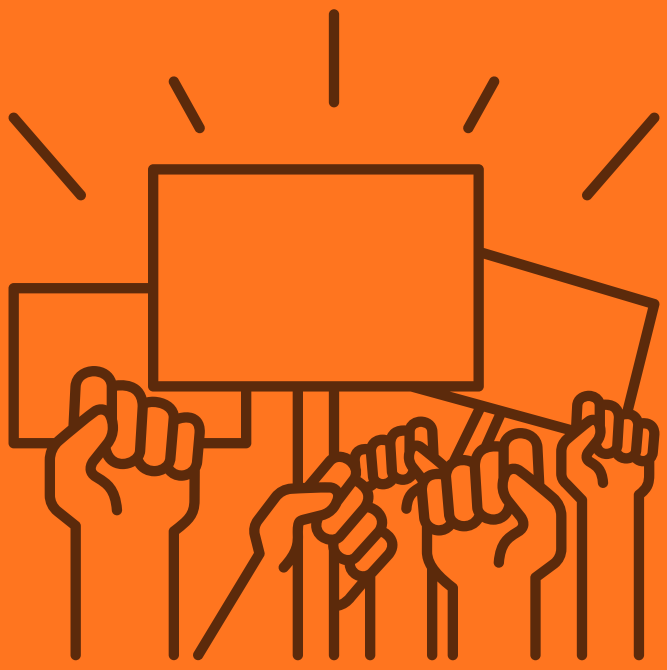
I didn't know how to tell her
that I listened to her favourite album every morning
on my drive to work
I'd get her favourite drink
I'd watch her favourite movies
I'd make fan art of her favourite game characters.

So, yes, I never did get the lyrics right,
but I swear I did try.

Raine S. is a part-time Edmontonian, spending her days studying here and her nights calling back home. She enjoys writing about heartache and occasional happy endings.

We Won't Be Silent by George L.

Masked crusaders,
Tomb raiders,
Bone deniers,
starting fires.



Labelled drunk men,
Missing women,
Murdered children,
broken systems.

A loving home,
Wife to console,
Kids to hold,
lives untold.

We won't be silenced.
Between the violence,
and broken systems,
We can't be silent. ***We won't be silent.***

George L. is a devoted husband, proud father of three kids, and loyal Flames fan. At forty-three, he has recently turned to writing as a form of expression and resistance.

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Learn more about submitting at booksmack.ca/submissions

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