

Time and Place

a cultural quarterly



We are all of a particular time and place. The space we occupy influences who we are, what we think, how we act, re-act, and what we create. **Time and Place** is about capturing the creativity of a particular moment of the artist's life.

If you wish to contribute a piece to **TIME AND PLACE**:

There are no restrictions as to subject matter or content (the right not to accept a contribution is reserved, mind you.) Each contribution must have an accompanying paragraph detailing the significance of the time and place you were in when the piece was inspired, created, formed, birthed, or otherwise captured, along with a brief biography.

Copyright remains with the artist or writer.

Please send your submissions to ninthfloorpress@gmail.com

Please submit only one item for consideration. Multiple submissions will not be considered.

Contribution guidelines:

Writing: Words of any type (prose, poetry, fiction, non-fiction,) no more than 700.

Art: Acceptable formats are PC compatible (.tif, hi-res .jpg, .pdf, 300 dpi.)

Photography: Colour, Black and White (.tif, hi-res .jpg, .pdf, 300 dpi.)

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Smoker

Dad smoked inside, even in the summer. I sat beside the window on the blue couch that used to be in our family room. His only paperback protected my nose.

The windows stayed rolled up when he smoked in his truck. My little brother Evan and I listened to tapes while Dad went into the store for hard packs of Du Mauriers and cash from the ATM. He took us to the county fair for ice cream and stuffed animals won by rings around milk bottles.

I thought I did something wrong when I found Dad crying on the stairs. He kept saying, "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry," so I let him hold me. His tears soaked through my thin nightgown and it stuck to my shoulder. Evan was there and seeing Dad cry made him cry, too. I asked to go to bed as soon as they stopped. The front door clicked and smoke floated in through the open window.

Two weeks later we had a "family meeting". Four wooden chairs, Mom across from me, Dad across from Evan. We all had our hands on our laps. Mom said they were separating and asked if we knew what that meant. Evan said "No" and started crying because he thought we would be homeless. Then everyone started crying except for me. I had read every Babysitters Club book and knew what divorce was.

I wasn't supposed to be home while Dad packed. He cried again and gave me an extra-large t-shirt that wouldn't fit in his suitcase. It was black with an orange logo of a deep-sea diver.

I sat on the blue couch and watched him drive away before I put it on. I kept it under my pillow when Mom was around and I never showed Evan.

First, Dad moved to Grandma and Grandpa's. Grandpa sat red-faced in his La-Z-Boy and Grandma refilled wine glasses. When we stayed over, Dad slept on the couch and Evan and I shared the pull-out bed in the spare room. The computer hummed and I couldn't sleep next to the warm body of my little brother. Outside the window, Dad's silhouette under a streetlight halfway down the block.

Next, Dad moved in with friends I'd never met. The house and the kitchen were crooked and they barbecued a lot. An ashtray overflowed onto the broken picnic table. The only tree was dead on a square of brown grass.

Then Dad got a one-bedroom apartment in Burlington. The walls were painted grey and the plastic shower curtain was wrinkled. Stale beer smell from shoulder-to-shoulder cans on the coffee table. Dad asked me to get them from the fridge but never to clean them up. We always had spaghetti for dinner and the microwave made breakfast. I read *The Green Mile* six times that summer.

We went to Emma's Backporch in the afternoons. Dad got to smoke and drink beer on the patio; we got to eat peanuts and throw peanut shells on the ground. The bartenders slipped us change for pinball and I used my last quarter to call Mom. She wanted to talk to Dad but I couldn't find him. His truck wiggled across the yellow line on the way home. Next month, we waited by Mom's door with duffel bags Dad bought us at the mall. We waited and waited, then I heard her shouting into the phone. I felt relieved when she said he wasn't coming today.

It was snowing the next time we saw him. Dad's truck wouldn't start when he dropped us off. I invited him in to see the cat poster Mom's new friend gave me but he didn't want to. I found a cigarette butt can and we sat on the porch until the tow truck came.

New Year's Eve was Y2K. We had a party at Mom's and everyone waited to see if the world would end. Her new friend let me open the bottle of champagne. I thought I would get in trouble when the cork hit the ceiling, but everyone laughed. Mom's new friend wrote "2000" beside the dent. Mom wasn't mad, she just smiled at him with all of her teeth. Dad called right after midnight. I asked where he was on Christmas and threw the phone against the wall so hard it broke. Mom didn't notice until the next day.

For the next few years, my eyes were on the back door of the gym every time I graduated from something. Mom's new friend became my stepfather and he never said hi when I came home. I moved out as soon as I could.

I called my father when I turned 18. He had a new apartment in the east end. It still smelled like stale beer, with a ceiling stained yellow and a Ziploc bag of smokes from the reserve on the coffee table. We tried to do dinner with my grandparents but Grandma just cried the whole time. Evan stopped speaking to me.

Dad ended up in the psych ward at St. Joes when he got an eviction notice. I was the only person who came to see him locked in a room with a bed and a toilet. I spent the weekend in the waiting room while he slept it off. The nurses let me take him out the ER door to smoke.

A phone call woke me up one morning. I heard wind rushing. Dad told me he was on the roof of his building and he was ready to jump. The blood drained from my head and I felt dizzy driving to the east end. My face turned white and I stopped twice to throw up. I tried to light a cigarette but my hands were shaking.

I have lived in the same apartment on Locke South for six years and watch the sons of my neighbours grow as I drive through their road hockey games. I wrote this one day after they moved the net for me. As I passed, one of them yelled, "Smoking is bad for you!" and I realized I forgot to hide my cigarette.

Kristen Lee Conrad is an emerging creative writer in Hamilton. Her first piece of poetry is being published this spring in the third issue of Sorry Zine (extremenonchalance.com/SORRYzine) and will be reading at the June 5th LitLive event in Hamilton. She is also a published music journalist and columnist for 102.1 The Edge

Nancy Benoy

Connected



Pools of phthalo blue colliding with ivory black, a dash of crimson, layered above and below, creating new colours that are invigorating and are mine. Light washes of colours overlapped with intense ones' delight. Pastels on first, resisting the paint, coarse sea salt sprinkled upon wet payne's gray absorbing the paint, creating a night sky. Blotting with a paper towel, pulling out those soft clouds, are all oh so satisfying. Pen on top, adding details, trying to make sense of it all. Painting with watercolours allows so much room for discovery, and sublet nuances that comes with experimenting. The colours and form that surface below and above one another, delve me deeper into the process of painting.

Nancy Benoy is a Hamilton, Ontario artist, whose work has been shown in local gallery spaces, cafes, and her home studio. She is immersed in the Hamilton art scene in Hamilton and participates any chance she can get, from Art Crawl, art openings, artists talks, performance pieces and music.

When I was King of the Jungle

All the river beds are dry
No time to stop and wonder why
Circle of vultures is getting lower in the sky

Well the drought it never passed
First went the flowers and then the grass
Then the leaves on the trees 'til there was nothing left eat

Gone are the days when all the fat antelope would graze
And I would roar with joy, 'cause I was the King of the Jungle
What can you do but quench your thirst on the morning dew?
And hope one day you'll come roaring back as the King of the Jungle

We're all bound here to this earth
Gravity holds us to her girth
Meanwhile in the village, gone is the laughter and the mirth

The ones who walked on two feet
Always took more than they could eat
Their brains got too big – they thought they knew what they were doing

Gone are the days when all the fat antelope would graze
And I would roar with joy, 'cause I was the King of the Jungle
What can you do but quench your thirst on the morning dew?
And hope one day you'll come roaring back as the King of the Jungle

Now I stand here on this hill
The world around is deathly still
And I lay me down one last time as the King of the Jungle
And I lay me down one last time as the King of the Jungle

Long live the King of the Jungle!

Costa Rica, March, 2016

Danny Medakovic is a singer/songwriter who lives with his family in Dundas. Danny's been writing and playing music for over 30 years.

Lonita

Lonita's out there again. Pushing that swing, just like in the early days.

That baby loved to swing. Always together at the park, laughing at the sky. Always with their backs turned to the apartment. Face the future, not the past, she would say. Face what's growing, not what's fading away.

She had a lot of darkness behind her, she did. Mostly in the form of men. They'd come and go through her life, like she had a window open that she just couldn't shut. They took what they found useful, took what they found beautiful, left the window open on their way out. One left the baby. Lonita never said who. No matter, she'd shrug. He's gone. The past goes away. That's what she used to say.

It was a wonder and a sorrow to watch that girl grow. Eyes like her mother's: wide open and laughing, a couple of windows on a beautiful soul. Like mother, like daughter. Always swinging. Always tilting backwards to look up smiling at the sky.

And then there was the accident. So-called. Nobody knew for sure, and nobody much wanted to ask. When the dark clouds gather, you go inside. Shut the windows to keep out the rain. Wait for it to pass. Lonita was the same. Shut up inside while the darkness passed. Looking out her windows, eyes up towards the sky. She had a lot of darkness to let pass.

Sometimes darkness doesn't pass. Sometimes it stops, settles itself like it has plans maybe to move in until things start looking better farther down the line. That summer she spent a lot of time inside, looking out at the park, waiting for the rain to stop. We never saw the baby.

She's out there now. I guess it's good she's back, laughing like her darkness has moved on. Shame about the baby, though.

Nobody around here is likely to forget that night. The darkness outside, the storm: lightning skittering like great silver birds; rain blurring our windows, pushing through the roof and staining our ceilings. And her, out in it. Sometimes the darkness comes in; sometimes it calls you out. This was one of those nights, I guess. And there's Lonita at the swing set, laughing and singing like the sky was blue and still and open like a baby's eye. Pushing that baby.

Well, pushing a swing.

The baby was there, but not there.

We knew everything was wrong, but we didn't want to know just how wrong. She held her arms stiff, bouncing the swing off her hands. No flow. Just a jolt that shook her arms, shook the baby. Sometimes the shudder came before the swing hit. Sometimes after. Thunder rolled in her arms.

Sometimes you just can't get involved. We didn't. Somebody called the fire department. There was no fire, of course: everything was too wet to burn. But we watched them wrap her in a blanket and hold her tight so those swinging arms couldn't move. Watched them pull something from the swing, wrap it tight, too.

Black blankets in the midnight rain. Darkness around darkness. She shuddered the whole time, still jolting in time with that empty swing. That was the worst part: her keeping carrying on.

Finally the wind stopped, and we could all get some sleep. Nobody knew enough to ask where they took her. Nobody cared enough to learn enough to ask.

Her apartment stood empty for months. Eventually men came with a truck, pried open the door, moved everything out. New people moved in. Just life, carrying on.

I bet they're wondering right now who that woman is, eyes open like windows, pushing that empty swing in the park, her back to the street and face to the sunset, singing her songs and laughing, calling out some little girl's name.

Me? I wish I didn't know. Shame about the baby, my wife says. Shame about Lonita, I reply. It's a conversation that wants to go somewhere, but nobody wants to go there with it. So it hangs around the house, a little bit of darkness in the corner of the evening. I close the binds. It doesn't help.

This piece was written all in one shot at eight in the evening on this past September 30th. It was a curious experience: one of those legendary “struck by lightning” moments every writer hopes for. I was making the kids’ beds. It was a Wednesday night. Life could not be more prosaic. And then the image of the woman pushing the empty swing in the storm. And then the voice of the man sitting at the table. I dropped the pillowcases and went to the computer. It was done 15 minutes later. I think there’s more. But I like that there’s not enough.

Tom Shea lives in Hamilton. He teaches English, Creative Writing, Guitar, and Recording Arts at Saltfleet high school. His creative energy is divided between writing words, writing music, and playing the guitar and bass.

Fehn Foss

Corners



These photographs are part of a project that was created for my most recent end of term series at school. It was created after a very long spell of the photographic equivalent of “writer’s block.” After two months of getting nowhere, I started finally photographing for this project in March - three weeks before it was due. Regardless of the rush to finish this project, it turned out really well and it allowed me to get out of a very uninspired rut. This project was taken in the spring of 2016 all around the nooks and crannies of Toronto. It speaks to the rhetoric of image-making and the how images need their own specific grammar and flow. Spacing was very key to how this project was presented. These two images are some of my favourites from the series and show how important light is to make the images visually worthwhile.

Fehn Foss is an interdisciplinary artist working in Hamilton, ON. She is currently finishing up a degree in Photography at Ryerson University.

fehnfoss.com

The Promise of Deserts

In Newfoundland we walk around St Johns, me looking for good coffee, Sophia looking for earrings for her cousin, Noel looking for a gift for someone but doesn't know what to get so in and out of souvenir shops we trudge me waiting and saying that would be good every time Noel holds up a snow shaker with a moose in it or a T shirt with a moose on it or a coffee mug with a... not recalling what he picks we are looking at ships from Signal Hill climbing on a cannon my knees weakening when the kids run near the edge, the view is fascinating and jets fly close to our heads because the airport is close by like everything is close here and the clouds are low and fog wraps around our legs, I suggest food but there is the argument to get through, I expect it but we gotta eat we end up at Subway watching a guy order seven subs all particularly different and I figure they are for him for each day of the week and he says he will eat one in the car and looks at me like he knows he's been fifteen minutes and I am hungry, yet I like the oddness of the situation perhaps just for when I write this now, he goes on his merry way and I ask the sub-maker is he a regular, "no, the first time I've ever seen him", the sub-maker is proud to have accommodated the 7 sub-man, he wipes his brow like a fist place winner...the holiday inn is just what it is and I can't think of why I would need ice and buy chips from the hallway alcove vending machine, make that 3 and I better ask what kind Sophia wants, I get that feeling I'm worrying again about pleasing everyone and shake my mind and push the numbers for cheese Doritos and think I can always eat them and run down the hall later in my pyjama pants even though I don't like being outside in those clothes, TV flutters in the room, the sheets are too crispy, Noel is kicking me and

if air circulation was a reality I'd sleep, sun rises and slices through that one crack in the triple thick drapes that help make the room a prison, breakfast in the hotel comes to fifty-three-dollars and twenty-six- cents I don't usually check bills yet wonder if Newfoundland has an extra moose tax or cod subsidy and I don't mention it to the freckled waitress who looks like there's someplace that she'd rather be and she has a smile that could be on a tourist guide, I vow to be careful at lunch which turns out worse in that respect another fifty or more for flat hamburgers in the darkest restaurant booth I've ever sat in with mirrors that make the washroom look like its over here and not over there, I pray I can get to the cafe we've passed seven times like a frustrating dream except I am not in my underwear, I muster up the demand to go for coffee with the promise of deserts and we get there and I get coffee and sit at a table outside, I begin to ponder living here maybe for a year because they need someone to write on cafe patios and sip coffee and look up once and a while and the sun actually comes out and my pondering strengthens and I say to the kids what do you think of this idea and I see they are fifty feet away in the little park, I tip my coffee back to finish though I want to stay when I hear a woman say something about rain before

I took Sophia and Noel to Newfoundland last summer. I wanted them to climb Gros Morne mountain and see a moose. We did both.

Jeff Griffiths lives in Hamilton and likes it. He raises two kids, teaches writing, plays drums, and writes and gets published once and a while.

John Kinsella

Clearing Storm



I started this painting in June last year and have just completed it. The theme is *Change, Transformation and Hope*. It was one of those magical moments when time seemed to stand still long enough to see the change and motion in everything around me. The storm is clearing as a band of clouds blow off revealing the clear sky and morning light. The season is on the cusp of change as summer slips into Autumn. A new day is dawning and the warmth of the sun rises over Lake of Two Rivers.

John Kinsella is a painter born in Hamilton, Ontario. He studied Art and Art History at McMaster University and Fine Art at Val de Loire, France. His work has been featured in many solo and group exhibitions in Hamilton, Dundas, Grimsby, Owen Sound, Toronto and Barcelona. He was a founding member of the artist's group The Contemporaries. He currently lives and works in Toronto, Ontario.

Poison Ivy

1989: Everything about you is bad-ass that year. For starters you ride a mountain bike. Not on the road, but in the woods. You have a boyfriend who smokes duMauriers; he swigs a breakfast beer before you head to the highest and most remote peak of the Niagara escarpment. There you ride over shaky bridges and along ledges that fall away as precipitously as the promises of dangerously bearded men under the age of 30. You ride hard and wild for, oh God, at least 20 minutes.

Someone's always got to pee. And it's going to be you with your untested city-girl bladder. The boyfriend points to a low-lying tent of shiny green in the privacy of shade. He grins. And before exposing your bottom to mother nature's botanical tickle, you send him a coy wink. And oh, he laughs. He laughs and laughs. Was ever a rebel more infatuated with a good girl, than he is with you?

Poison Ivy is your enemy.

You're working in a cubicle, wearing panty-hose in July, when the itching starts, as if someone rubbed kerosene into your most tender crevices, dropped a lit match and ran. So when an office-mate asks if you want to split her *Jenny Craig tagliatelle en olio for lunch, do a power walk and treat yourselves to a DQ blizzard*, you snap: I'd rather die!

At home, you submerge yourself in the hottest bath you can bear, so hot your endorphins start firing at levels that require a safe word. All those open pores are like the twitter-sphere – they over-share.

When you wake up the next morning your poison ivy's not just one locally tender area, but every possible tender area of the human anatomy. You are, in a word, treacly.

You recover; you dump the bad-ass boyfriend. (Okay he dumps you. By then poison ivy scars weave across your body as if a dying Sumerian wizard with ochre-dipped fingers drew them; during the lonely nights that follow, you trace them like a treasure map, a memento of being outdoors, searching for something bigger.)

Poison Ivy is still your enemy.

2004: you're in a marriage that fits as poorly as those panty hose whose crotch starts just above your knees. You get poison ivy from your dog.

The doctor offers Prednisone and you swallow it with a Cabernet chaser. The itch disappears fast, as if poison ivy couldn't be bothered buckling through your epidermis because you're so out of touch with that skin.

2014: You're a divorced woman wearing what can only be described as a lycra onesie. The new boyfriend has his tattooed calves and forearms bared to the elements, which means he's at higher risk while riding in the poison-ivy riddled forest. Or so you think.

But poison ivy really, really is *your* enemy.

You want to believe nature's loving, that the bitchiness of poison ivy is offset by the benevolence of another plant, a healing antidote. You do research, then forage. Blended jewelweed smells like a swamp smoothie. You spread the mashy pulp along your infected arms and for a moment, there is cooling relief. A week later, your suppurating skin is so weirdly colored the urgent care doctor won't come near you. "You have an advanced secondary infection," she says before writing you judgy prescriptions for antibiotics and corticosteroids.

The poison ivy scars on your forearms are fading when you arrive in Nepal to test your mountain bikes on real mountains. You're sitting on the edge of a terraced field in Bandipur, watching the Himalayas make a holographic panorama in the mist. The new boyfriend offers you a ring with a stone as blue as Manislu, the sky behind it, the wildflowers around you both. You're fused not just with him, but this place, the outside and its outsized joys.

Poison Ivy is your friend after all; it's taught you about the complexity of nature, crept under your skin, and finally left you alone and in love, resting the bare skin of your calves and knees and arms against the earth, the steel wool scrubbyness of weeds. Because there is no poison ivy in Nepal - not a single, glossy, mean-spirited leaf of it.

But, there are, as it turns out, ticks.

Hamilton, Ontario, 2016

Krista Foss' debut novel Smoke River (released by McClelland & Stewart in 2014) was shortlisted for the North American Hammett Prize for literary excellence in crime writing and won the Hamilton Literary Award. Her short fiction and essays have been published in several literary journals and she has twice been a finalist for The Journey Prize. She lives in Hamilton where she unsuccessfully avoids poison ivy.

PleasantLand

Walking all over the stones of the dead
A priest speaks a prayer above my head.
And I cried by the crypt of a long-gone man
I cried for the years gone by
And I saw The Light of the World - Amen.

Called out to court on a westbound train
I met German George - he acts like a king
His character won't break on my obvious confusion
We can both agree that polite words are the best.
I was dazzled in the sunlight - Danke Schoen.

I stood by a door
That was a thousand years old.
Felt the bricks and the bones
Of the stories I'd been told
Of when knights rode the land
And your Empire was gold...

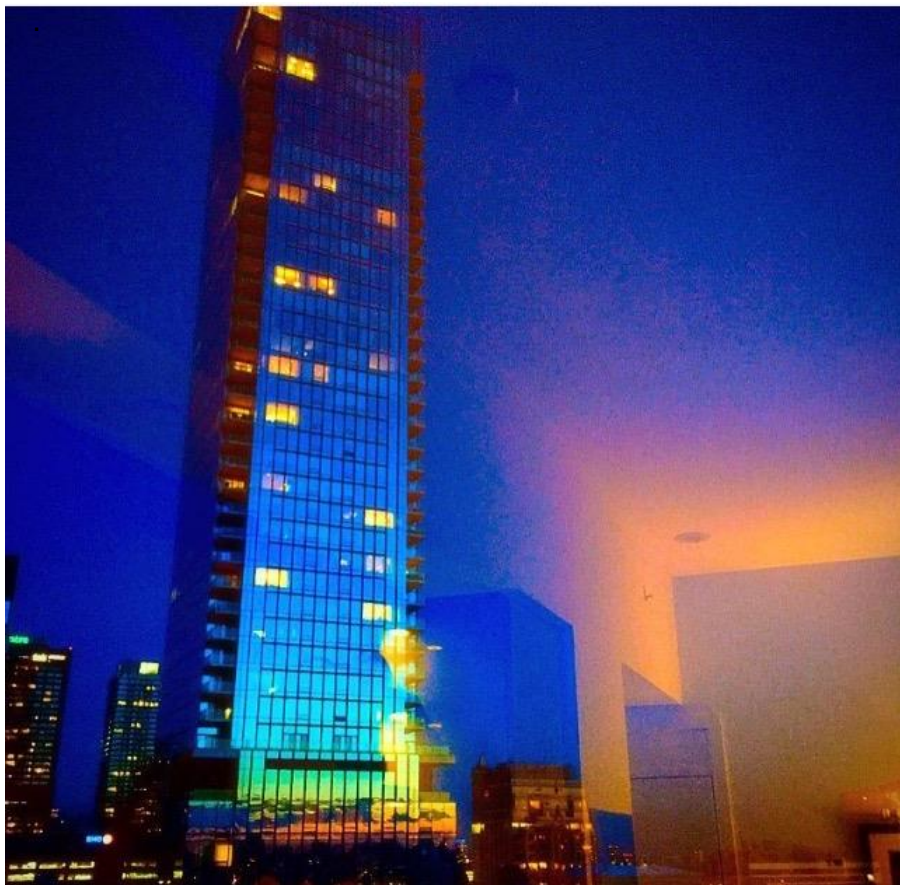
Sitting in the shade at the foot of Tower Bridge
Listening to La Piaf sing
A perfect morning, wandering.
Two rivers flow by, beside and above me
I heard your laughter in their voices.
You gave me the key to my heart - Thank you.
And I'll keep you here in my heart - Thank you.

I had always wanted to go to London, England. In May 2014, I did just that. Though nothing "earth-shattering" happened while I was there, my experiences added up to a change in my life's direction. Part of that shift in direction was a return to singing and song writing. This song is a result of that.

Elva Raymond is a somewhat hermit-y person. She loves music, art and words.

Linda Taillon

Dark Tower



This photo is part of an ongoing series of abstract photos of interesting architectural buildings in (for now) Toronto and Hamilton.

Linda Taillon is an artist, photographer, and improver who divides her time between Toronto and Dundas, Ontario.

Scenes from the Wrong Side of the Bar, #11

Sunday lunch, first nice day of the spring, Rugby Union on at the Rec: it is go time. Pub is packed with families, fans, and tourists. Locals are complaining about a lack of attention. Simple solution: ignore them some more.

1:20pm and the kitchen has taken 70 covers. The 150 pre-made baps (ham and cheese, cheese and pickle, cheese and onion) are gone. Another hour and forty minutes until the kitchen is closed. Work the tills to manage the kitchen: order on till one but don't ring it through. Take an order on till two. Don't ring it through. Dart back to till one and ring through the previous order. You may have to offer the odd table a complimentary bottle of wine but you can make that back another day. The system buys the kitchen a few precious minutes and, possibly, but not likely, one less plate thrown at your head when you dare enter their territory.

There are 6 real ales on line at noon: three are now down. Punters are not pleased. You need to leave the bar to change the casks. Two lines need proper cleaning; one can get away with a simple flush. You pride yourself on the quality of your ales. Your pub has developed a reputation as a place for a proper pint of ale. Despite the crowd, the cleaning schedule will be kept. Clean lines equal quality ales. Pass off the managing of the tills to Joel – Tom is too dopey to handle the task and Kate has already been commandeered into the kitchen.

Run down to the cellar: disconnect lines 1 (Bishop's Tipple), 4 (Directors), and 5 (Boddingtons). Place the lines in the large bucket with the hose turned on.

Don't forget the sump pump. Run up to the bar; draw the water through the lines. Run back down, check the chalkboard schedule you keep on the wall: Bishop's is ready to go. Reconnect the line and place the other two lines in bucket of cleaning solution. Turn off the sump pump. Run back up to the bar. Check on Joel: he is solid. Tom is clearing tables, trying to chat up a girl from Holland. Pull cleaning solution into lines 4 and 5 and let sit for 15 minutes before they can be flushed. Draw the Bishop's through line 1 and bring it back on line. Joel can keep managing the tills and serving the bar. Help Tom bus and clear tables for 15 minutes.

Run back down to cellar. Remove the lines from the cleaning solution. Place them in the large bucket with the running hose. Don't forget the sump pump. Run back up to the bar and flush the lines. You know the solution has been fully flushed when the water is no longer "slippery" – about 50 pulls a line. Some say it is excessive but better safe than sorry.

Final hour goes by in a flash. Last few patrons leave and you can close for the afternoon. You have run left, right, centre, up, down, ducked, dived, and dodged. Time for lunch and a rest. You will restock the fridges before re-opening at 7.

6:30pm. Time to restock the fridges. Go down to the cellar, open the door, step down and turn on the light.

You are knee deep in water.

You forgot the sump pump.

My wife and I went to England to help friends manage their pub, which lead to managing our own pub. I took notes. The names have been changed to protect the innocent and guilty alike.

Ed Shaw likes to write. He has published two volumes of poetry. He is slowly working on a compilation of stories about his time behind the bar of an English pub.

fortyteenyearold.com

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