

# **Time and Place**

**a cultural quarterly**



**Ninth Floor Press**

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](mailto:ninthfloorpress@gmail.com)

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.)

*Editor: Ed Shaw*

*Layout/Design: Nancy Benoy*

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## Scuff Marks

They sent me their canoe inside a moving van across  
two thousand miles of bush and the great Canadian Shield.  
No more journeys for them, my father dead, my mother frail,  
so I inherit the canoe with all its dreams of wilderness.

And on its first journey in Ontario  
on Rathburn Lake with the light just right and the sun so  
low,  
I look down, just in front of my seat,  
and I see the scuff marks of my father's feet.

Proof he left his mark in the place where I just sat.  
And it took me back to other marks my father left behind –  
that flinch in my left shoulder, guard my heart from those  
attacks  
launched across the dinner table – “Where'd you lose that  
2%?”

That man did more than any man for me.  
He said: “You want to enjoy your life, you'd better succeed.”  
His disappointment walked the stairs, and the stairs they  
creaked,  
and I feared the scuffling of my father's feet.

He brought more things to me than I can share in one short  
song,  
like generosity and an odd way to belong.  
Once he told me he was proud of me, I said “thank you,” so  
numb;  
no socket for that plug, just left to scuff the empty wall.

But he showed me things I treasure still –  
mountain vistas better than any pill.

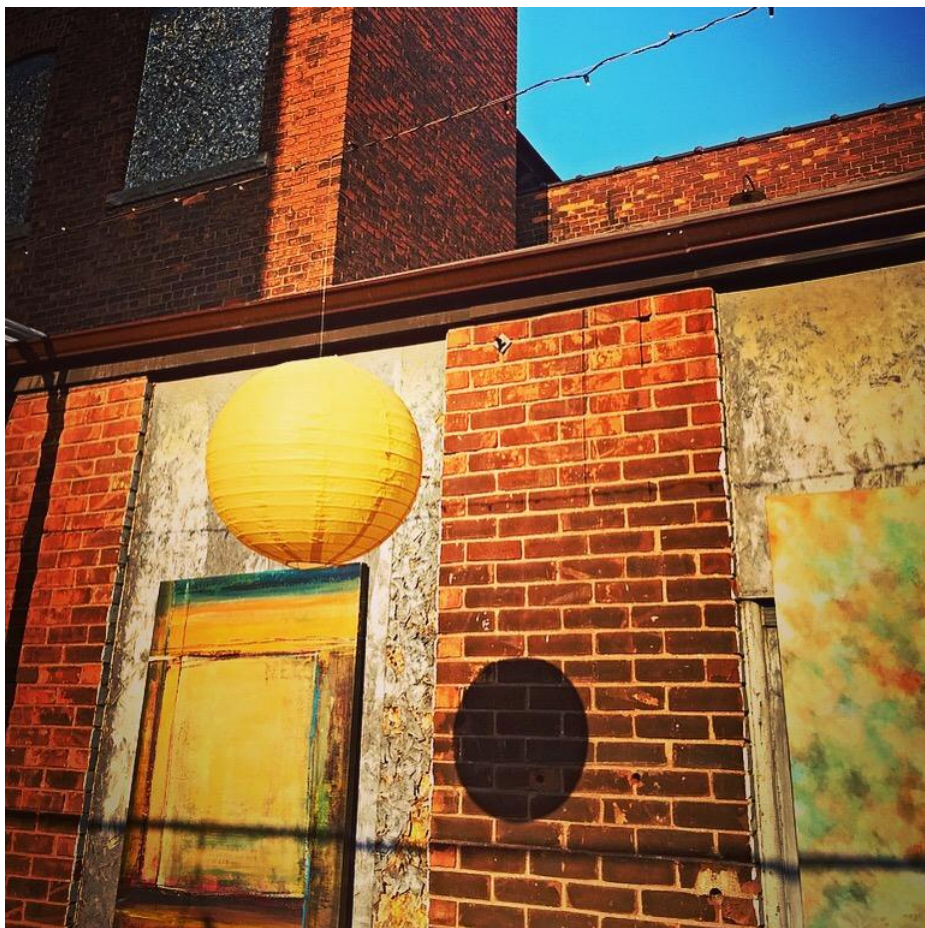
Now I steer the canoe and I splay my knees,  
and put my heels in the scuff marks of my father's feet,  
made by the scuffling of my father's feet, the scuff marks of  
my father ....

I think that the song really speaks for itself in terms of the times and places that it tries to knit together. The song is actually near entirely about the different times and places of childhood and adulthood, canoe trips in Manitoba and Ontario, my taking (in some ways) my father's place in the family after his death, the ways in which family affects us, and the embracing of those effects as we live our own lives ("now I steer the canoe"), of choosing to be the person we are, warts and all. And it's also about reconciling those differences and seeing how those times and places form a coherent whole.

*riot nrrd is Conrad Sichler, a Hamilton -based musician, songwriter, and physician.*

*Linda Taiton*

## **First Reflection**



This summer I decided to get into the nooks and crannies of Hamilton (sometimes in the dark of night) and this photo is the first. I call it "first reflection". I took many more over the summer and some are on Instagram @veracious\_life. This is my source of "instant" gratification which is fun and inspiring and easy. However, I often think about losing the desire to paint. So I have decided to paint my favourite photos over the winter. And my paintings will be Instagrammed.

*Linda Taillon is a visual artist and photographer who divides her time between Toronto and Hamilton.*

## Just Because

I love your skin.  
I love the way my hand glides across it  
like a passage of time.  
Your skin is a canvas I want to paint myself in.  
Cause if we were still kids,  
we'd be like best friends,  
and it'd be cool if  
I fell in love with you,  
just because...

Just because there's something about you  
that feels like the sky just bent down and kissed me.  
Like in an alternate universe,  
rivers are chasing streams  
looking for grass to sway and smile at the moon.  
I feel like I've been crushing on you for a thousand years.  
And it sounds crazy, right?  
Cause there's no actual way to prove any truth to this  
statement,  
but, when you hold my hand,  
... it feels like home.  
Like warm summer nights misted with ocean  
and cradled in palm breeze.  
I feel safe.  
Sensing the tremors of bass concurrent to skin  
as you breathe,  
I feel music.  
Come closer.

Cause if I could paint myself in your skin  
we'd still be kids,  
and you'd be the first boy I'd WANT to kiss.  
Although being kids,  
the fear of making the relationship "WEIRD,"  
we probably never would have kissed.  
... You'd still be the boy that made me feel --  
something,

and I'd go home,  
and totally practice make-out moves on my pillow,  
as if cotton sheets could emulate your skin or lips.  
I'd do it anyway.  
One, because it's an immediate option.  
Two, because that way I could pretend that it was your face  
pressed against mine as I fell  
asleep,  
confirming in dreams,  
that little things that leave us breathless,  
make fairy-dust linger for lifetimes.  
And if feelings create light,  
and light is a blessing,  
then I am incandescent, and filled with the sun,  
like innocence erupting night skies with galaxies of saffron  
stars,  
sparking the histories felt between strangers,  
and stories we never wrote ourselves in.

Cause if I could paint myself in your skin,  
we'd still be kids,  
and see, the cool thing about you and me, if we were still  
kids,  
is that we'd be unscarred by relationships of yesterday,  
and your battle wounds wouldn't make my heart contract,

they wouldn't have the ability to confirm that  
nagging sound in my head that keeps telling me,  
"see, you're still not good enough."

So when you say  
that you're afraid that something better is on it's way,  
if we were still kids, I'd tell you,  
"aww, you're just being stupid,"  
and then I'd take you swimming and totally swim between  
your legs and pants you!

Embracing my role  
as the playful forlorn reject,  
and your foolishness,  
as the genius outcast.

I'd have the courage to let things unfold,  
knowing that I've been painted into your skin  
and if I let you go --

then I get to be part of the road,  
that leads you to feeling loved.

And that's pretty cool!

Because, if we were still kids,  
we'd be like best friends,  
and it'd be cool if I fell in love with you,  
just because.

I wrote this in 2013. I knew that my beloved would soon leave me for another. I wanted to linger in the incorruptible innocence of what was. I wanted to let go peacefully.

*Nea Reid is a multidisciplinary artist, educator, and organizer from Hamilton, Ontario. A passionate advocate for young voices, Reid frequents her time and experience in high schools, correctional facilities, and within her community as the Artistic Director of the Hamilton Youth Poets and Louder Than A Bomb Canada. Reid presently resides in Hamilton, Ontario, with her daughter Maia.*

*Mimi Shaw*

## Niagara

I wanna tell you that the sky is so blue  
And that my love for you will always be true  
I wanna tell you that the seas run so deep  
And that my love for you is yours to keep

So many things to tell you  
All of them are true  
I'm falling like Niagara  
And I'm falling over you

I wanna tell you that the pines are so green  
And that you are the best baby I ever seen  
I wanna tell you that the stars shine so bright  
And that I'm gonna make you mine tonight

So many things to tell you  
All of them are true  
I'm falling like Niagara  
And I'm falling over you



FLA • 57 OCT

The genesis for the song Niagara stemmed from a classic honeymoon photo of my parents in front of Niagara Falls. It is so nostalgic and familiar that many people can conjure up a similar image with their own families. The falls are in the background and you see the old wrought iron railing behind them. I wanted to write a love song that was as simple and sweet and elemental as that. It's a love song that's not in some far away land but in a place where we live

*Mimi Shaw is a musician from Hamilton, Ontario. She recently released her debut solo album "Niagara" and plays the local haunts.*

*[www.mimishaw.ca](http://www.mimishaw.ca)*

## **Das muttering**

Lovunder, Lovander, Loversloss  
Mother's moss, rolling stone clause  
Reflection still schloss  
Now linger tongue muther  
All langer in pause

Gloshes clanger doppleganger  
Cupid und dixen leibing mit Disney  
Das Mickey is merkey,  
not certain why.

Underwater, lovelunder  
each bubble, Thoughts upward  
applied. Accepted?  
Exerpted. Edited. Tied.  
Jimminey swimminy, jerkenzy,  
Oh my.

Findenzy frenzy, no friendly skies.  
Surrender, Surrender love langer  
Dorothy mind fodder

Gale finder and Wenders/Wim  
A forest of signs.  
Single signal pause,  
should make it mild.

Mother and kinder, no sleeping, surprise.  
Ooze dreaming, fond beaming.  
All gleaming besides.

Refried echo. Seamless "Lavender Mother" ...  
All eggs under gauze.  
Habit of ever-ring  
a tender uttering ...

Lavender Mother, proffer,  
feather flosser.  
Foolish capital -- spital.  
Nest pestering pranks:  
pitfalls,  
pratfalls,  
blithering tongue toils.

Enter kinder, large embroiled.  
Movement, make monument.  
Big letter "B", capital "P",  
little letter, "oh"?  
Bo, Boo,  
Po, Pooh ...

Package. Pasty and blue.

Courtesyphone, chaosphile, calender chaser  
Cloister shoes. Feline dander  
philander, palace parade.  
Lavender Mother.  
My clodhopper dues.

Chiffon draped terra cotta manna,  
my nanna ... inherited hues?

Lovunder, lovander, loversloss  
Mother's moss, rolling stone clause  
Now linger tongue mutter  
All langer in pause.

Hamilton, June 2000

Harry my son, had just turned two when this poem was written. And I am turning 40! Seems odd in retrospect but the year 2000 was one of those far away points in time for so very long (when one is born in 1960 at least). When I did ponder this significant date, I didn't imagine I would also be a mother of a toddler.

*Calla Shea-Pelletier returned to Hamilton in 1998 after working as an art educator at Toronto's Power Plant Gallery. Graduated from the "Experimental Art" program in 1987, at OCA(D). Writing has always been the constant. Exhibitions include unconventional locations: Laundromat, hotel, street, apartment, mall stores, and a former garment industry building. Collaborating with Hamish Shea-Pelletier, making small spaces seem larger raising a family.*

## **Lover's Quarrel**

In October of 1977 I stood at the bottom of the stairs in Diane's knotty pine rec-room and told her that I didn't want to get married. I was nineteen and the plans were well under way. The German Club was booked even though no one was German. The bridesmaid's gowns and Diane's wedding dress were bought and paid for. I felt like I was drifting fifteen feet above everyone, watching like I'd just died.

Diane stared at the wall twisting her permed hair between her fingers. I looked at her painter pants and penny loafers and wondered what had brought us together.

Her mother came down the stairs, her big feet padding on the blue carpet. "Are we having a lover's quarrel," she said puffing with worry in her eyes. I wanted to push her into the wet-bar and watch the Johnny Walker and Beefeater bottles smash in the bar sink.

"He doesn't want to marry me," Diane said. She pointed at my face. I glanced at her bitten down nails and she put her hand down.

Her mother's head swung back and forth to each of us. "We all have our spats," she said and touched my forearm just below the rolled up sleeve of my denim jacket. Her hands were clammy. We all stood still, the electric wall clock that looked like a brass sun, buzzed. I made my move and shot up the stairs and out the side door.

Her mom followed me to my sporty yellow Toyota. I got in and locked the door. She lunged for the door handle. I saw Diane in the picture window fiddling with her pack of cigarettes. The motor kicked in. I pushed the shifter into reverse and let the clutch go. I hit the street and threw the shifter into first gear. I lifted my foot off the clutch so fast my knee hit the steering wheel. Tires spinning, a cloud of blue smoke, and I was gone.

I could see Diane's mother shrinking in the rear-view mirror. She was probably wondering if the neighbours saw anything.

A few months before all this, during the Christmas holidays, in the comfort of Diane's rec-room with the fire crackling and The Grinch on TV, I asked her to marry me. I hadn't thought of a ring or anything past that. I had asked in the moment never considering the weight of the question. Diane said yes while looking at my hands, probably searching for the ring box.

She easily took over the duties I had missed. During the week before New Years we were at Stark's Jewelry and I was counting out four-hundred dollars to Frank Stark. His eyes followed my hands like a seasoned poker player. Next, Diane took me to Hillmans Mens Wear and had me measured for a suit. "I cannot believe you don't have a proper jacket and tie, not even dress pants." She shook her head. "I've got work to do." She smiled knowingly to the young clerk. He avoided my gaze.

I spent over seven-hundred that day. I felt beaten down but conceded to myself that I needed to grow up and be responsible.

To celebrate the engagement, Diane's mother baked salmon and sat us all down in the dining room on the evening before New Years Eve. Their house was a small three bedroom bungalow with the living room and dining room facing the street. There was a snack bar with overhead cupboards that separated us from the kitchen. Her mother had red paper napkins folded beside our four plates. There were wine glasses at three of the settings and a beer glass at the head of the table, the only chair with arms, where Bill, Diane's dad, would sit.

Diane and I were hanging around the kitchen talking to her mom and Bill was in the rec-room watching golf, which meant he was sleeping on the couch.

"Bill, it's dinner time," Diane's mom sang into the stairwell. We all snickered as he sputtered out a snore.

We took our seats and passed around the food. I poured the wine and Diane's mom poured beer for Bill as he pushed the heels of his hands against his eyes.

Her mom raised her glass, "A toast to the soon to be newlyweds."

My stomach burned.

Bill followed suit. "Here here."

"Are your parents happy about the news?" Diane's mom sat her glass on the table. I noticed it was empty.

"Yep, they're excited." I hadn't actually told my mom and dad.

We ate quietly for a few minutes until Bill spoke. "That's quite the head of hair on your friend Wayne." Wayne had introduced Diane to me. He was engaged to Diane's best friend Janice.

Diane said, "He's had that afro since he moved here back in grade nine."

Bill nodded as he cut a piece of salmon by pushing his fork through the tender pink flakes. "He was adopted as an infant. Right?"

"He was, and his adopted mom and dad are so nice." Diane sipped her wine.

Bill took a fork full of fish. "It's something for Janice to consider when they get married and think about having children."

No one responded. I wanted to kick him in the ass. I imagined him wearing a ghostly hood and robes as he rode a horse through the suburbs. The subject was dropped.

I tried to talk to Diane about it later that night while we watched TV. "I don't get your dad saying that stuff about Wayne and having kids." I watched the goldfish in the aquarium bob for food.

"Dad likes Wayne you know. It's just that he's known Janice and her parents for a long time."

"Do you agree with him?"

Diane sighed. "I think Janice should be aware that's all."

“Maybe she is aware but doesn’t judge people by their looks.”

Diane’s mom came down with a cup of tea. She sat the cup on the end table and flopped into the turquoise Lazy-Boy. I wondered if she’d heard us talking.

“Do you kids have any plans for the evening?” She looked at Diane’s profile like she was attempting to find her little girl.

The time was the beginnings of a failed marriage. The place was mostly a rec-room in a basement in Cambridge.

*Jeff Griffiths lives, writes, and plays drums in Hamilton. His short fiction has been published in various literary venues including Time and Place. He teaches Creative Writing 1 and 2 and Prose Styles for Mohawk College.*

*Scot Cameron*

## **Providence Bay Lighthouse**



Providence Bay was once a booming hub on the southern shore of Manitoulin Island; a place that has been part of my existence from the beginning. I have made an annual pilgrimage to the Island nearly every year of my 40 plus years, with most visits centered in this small village that is but a shadow of its former glory.

This photograph is of the stone foundation of the old Providence Bay light house which burned down in the 1960's. It sits at the tip of a peninsula on what is now a popular hike along the shore of Providence Bay to the open waters of Lake Huron. For me, this hike is not only a beautiful scenic walk, but follows the footpath of my relatives. The telling and retelling of stories about my mother as a young girl walking out with her grandfather to maintain the lighthouse have romanticized this icon which was a beacon for boats and a landmark of a thriving community. Unfortunately, my great grandfather was too old and I too young, to share these memories together. Today, the lighthouse is nothing more than a pile of rubble, barely recognizable to those who know what it was, and unremarkable to those who walk by. It was replaced with a very functional (read: ugly) steel channel marker that does not require maintenance.

I have attempted to capture some element of its former beauty for years, with each photograph coming up short. But I have come to realize that most of the majesty of this place, and its beacon, comes from my own personal connection, the depth of which is impossible to capture in one image. The annual hike has become a rite of passage; a way to retrace my family's footsteps and to preserve this memory.

Of the hundreds of photos I have taken of the lighthouse, this is the first one that I feel captures some of its character, despite the fact that it does not show any context about what it once was, or even where it is located. The reason I like it so much is that it is visually interesting but more importantly you can appreciate the texture of the stone base.

A rocky vestige of a landmark: stones sourced from the shore, mortar applied by the hands of my relatives, and light tended by my great grandfather over a half century ago.

*Scot Cameron is a writer, photographer, and skater. He lives and plays in Hamilton with his wife and two kids. You can find Scot carving a bowl on his skateboard or hitting the slopes on his snowboard.*

Katie Sullivan

## Techgeneration

I live in constant fear of being forgotten  
but if forgotten means  
only known by those I truly love  
why am I scared?

I wrote this after I moved to Toronto from Hamilton and started thinking about the quality and type of relationships social media has created. The weight we give our “likes” borders on a healthy “I want my friends and family to see what I’m up to and wish they were here” to an unhealthy “if I don’t post this it didn’t happen, and if I don’t hit 11 likes, the picture is getting deleted.” I feel very lucky to know a world without Facebook, and know that life and the quality of it does not depend on my posts, but I can’t help sometimes feel the anxiety of those around me as they place so much weight on maintaining their social media presence meanwhile forgetting about maintaining their relationships in real life, the ones that matter, and the ones that mean something in the long run. If abandoning our social media accounts for a couple weeks at a time means we become closer to our best friends and family, the people we are lucky to have in front of us, why don’t we?

*Katie Sullivan just really likes writing. She’s lived in Toronto and Vancouver, but chooses Hamilton above both..*

## **Listening Lenses**

Balloon expanding  
The fragile thinness pushed beyond limits of belief  
Overwhelm with excess air  
A tight pressure to pop

Jungle noises release an effect of letting-go laughter

Release. Release. Release.

Ahhhhh wind chimed pleasures of sound delight  
fill a glass of chocolate candied words.

Carefully.

Slowly.

I remove that which calls my name

The monkey bird calls to me pleading.  
I pick you up with both hands,  
remove the packaging  
let the honeyed source melt into my whole consciousness

Soul moving to words strung together in melody  
Kneading my heart back to the moment.

This piece captures the vulnerability and fragility of a moment caught up in anxiety. The poem begins from a feeling of overwhelm amongst street sounds that induce anxiety and interpreting the environment as busy, hectic, and chaotic. The poem is an example of being released from a moment of anxiety through simplistic natural elements of nature, which allow an artist to use all emotions as a benefit towards creation and art.

*As an aspiring writer, Kelsey Knight is an experience chaser. She is motivated in her search for moments to accumulate and create a meaningful life. Her main focus and interests are in poetry, art and photography. Kelsey Knight has had opportunities to read her poetry in a variety of settings, including the 13th Annual veteran's appreciation luncheon. She has traveled to Montreal to read in the monthly Words and Music show, and conducts poetry groups in long-term care homes. In April for national poetry month, Kelsey and 26 other Canadian poets traveled by train with stops in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver in The Great Canadian Poetrain Tour, which led to being published in the Poetrain Anthology; A collection of train poems by Canadian poets. Kelsey is currently involved in a new project, Poetic Melodies, which is a collaborative effort between herself and local pianist Ian Green; to blend the transcendence of music and the spoken word. She resides in Hamilton, Ontario.*

## **Caledonia**

Father said not to take any wooden nickels  
on your trip down to kingdom come.  
I lost myself, down in Caledonia.  
Where we smoked our last cigarette, under the Grand River  
bridge.  
Moon hit its peak  
as the ashes hit the ground.  
Sirens in the distance and tire marks heading Northbound.  
We were off the rails  
Street lights guide our way  
My window acts like a movie screen projecting the world on  
display.  
No map to say where  
No clock to say when  
We were riding all night long down highway fifty four.  
We made our way back to that factory town  
High-rise buildings had all the people running around.  
I left myself back in Caledonia  
Where we smoked our last cigarette under the Grand River  
bridge.  
No map to say where  
No clock to say when  
We were riding all night long down highway fifty four.

The song "Caledonia" was first created while on a drive with my friend towards Caledonia, Ontario. We never set out to end up in the Grand River town and not really sure why we chose that direction. We were bored 18 year olds and had nothing better to do so we just started to drive. As we listened to music heading south on six, we soon realised that we had no idea where we were until I saw a sign that read "Grand River", at that point I knew we were in Caledonia. We spent a solid hour trying to figure out how to get back and we ended up on Highway 54 heading west, then east, before we found our way back to Highway 6 and headed south. As we made our way back home I knew I had an idea for a song and wrote it as soon as I got home. Maybe getting lost is a good thing.

*Ethan Paxton is a singer, songwriter inspired by the many incredible artists that have called Hamilton home.*

## **The Ripening**

**(from what hopes to be an upcoming book “Cooking with Anger”)**

I love tomatoes. Love them on toast with pepper, love them in soup, love them on pizza when they are twice as hot as all the other toppings. I love them in sauces, all the sauces, even the sauces that have no tomatoes, because deep down those white, brown and yellow sauces are all tipping their hats and saying, ‘thank you tomatoes, we wouldn’t be here without the fine work you’ve accomplished”.

My love for tomatoes is so expansive that I will go out on a limb and say that I love them probably a full 360 days a year. Breakfast, lunch, supper, rain, snow, heat, and I can always think of a way to use a tomato to make things better. I know one of you is saying ‘but they’d suck in a dessert’, to which I reply that the tomato doesn’t even try to do dessert, because the tomato has humility, not like those goddammed carrots and pumpkins and avocados always jamming their way into any cake or pie that will have them. Tomato doesn’t need to showboat. Tomato knows that after three bites of any dessert you’ll be ready for something tomatoey again.

360 days a year. That is pretty much unconditional and unfettered love, every single day. It just leaves out those five days in the fall, at the height of the tomato ripening season, where my tomato love is temporarily replaced with a madness and despair that extends towards not just the tomato, but to all things, living and dead.

The way to determine the beginning of tomato ripening season is when the small grocery stores on James Street start offering bushel baskets of Roma tomatoes for ridiculously low prices.

Every year I buy one, because I think I can blanch them and freeze them effortlessly and have fresh zingy tomatoes in my home throughout the morbid winter. Every year I cart the thing home and convince myself that if I process this bushel quickly, I will buy another bushel and, I don't know, make my own ketchup.

I could be one those people who make their own ketchup!

At that precise moment, because it is ripening time, the scrawny tomato plants in the tiny strip of earth along our driveway, gain access to some latent Italian/Portuguese nutrient in the north-end soil, and suddenly become flush with fat angry fruit for the picking. Yes! Go outside, pick some tomatoes, put them on your counter, go back outside, and hurray, more fat angry tomatoes to pick!

In fact this is the other way to know that it's the height of the tomato season, because every other god-damned thing in the world is also ripening. Fruits, vegetables, work demands are ripening, professional sports are ripening, your children's sense of entitlement and scholastic malaise is ripening. Allergies and sinus infections! Fruit flies and indoor vermin! Yes, the weather is colder, but your home is still inexplicably moist. Why? Because it's all Ripening!!

Day one of the ripening, and I can't start processing the counter tomatoes or the bushel tomatoes, because the phone rings, and it's that guy who's always on about something and now I have to make an appearance at the place, but tomorrow there should be time. Only there isn't, because I've forgotten about the other deadline for the thing that was supposed to be done, and also now my kid is having feelings all over the house, and the fridge has stopped working.

On day two, all I can bring myself to do is look at the tomatoes. They have held their luster, but they have begun whispering to anyone who passes: 'Everyday a senseless rot grows in our bellies, every day we inch towards a meaningless death. Is there no one to deliver us?'.

Day three of tomato ripening season, my brother offers a bushel of apples from his tree. I love apples. I love them like 360 days a year. They're perfectly in season and begging to become pies and sauces. Awesome I say. I bring them home. The apples have a brief conversation with the tomatoes and rapidly begin rotting as well.

Day four and five, even though I am saddled with a myriad of other obligations, the tension breaks me. I stop communicating with my family and associates, and remain over pots of boiling water in the kitchen, piercing and scalding off tomato skin, plucking off the tough stem with my horrid fingernails. If one of my children ambles in and wants a meal or some such extravagance, I turn quickly and howl at with nonverbal howl of a ghost witch. Three hours later I am covered in sweat and red pulp, and the kitchen looks like a vegetarian re-enactment of Steven King's 'Carrie'.

The next day I wake up and it's over. The only tomato that isn't frozen in a bag in the freezer, sits on the counter silently and eagerly.

I slice it up with some eggs and am once again in love.

Hamilton, summer, 2015.

*Tor Lukasik-Foss is a performer, visual artist and writer based in Hamilton ON.*

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*Donna Akrey*

## Curate



Here is the drawing "curate" from probably 1998. I think this is a good image depiction of how we see things, collect, curate in our won minds. Collecting images and impressions walking thru places in time----and keeping them collected in our old school hard drive brains----that inevitably have an affect (effect?) on our operating systems.

*Donna Akrey is a maker of things, teacher of things and researcher of things. Her work reflects an interest in the urban environment, language and communication, and the power of the habitual on our dreams and realities. She uses an interdisciplinary approach to articulate ideas to create large installations and sculptural objects, single channel video, video installation, performance and book works. From Toronto originally –she has lived all over Canada. Currently living in Hamilton-just relocated from Montreal – and teaching at Brock in the visual art department. Donna received a BFA from Concordia University and an MFA from NSCAD.*

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## **Scenes from the Wrong Side of the Bar, #10**

The Magpie, Sunbury-on-Thames, Wednesday, 10:58am: there is a sharp rap on the glass of the doors to the pub. Look out and there is Tom pointing at his watch, big smile on his face. Point back at your watch, signal there are two minutes to wait, bigger smile on your face. Open the doors two minutes later.

“A man can die of thirst waiting for you ...”

“Morning Tom, morning Des.”

“Hiya lad.”

Tom and Des: two of seven brothers. Irish builders: word on street is they are rich. Rumor on the street is they are connected. Tom and Des: not their real names. None of the brothers go by their real names. Never do find out what they are.

Tom, smaller, gregarious, greying curly hair, ever-present tweed jacket on, settles into a stool at the bar and orders a Guinness. Des, bigger, even more gregarious, black hair slicked back with pomade, stands at the bar and orders a Carling. He is a lager man under doctor’s orders: was told to cut back his drinking so, obviously, he switched to lager from stout to comply. Which one is older is hard to say. They change their story each time you ask.

It is a warm summer day and the patio doors are open. Tom signals for another pint. You have learned, even though you have just served him one, he will be ready by the time the second (and third, and fourth) is ready. Mid-morning turns into mid-afternoon. Pub is quiet. Tom and Des are the only reason you stay open. Tom calls you over.

“There was a fly in my beer”

“Come on Tom – it’s summer, the doors are open and -”

“No, no, nothing like that ... just wanted to let you know I grabbed ‘im by the t’roat and made him spit up what he drank ... cheeky little bugger.”

He signals for another pint. Serve him, shaking your head, laughing.

Des has wandered over to the phone. Race day at Kempton Park and Des calling in to his man, placing his bets, asks if you want in. You know nothing about horse racing but why not.

“I trust you Des (Tom snorts into his pint), £20 on your choice.”

“Righto lad, # 7 in the first”

Des finishes up. Turn the telly on to the race and watch. Your horse bursts ahead at the start and you nod approvingly to Des. Your horse stumbles at the quarter mark, jockey is thrown, stare disapprovingly at Des and hand him a twenty.

“Unlucky that, lad.”

Turns out later your horse has to be put down.

Tom stands up, drains his pint, shakes your hand and moves to leave.

“Time to say hi at the Whitehorse. See ya t’morrow.”

Des does the same.

“See ya lad, we will try again tomorrow with a flutter.”

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.*

*[www.fortyteenyearold.wordpress.com](http://www.fortyteenyearold.wordpress.com) (if he ever gets around to updating it.)*

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