

TRANSITION

SPRING 2020

Section 1 - page 3
CMHA SK Pages

**Finding strength
in partnerships**

**Promoting work-
place wellness**

Recovery College

Section 2 - page 9
TRANSITION Pages

Poetry!

Section 3 - page 23
**Writing For Your
Life (WFYL)**

**Submissions from
Eastend and
CMHA Branches in
Prince Albert
Regina
Saskatoon
Weyburn**



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Saskatchewan
Mental health for all



TRANSITION

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Phyllis O'Connor, Executive Director
Canadian Mental Health Association
(Saskatchewan Division) Inc.

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Our Mission:

Founded in 1950, The Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) Inc. is a volunteer-based organization which supports and promotes the rights of persons with mental illness to maximize their full potential; and promotes and enhances the mental health and well-being of all members of the community.

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Subscription by joining CMHA (SK) at \$15 / year.

1. Send original and unpublished articles, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual art that represent current mental health issues and reflect on their impact on individuals.
2. Maximum manuscript lengths: prose – 10 ms pages; poetry – 10 poems or 5 ms pages, whichever is less; visual art – 5 pieces.
3. Unsolicited international contributions, reprints and simultaneous submissions (to several magazines) are not considered.
4. Turnaround time is normally within one issue or up to 6 months: do not send a second submission before the first has been reviewed.
5. Payment is \$50.00 per printed page (\$25/half page); \$40.00 per published visual art work; and \$200.00 for cover art. Cap on contributions: \$200/author.
6. Only electronic submissions including full contact information and a brief bio are accepted.
7. Submit manuscripts in MS Word format (12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, normal margins) as e-mail attachment to: contactus@cmhask.com; or directly to the Editor at tdyck@sasktel.net.
8. Surface mail should be sent to:

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Mental health is not a destination, but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going

HealthyPlace.com



CONTENTS

- TED DYCK
- 2 Editorial
Recovery through diversity

CMHA SK Pages

- 3 PHYLLIS O'CONNOR
Executive Director's Report
Finding strength in partnerships
- 4 Promoting workplace wellness
- 5 H.O.P.E. Learning Centre
(Recovery College)
- 7 Vocational programming at CMHA

TRANSITION Pages

LIVING THE LIFE - POETRY

- 9 COLLEEN ANDERSON
Family dinner, Prince George
Sweat Lodge
- 9 PHLIP ARIMA
Slow Time
- 10 A Quiet Walk
Awakening
- 10 TERRI BOSNER
mark the world
confession
- 10 GORD BRAUN
The water of numbers
(bits of the obvious)
- 11 JOAN CRATE
Deer Prayer
Christmas Prayer
Summer mornings
The Way the World Works
- 12 Gravel road
Gutter gods
- 13 Bedroom wall, September
- 13 BEVERLY CUMMINGS
Presence
- 14 CATHERINE FENWICK
Ants to Zebu
- 14 Bouquet

TRANSITION Pages

LIVING THE LIFE - POETRY cont'd

- 14 CAROL GARVIE
Postpartum
- 15 gillian harding-russell
Wolf Moom
- 16 Meditation on blue
- 17 Third Eye on the ground
- 17 CATHERINE KATT
Not Holding My Breath
- 17 DEREK KENDALL
I'm still trying
- 18 TONYA LIBURD
The yuppified psycho in denial
- 18 FRANSIVAN MACKENZIE
This is how you win the war
- 18 Cut
- 19 ADISON MESSETT
Dance with Death
- 19 MAGGIE METNICK
Anxiety Haikus
- 20 DOMINIQUE PANKO
Saskatchewan Spring
They Remind Me
- 20 ky perraun
THIS IS
- 20 ROLLI
The cemetery for dead books
21 The black bat's back
21 And then the wind
21 The day it rains
21 To cure cynicism
- 21 CARRIE SCHEMENAUER
Before you go getting all romantic

REVIEW

- TED DYCK
- 22 Perhaps a but thinly, but ...

WRITING FOR YOUR LIFE (WFYL) Pages

- 23 Judge's Comments

EASTEND

- 24 CATLIN MCCULLAM-ARNAL
- 24 MAREIKE NEUHAUS

PRINCE ALBERT

- 24 BASIL BALLANTYNE
- 24 DANIELLE BIRD
- 25 DEBBIE COCHRANE
- 25 NICHOLAS DODGE
- 25 SHERRY FAVREAU
- 25 WENDEL GUIDO
- 26 HOLLY KNIFE\
- 24 IAN MCINTYRE
- 26 DOT SETTEE
- 26 MARK TESKEY

REGINA

- 27 JENNIFER NIXON
- 27 BILL PELLETIER
- 27 JAYNE MELVILLE WHYTE

SASKATOON

- 28 BRITTANY BOGAN
- 28 CHELSEA DANIELS\
- 28 NAOMI DOELL
- 29 MELANIE HELSTROM
- 29 BRIAN PRIEST
- 30 JAMES SKELTON
- 30 SHANE SMALL
- 30 JAMES SNYDER
- 30 KIRK TAYLOR

WEYBURN

- 31 DEBBIE CARLSON
- 31 LARRY LAUDER
- 31 JENNIFER MORIN
- 31 KEVIN PROKOPETZ
- 32 IVAN ROBB
- 32 NINA SCHAD
- 32 BARRY STYRE
- 33 ERIC VALENTINE

- 36 Notes on Contributors

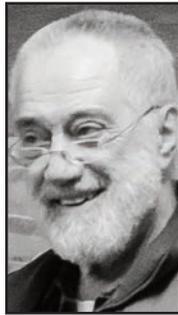


EDITORIAL

Recovery through diversity

TED DYCK

If this were the Middle Ages, we would be in the midst of a *plague*. But it's not, and we're only next door to a *cluster* (Washington State), watching an *epidemic* (China) perhaps on its way to becoming a *pandemic*. A classic example of how words conceal as they inform.



TED DYCK
EDITOR

Take the words *mental illness* (please!) – and their complement, *mental health*. What's left of the simplicity of illness vs wellness after *insane, mad, crazy, loony, ...* have taken their toll? Of course I am not the one to [even] attempt an answer – but I can try to stay informed on developing / evolving approaches to possible answers. I'm a clinical depressive, and that presents me with a focus – *whodda think it* – for such a project, for it reduces my task to [almost] manageable size.

In her [also almost] manageable 275-page tome, *MIND FIXERS* (Norton 2019), science historian Anne Harrington deals with exactly this issue: what does historical and current research on *mental illness* tell us about it – and especially its treatment?

Harrington does not repeat the historical mistake of giving “the” answer to this question, not even for our times. Instead, she surveys the sequence of mostly failed “final” solutions offered up by psychiatry in the past hundred years and suggests a practical *recovery* through *diversity* approach to the treatment of mental illness. True, both of these terms are among the buzzwords of contemporary thought – surprise – but their application to the study and treatment of mental illness feels honest and sensible, is perhaps even useful.

Recovery through diversity is an apt description of my life in depression: Freudian psychiatry, pharma-psychia-

try, biological psychiatry -- I have benefited, in some way- time-degree or another, from them all. Harrington is especially informative when she traces a path (similar to my own) through the failures to find a final solution for depression (and other kinds of mental illness), including the rapid rise and fall of Prozac, the most famous of the SSRIs. I've long ago reverted to a less flamboyant NDRI, on the advice of the psychiatrist who has been treating me since the 90s.

This is a longish intro to the CMHA(SK) PAGES in this issue – and it's tuned to the article about the new H.O.P.E. Learning Center (Recovery College) in Regina. The Recovery College idea (*college* being used metaphorically) is in line with Harrington's general conclusion in *MIND FIXERS* that recovery benefits from a diversity of approaches. Congratulations and best wishes to Donna Bowyer, the College's new director.

Speaking of recovery and diversity, the contest in the WFYL PAGES evi-

dently intrigued the half-dozen writing groups extant. Certainly the “guzzles,” judged by Victor Enns (a walking recovery college himself if ever there was one) who chose a variant of the traditional ghazal for the contest, are evidence that a mundane arbitrary restriction may evoke delightfully free responses. *OuLiPo* [ask Dr. Google what this stands for] seems to be onto something.

The TRANSITION PAGES this time are all poetry. Normally there's more generic diversity in this section, but our previous issue was all prose, and this collection of poems is itself quite various. From the precise meditations of harding-russell through the cry-from-the-heart passion of MacKenzie to the brisk skepticism of Rolli's play in grammar– from long to short, in other words, from calmness through passion to skepticism, these pieces offer the healing power of the word to the reader. In doing so, the *words* in these pages open up a whole *world* of poetry.

Wellness Support Response Line Directory	
Prince Albert	1-306-940-7678
The Battlefords	1-306-441-5746
Saskatoon	1-306-270-3648
Rosetown	1-306-831-4083
Swift Current	1-306-741-5148
Moose Jaw	1-306-630-5968
Regina	1-306-535-4292
Weyburn	1-306-861-4951
Provincial Div.	1-306-421-1871
Youth Line	1-306-730-5900

Finding strength in partnerships

PHYLLIS O'CONNOR

Another year has ended and we have moved into a new decade – a wonderful time to reflect back on how far we have come and to set the course for the future.

We are eagerly awaiting the new CMHA National strategic plan and are very encouraged that the new vision will reflect that in Canada, mental health is a universal human right. This is in direct alignment with much of the work that has been done such as “A Case for an Investigation by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission into Systemic Discrimination of the Mental Health System in Saskatchewan” which was produced in November 2016. Once mental health is recognized as a human right it puts more pressure on governments to provide adequate supports and services. It will be interesting to watch how this rolls out as we collectively work as National Office and Divisions to move this agenda forward.

Building partnerships is a key method utilized by CMHA Saskatchewan Division to accomplish the work we do. Mental health is a huge issue and we can't do it alone . . . there is strength in partnerships. During fall 2019 we have been able to formalize a number of strategic partnerships such as:

- A formal memorandum of understanding was signed with Service Hospitality to continue to work together on their Mental Health Best Practise Group and to seek out other opportunities to work collaboratively in improving mental health in the workplace. A key component of that partnership will be our 2020 “We're Only Human” conference on June 18 & 19, 2020 at the Sheraton Cavalier in Saskatoon. Further information about that conference is included in this edition of Transition.
- Partnerships with CMHA National, Alberta Division and Manitoba Division to expand our OSI-CAN program nationally.
- Partnership with the Workplace Mental Health Committee of Active

Saskatchewan to support the link between physical health and mental health in the workplace.

- Beginning discussions with the Global Alliance Foundation Fund re the development of programs and services to support veterans and first responders, including a planned equine therapy camp for clients and their partners.

We are also very excited to be launching our Recovery College (called the H.O.P.E. Learning Centre – Helping Others through Peer Education) in January. The first training course is the Art of Friendship which is being held January 22-24 in our new facility at 1888 Angus Street in Regina (in the same building as CMHA Saskatchewan Division Office). This was made possible through a donation from Conexus Credit Union to get the renovations done and furnishings purchased as well as a donation from Sask. Power Corp. that gave us the funding to hire staff and start the work of building our college.

This year, 2020, looks to be another exciting year for CMHA Saskatchewan Division. I especially want to thank our amazing staff and wonderful volunteers for all they do to support our work. They really are the driving force behind any successes we have had and I feel blessed to work with such a great team.



PHYLLIS O'CONNOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NEWS AND VIEWS from friends, members and staff of the Canadian Mental Health Association in Saskatchewan



Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatchewan Division Inc.



CMHA 2020 CONFERENCE

We're Only Human -- Promoting workplace wellness - postponed to spring 2021

CMHASK has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Service Hospitality to work collaboratively toward the common objectives in promoting awareness, knowledge and education regarding mental health and well-being in the workplace as well as with youth.

An exciting initiative resulting from this MOU will be the 2020 Conference "We're Only Human - Promoting Positive Workplace Wellness" to be held June 18 & 19, 2020 at the Sheraton Cavalier in Saskatoon, SK.

This conference will bring in speakers from across the country to present topics under two main streams:

- Maintaining your own mental wellness in the workplace and;
- Building organizational mental wellness.

Our keynote speaker on June 18th will be Mark Henick, Mental Health Advocate & Strategist/Top 50 TEDx speaker. Mark Henick captured global attention when he shared his story of searching for "the man in the light brown jacket" who saved his life from a teenage suicide attempt. With over five million views, his TEDx talk, "Why We Choose Suicide," is among the most watched in the world.



Mark Henick

Having been a patient, a professional, a policy influencer, and a public figure in the mental health system, Mark has dedicated his life from an early age to opening minds and creating change.

He is currently the Principal and CEO of a boutique consulting firm that helps individuals, companies, and governments to take action in improving mental health and wellness, and previously served as the National Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Canadian Mental Health Association.

On June 19th our keynote speaker will be Victoria Maxwell with her presentation "Funny You Don't Look Crazy - A Story about Mental Illness and Returning to Work"

Victoria Maxwell (BFA/BPP*) is one of the top speakers on the lived experience of mental illness and recovery, wellness and creativity. She's also a self-proclaimed Wellness Warrior and Bipolar Princess.

She lives with bipolar disorder, anxiety and psychosis and has for more than 17 years, been helping people internationally better understand the 'insider's' experience of mental illness and recovery; how to create long-lasting wellness and kickstart their creativity.



Victoria Maxwell

The Mental Health Commission of Canada named her theatrical keynote, "That's Just Crazy Talk", one of the top anti-stigma interventions in the country.

When she's not presenting, you can find her running in the trails on the Sunshine Coast in BC or practicing Chi Kung

in the early morning.

She feels honored to be able to share her story and sharing her story helps her heal. As Victoria likes to say: "Sometimes... the harder we fall - the higher we bounce."

Under the personal wellness stream we will have the following presentations:

- My 1440 Matters - You have exactly 1440 minutes in every day. How do you spend yours?
- C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Affected Recovery Education)
- Coaching to Support Mental Wellness
- Physical Activity and Mental Wellness

Under the organizational wellness stream we will have the following presentations:

- Building Intercultural Competence: An introduction to the Intercultural Development Continuum and how we engage with Cultural Difference
- LGBTQ Education and Allyship
- Difficult Discussions Workshop
- Creating a Psychologically Safe Workplace
- Ready, Set, Recognize: Detecting Workplace Mental Illness and How to Help

We will also have panel discussions on:

- Occupational Stress Injury and Veterans/First Responders
- Mentally Healthy Workplace: A Shared Responsibility

Further information and registration will be available on our website at www.sk.cmha.ca Early bird registration is \$400 (available until April 30, 2020). After that registration will be \$450.00 and will be available until June 1, 2020.

We hope everyone can join us for this engaging and informative conference.





H.O.P.E. Learning Centre (Recovery College)

Helping Others Through Peer Education

CMHA Saskatchewan Division is proud to announce the opening of our H.O.P.E. Learning Center (Recovery College) located at 1888 Angus Street in Regina, SK. The first class, “The Art of Friendship,” was held January 22 – 24, 2020, in our beautiful new facility.

Donna Bowyer is the Director of the H.O.P.E. Learning Centre. She was formerly the Director of our Friends for Life Program, which we have moved under the umbrella of the Recovery College. She is joined by Danielle Cameron who was formerly a Mental Health Worker at the CMHA Weyburn Branch. We sincerely appreciate all the hard work of both of them have put in in helping us establish the college from the ground up.

WHAT IS A RECOVERY COLLEGE?

A Recovery College can be described as a unique learning centre where people with lived experience of mental health issues, peers, family members, and mental health professionals use their knowledge and experience to work collaboratively and on equal terms to co-develop and co-deliver courses on a range of topics that support well-being and recovery. (Perkins, R., Repper, J., Rinaldi, M. & Brown, H. (2012) *Recovery Colleges*, ImROC Briefing Paper, Nottingham, ImROC.



A Recovery College is a place of self-discovery where people come together to gain knowledge, learn new skills, and explore new roles for themselves in a supportive environment. Here a “student” is not a passive recipient of information or advice; they are actively engaged, valued, and empowered within a culture of mutual respect. A Recovery College is a learning environment where people with lived experience are equal partners in developing and delivering learning opportunities that open the door to new aspirations and personal growth. Recovery Colleges offer a new way to support recovery and can be transformative for both individuals and organizations.

WHO ARE RECOVERY COLLEGES FOR?

One of the key features of Recovery Colleges is that they are open to anyone. This includes people with lived experience of mental health or substance use issues, family members, peers, friends, and other supporters, as well as community members

and people who work in a professional role in mental health.

A number of benefits have been identified by students, primarily people with lived experience, and staff/professionals based on the mixed student group learning model offered at a Recovery College. The ways in which students benefitted

from the diverse student group included: learning new knowledge, reduced stigma, decreased isolation, increase in hopefulness and empathy, and enhanced understanding of others’ perspectives and recovery (Meddings, S., Guglietti, Sl, Lambe, H., & Byrne, D. (2014) Student perspectives: recovery college experience. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 18(3), 142-150; Perkins, R., Ridler, J., Hammond, L., Davis, S. & Hackmann, C. (2017) Impacts of attending Recovery Colleges on NHS staff. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 21(1), 18-24).



and enhanced understanding of others’ perspectives and recovery (Meddings, S., Guglietti, Sl, Lambe, H., & Byrne, D. (2014) Student perspectives: recovery college experience. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 18(3), 142-150; Perkins, R., Ridler, J., Hammond, L., Davis, S. & Hackmann, C. (2017) Impacts of attending Recovery Colleges on NHS staff. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 21(1), 18-24).

A recent review by Toney and colleagues (2018), aimed at discovering how Recovery Colleges work and benefit people, suggests that four specific sub-groups of people who use mental health services may particularly benefit from the Recovery College model

- 1) People who are beginning their recovery and could benefit from the support and guidance in making choices;
- 2) Those who find it challenging to engage in any mental health services and who may benefit from the warm welcome of a College;
- 3) Those who have high self-stigma are likely to benefit from exposure to peer trainers; and
- 4) People whose social connectedness is limited to formal services and who would benefit from meeting others outside of that context.

(Toney, R., Elton, D., Munday, E., Hamill, K., Crowther, A., Meddings, S., ...Slade, M. (2018). Mechanisms of Action and Outcomes for Students in Recovery Colleges, *Psychiatric Services*, 69(12), 1222-1229.)

WHY DO WE NEED RECOVERY COLLEGES?

The main aim of Recovery Colleges is to provide an opportunity for people to discover their true potential; to use their life experience in positive ways to promote their recovery; and to be able to share that knowledge and expertise for the benefit of others in the community.

Continued from previous page

Recovery Colleges fill a gap in current service delivery models and structures. People living with mental health and substance use issues have long sought an environment where they are viewed and respected as whole individuals, not “broken” beings needing to be fixed. The Recovery College environment is different in that respect right from the outset. There is a belief that every student has strengths, capabilities, and aspirations; and the approaches taken within the College support that belief. The College process and environment assist students in finding and bolstering their strengths and leveraging them to achieve meaningful personal goals.

CRITICAL DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY COLLEGES

1. EDUCATIONAL. Based on educational principles and a co-produced, recovery-focused curriculum with each student having an individual learning plan based on their wishes and aspirations. Students choose the courses they are interested in attending. Not referral-based.



2. COLLABORATIVE. Based on co-production in all facets of their operation, curriculum and course development, co-facilitation, and co-learning that bring together lived-life, professional, and subject expertise.

3. STRENGTHS-BASED AND PERSON-CENTRED. The strengths, skills, qualities, and possibilities for staff and students are identified, built upon, and rewarded.

4. PROGRESSIVE. Actively support students to move on in their lives, to achieve their own identified goals, and explore possibilities outside services.

5. COMMUNITY FACING. There is active engagement with community organizations and mainstream education facilities in the local community and an emphasis on partnership working.

6. INCLUSIVE. Recovery Colleges welcome students of all types, cultures, abilities, and educational achievement. There are no diagnostic requirements or exclusions and no formal risk assessments. They also welcome mental health practitioners, other mental health staff, relatives, friends, carers, and people in the local community and are free to all. Everyone learns together and from each other. (Perkins, R., Meddings, S., Williams, S., & Repper, J. (2018) *Recovery Colleges 10 Years On*, Nottingham, ImROC.)

2020 promises to be an exciting year as we move forward. There is a lot of work ahead of us (course development to increase our offerings, and promotional work to get the word out) but CMHA Sask. Division is up for the challenge.

For more information about the H.O.P.E. Learning Center and its training contact the Director, Donna Bowyer, at donnab@cmhask.com.



“Oh, it’s not depression. It’s a charmingly accurate worldview.”



Vocational programming at CMHA

Employment is highly valued in our society and can provide people with significant economic, social, and psychological benefits. When people are employed, they see themselves – and others see them – as productive individuals who are making a contribution to society.

With education and employment, individuals often experience reductions in their symptoms and hospitalization, as well as improved quality of life. It is also widely acknowledged that unemployment is generally associated with negative health outcomes including diminished mental health and emotional wellbeing (WHO (1996). Psychosocial rehabilitation - a consensus statement. Geneva: World Health Organization. <http://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/60630>).

The effects of mental illness on an individual's life and ability to fulfill job responsibilities depend on several factors, including the severity of the illness, and the quality of supports and services available. Within an employment context, different levels and types of employment support are appropriate, depending on the severity and persistence of the mental illness.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR RECOVERY

CMHASK programs and services are based on a recovery model. Recovery views illness or disability as only one aspect of a person who has assets, strengths, interests, aspirations and the desire and ability to continue to be in control of his or her own life. This includes reducing and eliminating symptoms through medication, therapy and support.

Recovery requires access to suitable and adequate resources for necessities including income through employment or income support, housing, social support and inclusion in the community as well as necessary health services.

“A recovery-oriented system of care identifies and builds upon each person's assets, strengths and areas of health and competence to support the person in achieving a sense of mastery over mental illness and/or addiction while maintaining or regaining his or her life and a meaningful, constructive sense of membership in the broader community.” (Mental Health Commission of Canada (2006). Practice Guidelines for Recovery-Oriented Behavioural Health Care.)

In line with this recovery-based approach, CMHASK vocational rehabilitation programming reflects the following principles:

- As far as possible, individuals with serious mental illness have access to the fullest available range of employment supports and the information necessary to make informed choices.
- Employment education and supports are tailored to the needs of the individual, recognizing that these vary in intensity depending on individual circumstances.
- Employment supports demonstrate sensitivity to the

gender, race, language, and cultural needs of individuals with serious mental health problems.

- There is a focus on client-identified employment outcomes and using evidence-based practices for employment education and support. It is critical to recognize the diversity and uniqueness of each individual in developing employment supports.
- There is a continuum of services to support clients throughout their recovery journey.
- CMHASK collaborates with other non-profit organizations, businesses in the community, and other stakeholders to ensure the best possible access to employment supports and education. In advancing the vocational rehabilitation programming, CMHASK would welcome collaboration with the various Community Recovery Teams around the program in identifying client needs and working together to find appropriate supports to meet those needs.
- CMHASK looks at new research findings and emerging and evidence-based practices related to employment in an effort to enhance and improve our programming.

A value-based supported employment program offers choice and encourages self-determination for all individuals by incorporating a full range of employment options that increases the opportunity for goal planning and success.

CMHA Saskatchewan Division vocational programs vary from branch to branch depending on local opportunities and the needs of our clients. It is our goal to offer vocational services to our clients representing the following interventions or models:

- Job coaching
- Work placement
- Supported employment (Individualized Placement and Support)
- Absenteeism reduction through education
- Caregiver Affected Recovery Education workshops (C.A.R.E.) to support wellbeing on the job.
- Supporting individuals living with an occupational stress injury (OSI-CAN program)
- Providing in-house or group work experiences to clients
- Offering skills training for employment readiness (prevocational – Recovery College)
- Supporting volunteer experience

In November 2019, CMHASK signed an agreement with the Saskatchewan Health Authority which would provide funding of \$50,000 per branch to enhance and expand our vocational programming with a view to increasing access to empirically-validated, evidence-based recovery methods of vocational rehabilitation to CMHA clients.

CMHASK is grateful to the Saskatchewan Health Authority for this support, and we look forward to moving forward with this work in 2020.



Tazmania bound by Henry Peters



Family dinner, Prince George

COLLEEN ANDERSON

They ate dinner in silence
the woman enveloped
in emerald, her daughters
in amethyst and ruby
the man, beard bound in gray

The daughters ate small bites
the mother said little
glancing at them from time to time
he stared at the patterned wall
chewing his meal thoroughly
the man, their father

The daughters released, they skipped
to the bathroom and back
a crinkled skirt
tucked into panties
the father didn't notice until they were seated
said to the girl in crumpled ruby
pull your skirt down, it's no big deal
the man sipped his coffee

The waitress placed the bill down
he glanced at her, said thank you
the family left
jewels followed
by a gray man
an evening dinner out

Sweat lodge

COLLEEN ANDERSON

I gasp, try to be fish
adapt to the water
that pours from my skin
condenses in the air
falls hissing against red stones

The dark enfolds
holds me close
hot to equal lava plumes
I am suffocatingly entombed
falling in upon myself

Then the drumbeat hits the air
pulls my heart to throb its song

*I am the beat that swells
gives breath to the panting walls
the sizzle and song of stones
I am the heavy burning air*

*I am water whispering as it burns
the scent of cedar on the earth
I am beating drum and drumbeat
I am molten transformation*

*Flowing, I embrace the now
coyotes howling to the void
wolverines snarl from me
screaming eagles into air*

I am molten transformation

I am I am

I am present here and now



Mask by
James Skelton

Slow Time

PHILIP ARIMA

A small man in a dated suit,
face shaved, hair cut neat,
suitcase in hand,
wondering why
she threw him out.

Suitcase growing lighter,
fantastic voices talking,
he walks the same
six blocks
until completely
lost.

Unshod, grey-haired,
empty hands constantly
shaking, he sits
on ice-covered
pavement
watching dirty slush
clog
a sewer grate.



Canadian
Mental Health
Association
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A Quiet Walk

PHLIP ARIMA

I went to the cemetery, saw gravestones
and statues, wilting flowers, candles,
inscriptions of loss, numbers
that define
the limits of lives I never knew,
that are no more, not even
in memory.

I walked the paths between the dead,
the rows that unfold and intersect.
I got lost. It got dark.
I sat down beside a small mausoleum.
There were leaves on the ground
and very little sound.
I closed my eyes,
felt the night.

I went to the cemetery, saw gravestones
and statues, perfectly kept grass,
blossoming trees, inscriptions
of love,
numbers that proclaim
years of accomplishment, journeys
to be admired, even if only
abstractly.

I walked with the dead at rest
in all directions. I had no destination,
no desire. It got dark.
I sat down.
There were leaves on the ground
and very little sound.
I closed my eyes,
felt the night.

mark the world

TERRI BOSNER

in an effort to survive
i mark the world
with my words
i am driven to create
a place for me to exist
some people have children
but i write poetry for after i am gone
just as your children shall recall you
my poems will remember me

Awakening

PHLIP ARIMA

In slumber the guard goes down,
consciousness reaches into the shadow,
touches muted memory, illuminates reality.

Is it the scream that wakes me? Or waking
the reason I scream?

confession

TERRI BOSNER

we walked to the end of the world
where we flew away on
fists full of feathers
carried along on
the call of sandpipers and gulls
my spirit lifted by the
whisper of the Great Mother
you worshipped at the water's edge
and i confessed to the salt air

The water of numbers (bits of the obvious)

GORD BRAUN

we pledge undying love at an ecard distance

where we live is no one's business
except Amazon's

we are repellently friendly to user names
we only just met

laugh our asses off, when we didn't

mean we are, to a jagged burning
knife's edge
because anonymity wants compensation

it's safe here, warm in the water of numbers
there are no comebacks
no promises in need of keeping

last but not really,
we scream the scream about the sanctity
of our privacy
as we violate the space and time
of whoever is handy

Deer Prayer

JOAN CRATE

Drifting down winter
they carry wings of calm
on muscled shoulders, amber
eyes on a stark white sheet
of terms and conditions.

The cold holds the prayer
of their muzzles, feathery breath
blooming on boughs of destitution,
twigs, ribs and dens of hunger
deep in the mountains.

Give us this day
a leap of vigour
across the path of shed antlers.

Bless us with their persistence.

Christmas Prayer

JOAN CRATE

The sun rises like a scab in the east.
A few hours later it weeps back to bed,
sinks to sleep. Soon
night will be buried under a fallen
star.

O Little Town of profit and donkeys
I'm tired of stuffing holes in the heart
and head with *positive thinking* while my son's
palms sear on the stove, the smell of burnt flesh,
the whole damn mess of healing where scars
are the best result we long, we pray for.

Don't play me
the loop of consolation:
everything happens for a reason,
that dirty joke of hope. It's *all for the best*
and *what doesn't kill us makes us stronger.*
I don't want anything to kill you, my lovely

tortured boy, can't imagine what misfortune
does but nip our heels, draw blood, snap
tendons, how it wounds and weakens us,
our bodies dropping to a heap of waste,
heads in the flies.

Land of cannibals
and greed, a sea of carcasses
and rising degrees surrounds, pulls,
drowns us. Dear one, my injured son,
be okay, beokaybeokay.

Summer Mornings

JOAN CRATE

chipmunks dart
at the edge of consciousness, sticking
twitching noses in berry bushes and Id images
where they have no business. Marmots

poke from dark holes, sluggish as a cloud
of hung-over headache banked against
the queasy sun. At breakfast a hornet butts

between toast and teeth. I slam it into the table
with the morning paper, smear its body across
a story of bombs and snipers then contemplate

going back to bed, leaving behind the sentient
world with its stings and infringement, swing
on a hammock slung between drift

and wish, close eyes and ride a brainwave
like a barge of adolescent geese –
visions floating one after the other—

silent as the water parting before them
in liquid rows, then settling
back in disappearance.

The Way the World Works

JOAN CRATE

with hatchets and swan's down
runs on rust and racetrack bets
sputters one minute but births
symphonies the next. Or it doesn't

but strikes with bats and picket lines
hires scabs oozes infection bursts a-
part in spores and shrapnel.

In the lapse between 10 and 11 minutes
late for dinner it picks up like crows on a highway
while the day's ragged fingernails and rewind
voices tear roundaround like hungry mongrels.

King Tut's body, it holds together
longer than anyone imagined, persists
while bombs smash the sun, the world
gets sick, a cousin gets life, discs disinte-
grate.

We forget what we shouldn't
remember too much, are always
surprised. A hungover sunrise
through a cracked windshield runs
electrical currents through the teeth.

Small miracles duct-taped to sewer pipes drag it on.

Gravel road

JOAN CRATE

Empty, it feels like a long yawn,
like Saskatchewan after the sun's set
but stars haven't been turned on

when pickup trucks stop spewing
shrapnel and teen-aged girls
walk home in huddles, tongues

poking through tail-light lips
to shoot smoke rings through oblivion.
Dark and restless, it goes nowhere

in all directions. Like you at 16
alone in your room, stoked on rock 'n roll,
stoned on distance. Can't you see

the road's still in front of us, lit by reflection.
Tonight we'll fly on tires of flame, window
cracked, moon and road dust in our eyes,

muffler blown,
still roaring.



Sister by Rene Diedrich

Gutter gods

JOAN CRATE

lowly slipping my skin
memory and drive dis- connecting
and no YouTube video

or hook me up to heal
have all turned yellow bruises
roots gone grey

I've stepped
off the home-office, social media fast-track
delusional drained don't
really give a shit

noon
hum-drumming
down the hours inhalation
expiation step by slippery step
I wander *lonelyasacloud*
downtown

an old woman with a guitar
busks for quarters on a street of concrete gloom
that threadbare preacher
hobos huddled in front of the bank strung out
sharing a smoke

too busted
to care to try to make it to work to day

if I can get it together to phone
you'll come

salvage what you can
take it home to

1. flyers in the mailbox
 2. milk in the fridge
 3. your hand on
 4. my waist
- c'mon baby

you the machines
and gutter gods blow me up break me
down
pin me back to earth



Bedroom wall, September

JOAN CRATE

It wasn't a shadow dawn drew on the bedroom wall, but light in the shape of a raven. She was white as a wedding gown before flying up the chimney to be blackened by smoke and scheming.

As the hours flew by, a flock of doves. I followed them past the fraying corners of afternoon to an evening of feather pillows and cooing. The next morning

a different bird, the beak hooked, wings a counterpane of murder— the eagle that scooped up the neighbour's cat, its paws clawing sky as it was transported to the aerie, eyes two moons— one blood, one harvest. All these birds

dropping with degrees, each landing on a branch of creeping darkness.

Tomorrow I'll undo them from the drywall, set them free to eat fruit flies clustering around my reading lamp, catch the mouse that races through the house avoiding traps, its tiny exclamations of shit in the morning cereal. When days stain

and chill, I'll find a slinking coyote, peel it from paint to chase thieves invading the garden. I'll watch it clamp icicle teeth on the wheels of loss and sorrow, alarm January, shake February, wake March, deep in sleep with the marmots. Bring them

all the wild spirits, with their seasons of escape and carnage.

Presence

BEVERLEY CUMMINGS

“So I have always held you in my heart...”
---Michael Ondaatje, *Handwriting*, “The Great Tree”

*I wash you home I sing you home
I sing as I wash you home*

In the presence of sun-waxed summer leaves
I try to relinquish my worry stone

Often there is a whispering in my ear
suggesting impulses I would never act upon

From the twenty-second floor we view
lightning traffic up and down the river

Your fight with electronic technology
makes me glad of my ignorance

When I'm gone I'll know everything
necessary about vanishing points

To think privately is one thing
to speak privately is another

Water slick on the roads. Wind-racked
trees. Rain the texture of stone

To contemplate disaster is yet another
to reveal its complexity is uncommon

I listen to you fumbling in the next room
groaning from the pain of your broken collarbone

You have been out on the balcony an hour now— thinking
what?
as I lie in your bed worried about old age, money and death

I try to smooth out the edges of my conscience
lose confidence in my ability to confide to the page

The irony—the cock, the strength of your manhood, so brittle
To feel helpless in the light of your masculinity

CBC playing jazz—cool, succinct, calming
I try to sleep, but find poetry nagging

You say the smile you receive at my door
cannot be anything but genuine

Ah, the man you have become—
If I lost you now who would comfort me?

Ants to Zebu

CATHERINE FENWICK

Aggressively annoying ants
Basic bullying beetle
Calm cool cricket

Demented deviant duck
Exquisitely elegant egret

Fumbling famished fox
Gastronomic gay goat
Heckling hypertensive hamster

Impatient immature ibis

Juvenile joking jaguar
Keenly kiboshing kangaroo
Lobotomized laughing lemur

Manic malcontent merganser
Neurotic nervous nuthatch
Obsessively obliging osprey
Paranoid problematic pigeon

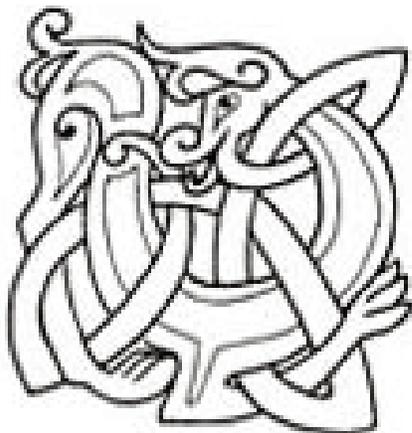
Quarrelsome quasi-friendly quail
Regressively recessive rooster
Sadistically stressed sapsucker

Tremendously tipsy turkey

Unsung unconscious uakari
Victoriously virtuous vulture
Withdrawn wounded warbler

Xavier's X-ray tetra

Youthfully yielding yak
Zealously zany zebu



Celtic design
Courtesy of Dover Graphics

Bouquets

CATHERINE FENWICK

Agapanthus attachment
Buttercup beginning
Chrysanthemum care
Daffodil destination

Euphorbia essentials
Frangipani friends
Gaillardia gestalt
Hibiscus hope

Ivy identity
Jasmine joie de vivre
Kalmia kindness
Lotus libations

Marigold memories
Nymphia nudge
Osteospermum obligation
Poppy projection

Queen's-cup quest
Rudbeckia reasoning
Saxifraga saga
Tiger-lily task

Ursinia understanding
Verbena voice
Wild-rose wit
Xylobium xenia

Yellow-bell yoni
Zesty zenobia

Postpartum

NEIL GARVIE

grey hues sadness confusion
depression gluts my thinking hailstones
strike my window sombre black shatters
the world into a thousand pieces

displaced running aimlessly along an
ink-sack path left from cuttlefish fleeing
a husband two young children a home
emptiness forebodes *a will to*

question? but what? desperately alone
in sunken indifference scarlet-flamed
emotions conflict racing wild running
running on misguided intentions

misaligned truisms anxious thoughts
perplex death threatens identity fractures
robbing me of purpose sifting through
the muddle in solitude I ponder

life without me desolate thoughts lost
and found edges keep swirling torturing
my troubled heart in devil's abyss dying
many times-over I cannot hear

nor trust those once dear on a road of
transparent destruction unconscious psyche
moves in accord with an abstract
dimension buried souls

interconnecting screaming many
minds many *what am I doing?* heavy
undertones stifle my thinking *will I ever*
understand? on hands and knees staring

into a white porcelain bowl a consequence
of blind will illicit consumptions collapsing
my body lay crumpled on terracotta
tiles then sometime
later in negative space *is this*
death? is death life? a critical crossroad
I plead mercy a voice only the weary
hear calls me

dragging myself across the floor
deliberately I rise placing one foot in
front of the other each day an echo
a blessing a light evolving



wolf moon

gillian harding-russell

A crack in the clouds, all peach and bruised plum,
lets in the light after purple storm
and a black wind has written in white so
you may see what was the beige prairie

draped in snow sheened to sun gold
before your eyes have already forgotten
the dull of a cloud passing the moment
before. Pain, so curious, you remember

the agony of its having happened
though distinctness of its chord in its wrenching
minor key is an ache that quickly goes away.
A wolf moon, round as a flashlight

in theatrical sunken-eye surround
with a bank of puce cloud slightly fogged
though its glassy peephole might be a voyeur
(you can't escape the notion)

who leans over the rim of the world
to watch your mistakes as it lights on the snowy
shoulders of the rolling hills while the fenceposts fly by.
Driving back the same way on the next day

you see three ravens flap blackly
over a brown fur flank, but as you look away
along the road the ghost of a vehicle that travelled
on to the next town the evening before enters

your mind. Perhaps the driver experienced
a sudden shift as in a strong wind that, on impact,
pulled his vehicle to one side? Mustn't he have
become aware of causing harm to another

body? So intent was the driver on arriving at a celebration
in the night with string band ready to perform in a country pub
and a reception with champagne on the house to welcome
the wedding pair into the dark of the new year

all silver and surreally lighted by a wolf moon.
Meanwhile the bridemaids' grandmother sits
hinge-hipped in an old rocking chair, her frame
slightly askew

the new hip without discomfort
though memory of the old one's pain remains –
hard to conjure pain though easy to recognize it
in its return, like a scent on the brain

Her aging eyes, frosted headlights circling
the winter morning room as she waits
for her shepherd dog, Molly, who has now
crossed the 8 a.m. yard past the neighbour

broken-wire fence, sniffed the air, trotting
in the direction of the roadside ditch where
the princely raked carcass is crowned
with leaping, lurching black wings...

The morning's scribble of scents so confusing
with the smudge of colour from an evening gone by
but isn't that blue car deserted in the middle snowbank
where none of the passing traffic slows to notice,
or stop, like a piece of yesterday's sky?



Meditation on blue

gillian harding-russell

Blue as a field of flax
mesmerizing

across the highway at noon,
canola neon yellow beside.

Blue as a mountain bluebird
that's found its way through wet snow

into the March branches, where you look
and then look again, so blue!

Don't be fooled. The sky is not blue
though it appears clear

as day, blue as the rim of
a rainbow is the iris of the day

but the air has no colour. Beware
you can't mix blue from the earthly colours

you already have. Blue physical as wavelengths,
abstract as a concept invented by your brain.

Blue unreachable as hidden depths of water
(rarely that blue) that reflect the untouchable

sky. Blue as Egyptian blue made from copper,
limestone, malachite and azurite, glows

from a sarcophagus and the dark of a grave
good for medical equipment. Blue as blue light

from the computer – that upsets the diurnal rhythms
and keeps you awake. Blue as lapis lazuli and a medieval

priest who cherished the blue of the virgin's robes.
Blue as ultramarine and an artist who purchased

packets of it, blue headdresses on a Dutch girl and
his obsession with blue while his family starved.

And cochineal red – fancy that! – mixed with
blood, makes for a royal blue blazer, blueprints

for architecture and X-rays for cancer. Indigo
that fueled the slave trade and the blue

of our everyman/ workman clothes, our high
brand jeans (some with holes and frayed edges

you pay through the nose). Blue so elusive, don't
know if the blue of the sky on a summer day

you can see or the blue of the delphiniums
you can smell are real, such is the power of blue...

we sing the blues at the unattainable, a beautiful
song, blue for a mystery. Blue

for a god who cannot be made up
of what we know. Cannot be

one of ourselves
...surely?



*Daniel in the lion's den
by James Skelton*



Third Eye on the ground

gillian harding-russell

One, two grosbeaks swoop through frozen air—
and light on a tall gathering of Ponderosa pine branches
that crackle in the cold. A third wrestles a thin seed

from a cone angled like a pupil
in a seeing eye and, in a splash of sunlight
their breasts are jewelled ruby and olive

before twilight behind a cloud returns.
My daughter 2000 kilometres to the north
and my son 2000 kilometres to the east

and, in a flash of sunlight, I see
my daughter climbs shield rock,
foxes that watch at the edge

of her vision on her way
to the school where she teaches
small children

while my son wrestles with bread dough
and himself to have his small word
on the world.

Why one child lights on ambiguous
natural spirits, gold furred and black-legged
that may be her guardian angels

and my son fights himself
would-be demons
I do not know.

A cone in the dry cold may be blown
by a nor'wester kilometers away
or drop to the ground, its seed mingle
(or perish)

distances away, melt with the snow
and travel natural waterways to new life
beneath our feet to become those towering

orange-legged ones of luxuriant green
with plentiful small cones that grosbeak grace
with a transcendent visit

from time to time, if one keeps an eye open
open between flashes of sunshine
and cloud's grey. Just this memory

Not holding my breath

CATHERINE KATT

Keeping Faith is like an old piece of jewelry
Sitting in a drawer forgotten, in a nice box
Hidden among the existential mire
Of being tossed over again and again into
A dark sea
Oh, desire.

Swimming, take in a deep breath
Before you dive first look up toward the sky
Arms outstretched, then poised to plunge
Into the depths of confusion
A dark sea
Oh, wishes.

Losing Faith is looking into the eyes
Of a love at the door
Who looks deeply back with expectations
At once welcomed across the threshold
When love is there, then turns away, into
A dark sea
Oh, breath.

I'm still trying

DEREK KENDALL

I'm older now than I should be
Years of loss, grief and misery
Everything except money,
Now I know I was right
And I know I made mistakes
I pray my soul to keep
Can no longer take, take, take
My heart can't be broken
My heart cannot break
Years come and go
Just for heavens sakes
I've been down to my last dollar
Couldn't holler at the demons
Nothing I could do
I want to learn the riches
Like not buying or selling
while I was dreaming
Seeming well for now
Mostly, I'm not still hurt
I'm not still crying
Lotta things I didn't do ...
But I am still trying

The yuppified psycho in denial

TONYA LIBURD

I sit cross-legged
My brain pickled in store-bought elixirs
My pie-face announcing more about my inner state
Than I'll ever admit, know -- or want to know

I think there's this imaginary line
That distinguishes me from my compatriots

I rail on
About the accomplishments of my compatriots
Who mostly don't call on my wine-soaked birthday
As if somehow the achievements of others
Endows me
With some otherness, my crutch
And when that crutch fails, I drink

Colloquialisms, anachronisms, schisms, whatnot
Are the raiments I hold about me
Yet they refuse to clothe me
I
The emperor who wears no clothes

I go on about who challenges me intellectually
While onlookers
See me
Wade and stumble through the illusions I re-create about myself
Not knowing that the things I say clearly dictate that they do not figure
In my high estimation of the world

But, oh no...
I'm not an alcoholic

This is how you win the war

FRANSIVAN MACKENZIE

when your heart rages in loud, staccato beats
and you're curled up on the floor with the glassy detritus of your dreams,

when you find yourself searching for a familiar glint of a metal's lips
to quench the planes of your heart that are gnawing in need,

when every cell in your body goes electric with longing
and howls for a bite the way your collarbones crave a kiss,

when all of you begs to be unpeeled
and your veins offer a golden ticket for a ride of relief,

when your knuckles turn white as your insides twist
and your eyes morph into faucets, relinquishing already,

grind your teeth with all your grit
and clench the madness in your fist.

whatever it takes, resist.
whatever it takes, resist.

Cut

FRANSIVAN MACKENZIE

I hope you never understand
what it's like
to dismantle pencil sharpeners,
to keep disinfectants in the pockets of your coat at all times,
to purchase huge watches and skin tone make ups,
to know the language the fabric whispers against your skin,
to be unafraid of rust yet terrified of dying,
to be highly aware of what it's like to turn
your flesh into dust,
to be enticed by the glint of the metals,
to hear your veins gasp,
to feel how hard it is to put the knife back
where it was.

I hope you never understand
what it's like to be unable to put the armor down
in a body that in itself
is a warpath.



Art by Rene Diedrich



Dance with Death

ADISON MESSETT

on my path
I encountered Death
our eyes met
gaze locked
two opponents facing off

our swords clashed
and I was coupled
in an unwelcome dance

I tried to read the cues
gauge the sequence of the steps
Death wielded his weapon
wounded and afraid I bowed
and drew from the fourth dimension

when he feinted a second, third,
and fourth intention,
my step and sword
matching his, I thought
“What do I say to Death?”
“Not today!” is what I said

we saluted upon his retreat
knowing once again we'd meet
still trembling but determined
I vowed next time would be different
teaching my soul to quiet
and not quicken

the training continues
unrelenting
for each of us
must some day die
but I will not go before my time
when Death's cold eyes again I see
he will not have his victory

Anxiety Haikus

(Written on Napkins While
Waiting For Friends)

MAGGIE METNICK

The rules that taught me
To survive are now holding
Me back.

Good things happen and
I say why me? It'd be so
Nice to sit awhile.

It's not dumb to want
Things to be different this
Time. I'm worth magic

Sometimes I think that
my depression is yelling
so loudly that I

am bad and should be
hurt But I think that voice is
something else Because

when I listen close,
I hear it whisper Please rest
now. Be kind to me

Afraid of watching
your heart change because of how
I tried to save it

I want to get in
Shape so I can be better
At the sexy stuff

If you were me could
You forgive yourself for the
Wine stain on the bed

I put on too much
Make up so no one will guess
My face is a hole

The way you light up
A room I want to light your
Cigarette thank you

Saskatchewan Spring

DOMINIQUE PANKO

The sky sings to dirt: time to wake up.
The dirt tells the sky: five more minutes.

They Remind Me

DOMINIQUE PANKO

I remind myself of my father when I burp
And when I tell my mother that my sisters
are in too many activities.
I also remind myself of him when I refuse to
throw away my garbage
And when I bring home too much fast food and feed the
leftovers to my cat.
I remind myself of my mother when I throw out all
my belongings
And when I sign myself up for too many activities.
I remind myself of her when I tell my sisters to thank the
drive-thru attendant
And when I say I love you too many times before I leave.

THIS IS

ky perraun

Lying in bed, the room cool. the blanket
draped across my body, soft and weighty,
I sink into the comfort of the moment,
presence, and the chattering mind is stilled,
the negative spiral thwarted by concentration,
bare attention on the breath.

What is tomorrow but a hazarded guess?
What is yesterday but a biased memory?
Today. This moment. This mind.

Room so cool.
Thoughts so calm.
Breath so steady.
This is.

ROLLI

The cemetery for dead books

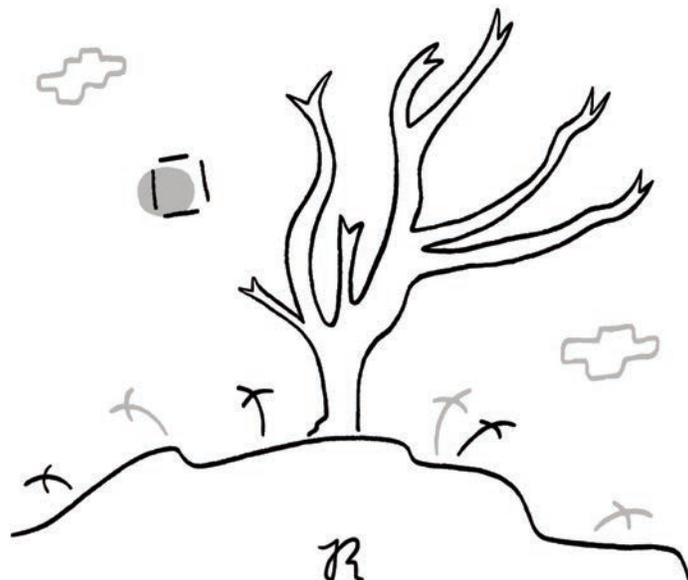
We will stroll
autumnally one
day

the grave way
to the place

where crawling
authors
water

buried fruits
of their futile
years

with tears





The day it rains

ROLLI

on all
(at once) of
us

we'll one an-
other
grasp

at last



The black bat's back

ROLLI

in my skull
that I cannot
rattle
free

guano
dropping on
my happy
memory

*Please
me evening
read
to sleep*

*and warm
my palm
till morning*

To cure cynicism

ROLLI

sew closed your
eyelids

cram
with wax
the canals
of your ears

your nose clothes-
pin

sing
anything
but the national anthem

And then the wind

ROLLI

without sweating

composed on
the skin
of the ocean

a poem
of such
deft
engineering

that fell
my pen

and I sat there
despairing

Before you go getting all romantic

CARRIE SCHEMENAUER

It has been four hours and fifty-six minutes
since I asked him to leave
clock ticks in an empty house
supper alone facing his chair
Is it better to be strangled?
or live alone?

Sometimes I am not sure
The first is scary, disturbing
makes me bone weary
but the second is a quieter fear
afraid that lonely is here to stay

It felt good to press skin against skin
to his large back
laid on with no air-pockets
like a perfect pie crust
soothing to be near and smell his scent

Stop

Woman you better forget skin to skin for awhile
This morning his skin against you
was his large hands around your neck
Maybe you need a picture of that
before you go getting all romantic

Managing STRESS

Become acquainted with
relaxation techniques --
yoga, meditation, deep
breathing, massage -- and
use those that work for you.



Perhaps a bit thinly, but ...

TED DYCK

Elliott, Alicia.

A Mind Spread Out on the Ground.

Penguin, 2019. Hardcover.

\$25. 223 pp.

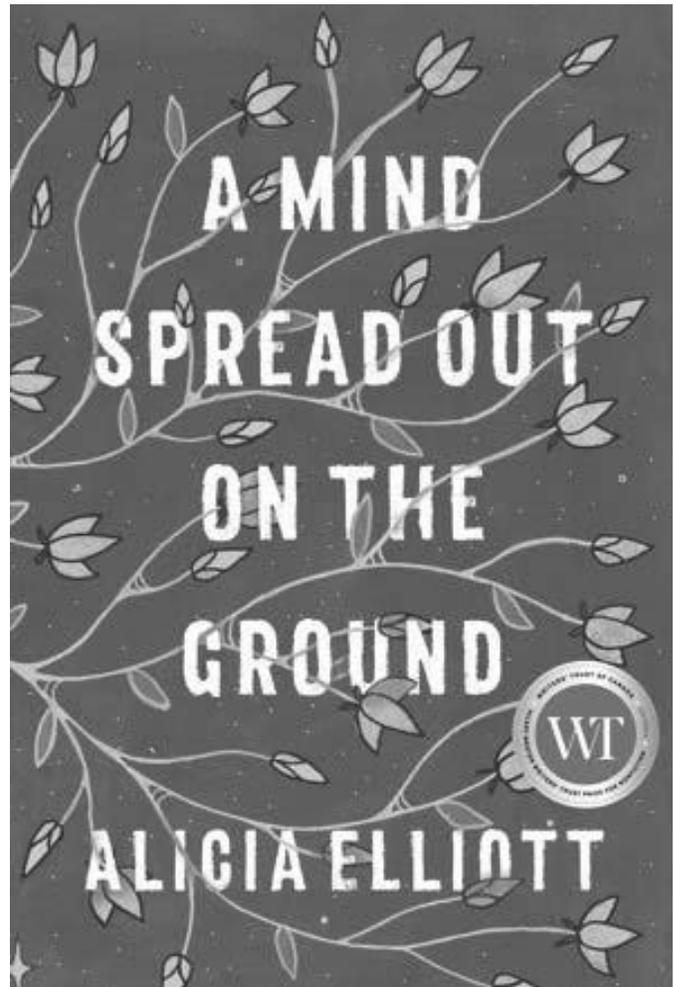
This unique book is a collection of essays dealing with the author's depression as a First Nations person writing her way through it. It is unashamedly an anthology of *traditional* essays, contra the attempts of some blurbers to read it as a "punk rock" text. One of the essays, the first, is stunningly good, most of them are passable, and several are evidently fillers. It is a book of essays by an *Aboriginal* writer – and I cannot think of a genre more distinct from – what I understand as – Aboriginal culture than the Baconian, English essay. Two of the fourteen recognize this legacy in titles beginning "On the" It is fully and fluently an English text, not an Aboriginal text written in *English*. And, most importantly, if sometimes obliquely, it is about *mental health* from an individual Aboriginal perspective.

The title essay is exceptional. According to the author, the expression is a translation of the Mohawk word closest to what we understand by *depression* (9). The author and her editors made the obvious determination that this prize-winning, previously published work (*The Malahat Review*) would be the most important piece in the collection. It puts out the author's own experience of mental illness. The most arresting single observation in the essay – or, for that matter, in the book, as if by accident, as an aside, is that ... *colonialism is like depression* ... (11). In my reading, the book might profitably end right there, stating this most damning of themes.

But of course it does not. It more or less (that is, not always linearly) traces the author's mental illness through her life. "Half-Breed" (13-22) identifies itself as "a racial biography in five parts." "Scratch" (71-90) characterizes the author's first eighteen years – if *scratching* is a variant of *cutting* – as a protracted mental illness. "Not Your Noble Savage" (151-164) includes a full-blown critique of a [mis]reading of Aboriginal writing by the [white] literary establishment and comes closest to articulating that we all write for our mental health. Among the fillers, I would count an essay that riffs in all directions on Sontag and would certainly include the final essay. This is a work that designates itself as "participatory" in its opening sentence but undermines whatever that might mean by admitting that whether the reader participates or not doesn't matter.

For its title essay alone, I place Elliott's collection of essays on depression, broadly speaking, on the same shelf and next to Brian Dillon's collection of essays about the genre *sine qua non*, broadly speaking, for writing about depression. And that, given my earlier review of Dillon's *Essayism*, is very high praise indeed.

I have only one reservation about Elliott's book– it's minor but perhaps telling: there is a lamentable lack of documentation of her use of other published sources – and that reservation applies at least as much to her editors as to herself.





Judge's comments

CONTEST: THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT IN MY LIFE

VICTOR ENNS

I was delighted to be given the opportunity to look at so much good work coming from the different Write For Your Life groups in Saskatchewan. I had heard of this initiative through TRANSITION magazine, in which I've myself been published. Thank you for sharing, putting yourselves "on the line."

Advice to contest entrants anywhere – the closer you stay to what the judges are looking for, if they provide that information to you, the better your chances are. After a first-impression reading and then a close reading, I had a long-list of about a dozen poems, and then a short list of six. These are my final selections.

First prize (page 22) goes to Caitlin Arnal's "Magical Pain":

The poem begins with an image that is one of those wonderful surprises I was looking for, with an ambiguity that remains even on closer examination. My reading suggests the owl (a symbol for wisdom) is the thinking brain that hates her, the kitten (yes also

her brain) about to be devoured by her predator. There are more striking images and metaphors in the last three couplets. The stanzas are not logical or linear progressions of image or story but are connected by magical pain.

Second prize goes to "from see to shiny c" by Bill Pelletier:

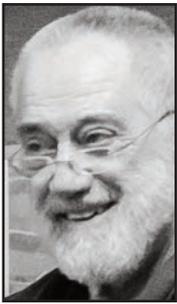
The metaphor of the mind being a darkroom developing negatives was the kind of leap that will make a reader recognize the truth and remember this poem. The reading I take most closely is as a description of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).

Third prize goes to Mareike Neuhaus's "I threw up mountains":

An evocation of throwing up not love but mountains of pain and puke. The stale stench of vomit in the air contrasts sharply with a lullaby finish, hush baby hush. Sounds like talk therapy.

Honorable mention goes to Jayne Melville Whyte's "Weather Vane":

One of the things I liked about this piece was the bit of levity shown – "The reign of pain / falls mainly in Jayne's brain." This poem turns on a pun with "A musing breeze foresees a change" possibly referring to the importance of the muse and writing for your life.



TED DYCK
WFYL
DIRECTOR

ANNOUNCEMENT

The WFYL Fall 2020 Contest will be judged by Moose Jaw's premier bibliophile, Irene Grobowsky:
Write a poem with a title and ten to twelve lines describing the main noun in the title but not using that noun in the poem.

For example, a poem about measles would have the word "measles" in the title, followed by 10-12 lines describing measles in which the word "measles" does not appear.

Deadline for submissions to your WFYL Group is July 01 2020



Canadian
Mental Health
Association
Saskatchewan
Division Inc.

Magical pain

MCCULLAM-ARNAL, CAITLIN

her mind hates her like
a kitten clutched by an owl

her present hate
drinks herself silly

she breaks the law
for chaos to beauty

a crime to forget his
stepping to rage

russian aeronautical metals
allow celebration in the mind

they bomb like eyeballs
under cellphone screens

a mind unravels cold so
it tolerates the licking dog

I threw up mountains

NEUHAUS, MAREIKE

I threw up mountains
I wish I could say of love

I'm lying on the ground
looking up to the peak

the most genius of acts are the most simple
it takes a sharp knife to take a life

my mother gave me to the world
and gave the world to me

there's neither rhyme nor reason
just the stale stench of vomit in the air

hush, baby, hush – let sleep come
and take you back forever

Confession

BALLANTYNE, BASIL

Christmas was fantastic
In Saskatoon with family

Been going for coffee at the mall
So I can visit with the ladies

Early on Christmas morning
My niece and nephew woke me up

I make a confession
That I am late for coffee

Everybody else was up
Except for me

They closed the A&W on 24th
And I am going to miss the ladies very much

I was so happy then
I'll never forget

Color

BIRD, DANIELLE

Walking in the woods
The scent of crisp fall leaves

The water glimmers
The glistening of the sun

The tiny cupboard
Is where I place my journal

Today I embrace life
For all it offers

I welcome the good that comes
My journal holds years of sorrow

I like the color of my journal
Long walks complete my good and bad days

Dust

COCHRANE, DEBBIE

writing on the dusty floor
the words throw themselves

as you sit by the windowsill
you slip into sleep

you can see them form
a word or pictures

gone south in the mind
its clear no one there

Dress appropriately

DODGE, NICHOLAS

people come and people go
along the trail of truth and lies

its warm and then its cold
be sure to dress appropriately

try to wake up on the right side of the bed
let go of yesterday's stress

love as much as you can
focus your mind away from hatred

stay in positivity
stray away from negativity

enjoy yourself today
all we have is time
if you're stuck meditate or pray
you'll find your answer soon enough

Passion

FAVREAU, SHERRY

A passion for the things I love
Comes from God above.

To express to others what I've been through,
Helping those who struggle, that's what I do.

It makes people see life through new eyes,
Makes sense about what nots and whys.

Walking frees me from mental illness,
Peace, fresh air, sunshine, I really feel fine!

God is always there if I need him
That is how I stay trim.

I am not full of anxiety and sadness,
Bowing my head, always, instead.

Passion for life
Ends all my strife.

War, Peace, Thunderstorm, Empathy

GUEDO, WENDEL

he was willing to fight
war for peace

thunderstorm a search for empathy
he doesn't want war at all

what he wants is peace
the force of one named empathy

he'd never been in a war
but neither had he ever known peace

For the score

KNIFE, HOLLY

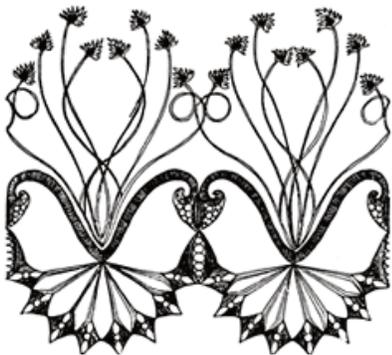
milk is great
during the break

eggs spill as they stumble
when you mumble they spill more

the kids laughed aloud
after they crowded around

the church bell rang
one more for the score

milk is what cows give
caterpillars give silk



Graphic courtesy of Dover Graphics

Miscellaneous

MCINTYRE, IAN

heavy metal is my therapy
brings me joy when I am sad

be careful with my mental health
I am better off if you leave me alone

wonderful to have a network of friends
friends are ears that never betray me

chocolate is my guilty pleasure
when stomach is filled, my heart skips a beat

I love coffee, like riding the bus
love when strong overpowers hate

gather the strength allow the world to change
the world is me and you, not one person

Siblings

SETTEE, DOT

My brother swam with me
To the middle of the lake

Believing in me
It's a surfboard, I think lucky for us

Another brother my heart is with him
He cannot do right, though he tries

My sister always in my mind
She is not my enemy, only in my head

I remember them well
It still isn't the same

Patience

TESKEY, MARK

recently I sold my art
I have to be patient when I paint

It has to have time to dry
If it is too wet it won't work out

My mother worked with honeybees
She wasn't allergic to bees

My mother was patient with the bees
She sold the honey locally

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

NIXON, JENNIFER

Books stacked a mile high, my Mount Everest of laundry
Tell only a bit of the story in this well lived home

Pressures and deadlines, whip me into action, and words fly,
My brain jump-starts into madness for clues and ideas

Promises of projects lie overdue and scatter endlessly
Gathering reminders of someday I'll find time, but not right now

My reality melts in one with my imagination and dreams
Fully aware and oblivious to my surroundings and thoughts

Denial strikes a fair game, and I play to stray and escape
And impulsively succumb to the devil's play and runaway

Broken young, living and dying, I survived the truth
Pain, it totally creates me, to be resilient and I persevere

My twin Jessie always said, "You're so hard on yourself Jennifer,
Please, lighten up on yourself sis, you deserve to be happy."

From See to Shiny C

PELLETIER, BILL

the mind is a dark room
that develops negatives – so

old crabby scoots – pinches his nose
spits chewing gum – a mushroom grows

an electric eel twists
its eye seeks to know

wears the death cap
the beep sounds like c-3-p-o

the stupor sees time's hand
point to its pale face to show

nurses' voices shadows echo
he's back – now he can go

Weather Vane

WHYTE, JAYNE MELVILLE

Storm warning with dark inner pain.
Weather changes on a window pane.

Rain - raging carves guilty gullies,
tears channel in desolate plain.

Floating leaves from last year's fall,
remnants of rich growth remain.

Plodding heavy in dark sticky mud,
One more step, then again, again.

Refrain flowing, "The reign of pain
falls mainly in Jayne's brain."

A musing breeze foresees a change:
Accept the rain, the pain made plain.

Streams of tears clearing inner pain.
Weather changes on a window pane.

January 9, 2020

Save my house

BOGAN, BRITTANY

Somewhere safe that I can go
A place somewhere no one will know

Alone at last among the streets
Furniture, bed with brand new sheets

By myself I walk away
For the future and seize the day

I pray and eat and find my seat
I keep my home very neat

What I do throughout my days
Save other souls from purple haze

Out through the shadows the trees moan
A safer place, to find a home

Loving there is a need
You run away from a bad deed.

Winning

DOELL, NAOMI

Win it in one hundred moves or less.
You're a failure if you win it in one hundred one,

If you always win.
Why bother playing?

You have the upper hand now.
Even the mighty fall.

I may be blind with my eyes.
You're blind with your heart.

What is life worth
Without compassion and empathy?

Polarities of bipolar disorder

DANIELS, CHELSEA

I go high, manic, and psychotic.
I go low, miserable and depressed.

I get support, love and understanding.
I get stigmatized, judged and criticized.

My family comments on the progress I'm making.
They cry when I end up back in the psych ward.

A car ride is a lot of fun.
A car ride is unbearable.

I go to a social gathering enthused and talk to different people constantly.
I go to a social gathering and stand in the corner alone, paralyzed with anxiety.

I go to a funeral and laugh.
I go to a funeral and cry.

My life is a series of highs and lows.
The more I recover, the less severe they become.

Strength

HELSTROM, MELANIE

It took all I had to wake up this morning, roll out of bed, lift my weary head.
I reach into my soul to find just one reason, one happy thought to get out of bed.

I spoke the truth, was vulnerable, left my heart on my sleeve, showed you me.
I bared my soul to you, and you rejected it all, so now I walk away.

I think of you, miss your beauty and light that you brought into my world.
Every day I remember, and I smile knowing that your soul is within me.

You see my kindness, my caring, my loving, giving personality as weakness.
No, my love all these things are my strengths, my virtues, my happiness.



Art by James Skelton

JOURNEY

PRIEST, BRIAN

My life flashes before my eyes.
As I watch my mother die in peace.

The story of my life or existence
Was it all worth the effort? I wonder.

The world is at a crossroads.
Is the end near or will mankind succeed?

This moment in time is just a blur
Will time be remembered, or everything be cast aside?

Can we ever live in peace and happiness? Or
Will we be lost and destined to suffer again?

Overall, I believe life is good and we all have a purpose for future generations.
As the twilight beckons me on I find meaning and hope.

Another dance

SKELTON, JAMES

You know me, there I am again, just thinkin' about the past
I've got stuff goin' on and I hope it's gonna last

In the here and now is where I have another chance
I look forward to the future and to have another dance

As I look back to what led me here
I find regret and tears and fear

And much light and love as well
It all fits together somehow

I am coming back to the present
And I find myself, My Self

You know me, there I am again, just thinkin' about the past
I've got stuff goin' on and I hope it's gonna last

GUZZLE THE GHAZAL

SNYDER, JAMES

Guzzle the eggnog at Christmas time...
All I can do is ultimately rhyme.

I used to drink to get my thrill.
But all it did was turn me into a pill.

Popper, I otter: as all we ingest is chemical.
Cause all is energy, reciprocal.

So, taste and see what remains with me
As all is concentrated, powerful drug, see?

Eight years I haven't been drunk...
Sober on the highway, no to clunk.

Better to serve in heaven, than reign in hell...
By disciplining ourselves, you're doing just swell.

Sipping whiskey can be fun....
In moderation sensible...done.

Strength

SMALL, SHANE

I have no idea what to write about.
This is confusing. What do I write about?

The strength to be.
The strength...

How do I write when the strength
To add words is never there.

Is it my position to speak but with
A pen do I have the words somewhere?

Is my voice silent or perhaps it's
What it is, a simple form of block.

Was it the cold that created this
Was it the confusing ideas of food.

I have nothing else to say, no words left to be written
Except for the cold wind.

My heart hates losing you

TAYLOR, KIRK

My heart hates losing you
But I know I have to let you grow.

I love playing basketball
Even though I do not play for the Toronto Raptors.

My dad is in heaven, Oh God bless his soul.
Someday I will see him once again, Oh, my soul.

I am a movie star on two hunting videos
I have respect for other hunters.

My hips twist and spin
Waiting for the next gal to arrive.

It is as cold as a Bulls' nuts.
Please do not let it snow.

Untitled

CARLSON, DEBBIE

The sky wars are comets and asteroids
Moving around the world like earth does the sun

In the darkness of the night we see the glow of lights
Like a Christmas twinkle tour

Driving from place to place to get where you are going
A place to belong

Seeing the smiling faces of those you love
Is like enjoying music and an awesome home cooked meal

The warmth of the home fires
Something felt throughout the whole body

Relief

MORIN, JENNIFER

Her tiny hands dig in the soil making a hole,
A seed is planted to help the pain

Summer rain, summer sun, the seed grows,
She tends to her garden like an artist to a sculpture to help
the pain

The flowers grow like beautiful art,
Only to be cut and placed on a grave to help the pain

A cold, wet fall, the flowers wither,
One last bouquet to help the pain

The white snow melts, revealing the soil,
The flowers once dead, grow again with love to help the pain.

Untitled

LAUDER, LARRY

On Roughriders! On Roughriders!
Smack right through that line.

Onward to a great smart play
And go down through the field.

Score at tough men well built,
All on the land of Mosaic stadium.

Comes the American and Canadian,
Enlisting men to build the Roughriders.

Go to see the Roughriders
And have a smart time cheering for the club

Thanks for the game of football
Made it kind of entertaining

I feel happy when they win the games,
They sing, onward Saskatchewan Roughriders

Healthy & unhealthy

PROKOPETZ, KEVIN

Vegetable smoothies are great,
They're like natural milkshakes

Coffee stimulates the brain
Like electrical currents through wires

Soaking in the minerals of the spa,
Like vacuuming, cleanses the body of various waste

Having a healthy heart pumping requires maintenance,
Like a vehicle with a clean oil filter

Smoking clogs the body, starving it of oxygen
It's like writing a 'Ghazal' with no words

Summer nights dreams

ROBB, IVAN

Start light, star bright,
On a warm summer night.

I realized soon the moon will swoon
Where a comet flew like a kite

They came as I was walking on sunshine
I felt alive and I could hardly hold myself down

A beam of light shone upon a stream
Like a laser from a space gun

I woke up in a meadow,
Was like being natures friend.

FAMILY

SCHAD, NINA

Having time with my kids is special,
As they change like the seasons in a year

Taking a trip on a plane
Seeing new things, I wish I could have them

I like to spend money
The more, the better

I like what I like,
Especially when eating food

Outfits, jackets, ski pants & boots,
One likes sweatpants the other running shoes.

Untitled

STYRE, BARRY

I should go out and have some fun
Instead I'm having tea for one

The dishes need doing, the floor needs sweeping
But I'm too busy missing you

The clock needs winding, the tub needs cleaning
But I'm too dizzy drinking brew

Now that I'm alone, I'll go out on my own
And reminisce of times that used to be

At least I've loved and learned, better to have laughed and loved
Than never to have lived at all

Untitled

STYRE, BARRY

I should go out and have some fun
Instead I'm having tea for one

The dishes need doing, the floor needs sweeping
But I'm too busy missing you

The clock needs winding, the tub needs cleaning
But I'm too dizzy drinking brew

Now that I'm alone, I'll go out on my own
And reminisce of times that used to be

At least I've loved and learned, better to
have laughed and loved
Than never to have lived at all



Graphic courtesy of Dover Graphics

The day I win a million dollars

VALENTINE, ERIC

When I get a boat I want to go tubing
Graceful as a bird in the sky

With a truck I could go in the mud
Slinging in the mud like an elk

When I get a house designed for myself
Like a mansion it would be as big as the Eiffel tower

If I owned my own grocery store I would eat whatever I want
I would also put lots of items on sale prices

If I win a million dollars I would go on a vacation to texas
I would like to be a gunslinger



At the beach by Rene Diedrich

Notes on contributors

ARTISTS

Diedrich, Rene
World traveller presently in France.

Peters, Henry
Winnipeg MB artist Long time contributor to Transition

Rolli
See POETS.

Skelton, James
Saskatoon artist and poet.
Member of Saskatoon's WFYL

POETS

Anderson, Colleen
Widely published B.C. author of fiction and poetry in over 250 publications.
Editor of *Alice Unbound: Beyond Wonderland* (Exile Books, 2018), anthology of short speculative fiction.

Arima, Philip
Established Toronto writer and performance poet. Former artistic director *Art Bar Poetry Series*, co-organizer *The Basement Reading Series*, and host *Syntactic Sundays Reading Series*.

Bosner, Terri
Former Sunshine Coast resident now living in Moose Jaw. Author and spoken word performer. Member Moose Jaw Night Writers. Winner RBC Emerging Writers Award (SK Festival of Words 2018).

Braun, Gord
Regular contributor and gently satirical poet from Yorkton SK

Crate, Joan
Poet, novelist, and former twenty-year teacher of English literature at Red Deer College AB. Latest novel (Black Apple, 2016) won W.O. Mitchell, City of Calgary, Award.

Cummings, Beverley
Ottawa poet published in a number of little magazines, as well as *The Voice*, *Open Minds Quarterly*, and *Transition*. Six self-published chapbooks and two trade books.

Fenwick, Catherine
Regina writer widely published in magazines, academic journals, and working on a poetry manuscript. Poems have been published in *Freefall*, *Transition*, *the Society*, and *Folklore*.

Garvie, Carol
CMHA supporter from Vancouver to Kindersley/Saskatoon to Comox writes poetry and prose and practices healthy living. Survivor of postpartum psychosis and member Comox Valley Writers Society.

harding-russell, gillian
Very prolific and often awarded Regina poet with PhD on postmodern poetry. Author five chapbooks, four trade books. Editor (for *Event* and privately) and freelance reviewer.

Katt, Catherine
Lives in Minneapolis Minnesota where she is inspired by nature and city life. She is a painter, writer and photographer.

Kendall, Derek
Member CMHA Swift Current Branch and occasional contributor to TRANSITION.

Liburd, Tonya
Very busy and very widely published Toronto writer and reader of speculative fiction and literature of the fantastic. A Codexian.

POETS cont'd

MacKenzie, Franzivan [Miranda, Faith]
Eighteen year-old college student of psychology who struggles with mental illness. Writes "to make something out of the chaos of [her] head." Connects with others through TRANSITION.

Messett, Adison
Emerging writer uses poetry and creative non-fiction to navigate through difficult challenges. Lives with her husband and son in Stony Rapids SK.

Metnick, Maggie
Writer, actor, and comedian based in NYC. Writes haikus on napkins while waiting for friends at bars in order to cope with her anxiety.

Panko, Dominique
Saskatoon poet inspired by anxiety and/or father who has Dissociative Identify Disorder.

perraun, ky [Karen Peterson]
Edmonton AB poet facilitates a writing group for CMHA. "A Silent Plague (for Colin)" featured in O.M.Q.'s anthology *In New Light*. A chapbook, *Paging Dr. G.*, available on Amazon.

Rolli
A regular contributor from Regina and a prolific writer/cartoonist, most recently of illustrated essays. <rollistuff.com/who>.

Schemenauer, Carrie
Humboldt poet finds peace from mental health struggles in writing poetry. "Before You Go Getting All Romantic" documents attempts to maintain an often unhealthy relationship.

WRITING FOR YOUR LIFE (WFYL)

Judge's Comments: ENNS, VICTOR

EASTEND
Facilitator Ted Dyck
McCullam-Arnal, Caitlin
Neuhaus, Mareike

PRINCE ALBERT
Facilitator:
Lynda Monahan
Ballantyne, Basil
Bird, Danielle
Cochrane, Debbie
Dodge, Nicholas
Favreau, Sherry
Guido, Wendel
Knife, Holly
Mcintyre, Ian
Settee, Dot
Teskey, Mark

REGINA
Facilitator: Linda Biasotto
Nixon, Jennifer
Pelletier, Bill
Whyte, Jayne Melville

SASKATOON
Facilitators:
Jeff Park and Sam Robinson
Bogan, Brittany
Daniels, Chelsea
Doell, Naomi
Helstrom, Melanie
Priest, Brian
Skelton, James
Small, Shane
Snyder, James
Taylor, Kirk

WEYBURN
Facilitator:
Tasha Collins
Carlson, Debbie
Lauder, Larry
Morin, Jennifer
Prokopetz, Kevin
Ross, Ivan
Schad, Nina
Styre, Barry
Valentine, Eric



FRIENDS FOR LIFE

PRESENTATIONS and WORKSHOPS

Suicide

- 🌀 **Speaking of Suicide** - an introduction to the topic of suicide awareness
- 🌀 **safeTALK** - Suicide Alertness for Everyone
A half-day (3.5 hour) workshop
- 🌀 **ASIST** - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills - 2-day skills-building training to provide suicide first aid interventions
- 🌀 **Empowering Teens** to prevent suicide
- 🌀 **Tattered Teddies** - a workshop about suicide in children

Mental Health

Balancing Work and Family
Seniors and Mental Health
Mental Illness (General Overview)
Depression * Depression and Physical Health
Depression in the Workplace * Work Life Conflict
Schizophrenia * Bi-polar * Anxiety
Borderline Personality Disorders
Seasonal Affective Disorder * Grief and Grieving
Laughter in Healing * Loneliness and Isolation
Stress Can be Fun * and many more . . .



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Mental health for all

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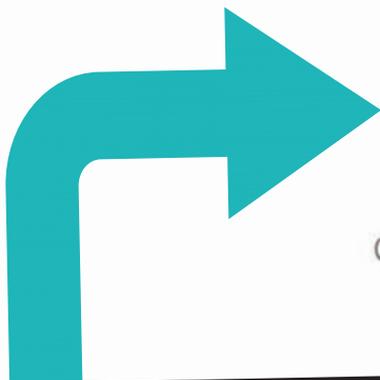


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Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatchewan Division