

# TRANSITION

WINTER 2018



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Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Saskatchewan  
*Mental health for all*



*years of  
community*

# TRANSITION

## PUBLISHER:

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

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MANAGING EDITOR: Lynn Hill

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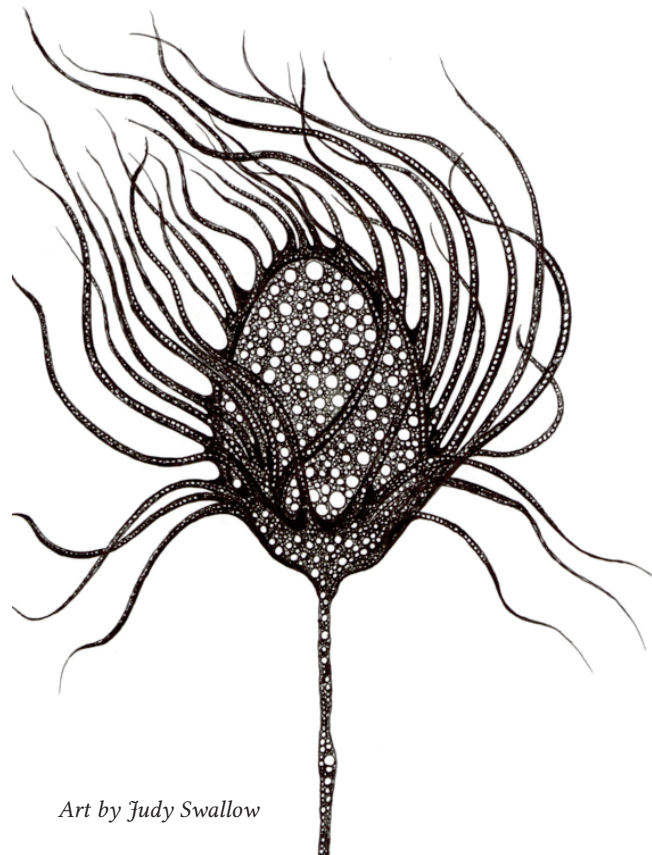
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Subscription by joining CMHA (SK) at \$15 / year.

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 Send original and unpublished articles, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual art that represent current mental health issues and reflect on their impact on individuals.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. Reprints, and simultaneous submissions (to several magazines), and unsolicited international submissions are not considered.
4. Turnaround time is normally 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](mailto:contactus@cmhask.com); or directly to the Editor at [tdyck@sasktel.net](mailto:tdyck@sasktel.net).
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## EDITORIAL

# Talented writers in WFYL groups

TED DYCK

This issue presents several highlights for me, as well as, I hope, for our readers.

First, the Moose Jaw Branch feature in the CMHA(SK) PAGES contributed by Donna Bowyer is a succinct introduction to the branch where the WFYL program began. When I interviewed for the position of writer-in-residence at the Festival of Words in 2007 and was asked what I intended as my legacy, a standard albeit pretentious question in such interviews, I spoke to what was closest to my heart. As a clinical depressive I had first-hand experience with “writing for the health of it,” and I said I wanted to start a writing group with persons who had direct experience of mental illness. “You should see Donna Bowyer,” I was told.



TED DYCK  
EDITOR

And Donna unhesitatingly set up the meeting which became “The Moose Jaw Muse,” a self-described and, eventually, self-facilitating WFYL group that ran for ten years. A number of very good writers have come out of that group (including the astonishingly gifted Adam Staite) whose work we regularly published in TRANSITION. So we owe you a big one, Donna, and I and all members of all WFYL groups give you our special thanks.

My sense is that there are hundreds of such untold stories attesting to the far-ranging, positive effects of CMHASK branches on the lives of a cohort that comprises about one of every five in the general population. That’s the same 1:5 group whose work you read in the TRANSITION PAGES in this (and every) issue. For examples of writers who have been touched, directly or indirectly, by our ten branches, you need search no further than local authors such as, for example, Missal, Parley, and Rolli. Of course our contributors come from the whole

country, with a select few from the larger world – just as help for those beleaguered by mental illness comes from a world much larger than writing. The University of Regina’s Online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is one such source of help (see back cover). There’s even an approach toward online help that comes from the intersection of the worlds of gaming and of writing – I speak of Zoe Quinn’s *Depression Quest*, a free online game on depression. This game asks players to participate in *writing* the ending of the story of the protagonist by playing her role and choosing, literally, how she might deal with her depression. This isn’t a recommend to use this game as therapy – it’s only an invitation to play it, as I have. Online reviews of the game, including Simon Parkin’s thoughtful discussion of the game and its reception (*The New Yorker*, September 9 2014), speak to its legitimacy.<sup>1</sup>

Now to games of a more familiar sort: this issue’s WFYL PAGES presents the results of a “Tanka” writing contest. The contributors, you may read them all in these pages, provided the judges, Rafe Ring and me, with a significant challenge that reached well beyond this magazine. The challenge was not just to choose the winning entries – they, in effect, chose themselves by their excellence as poems, but also to investigate the grounds of our choices. The winner, “Horses” by Stephen Dunster, for example, led us to research, seriously, the behaviour of horses standing in the wind, research which was settled by the knowledge of a long-time Eastend rancher, William Caton (and a previous contributor to TRANSITION). My larger point is of course that *excellent writing for therapy* is also excellent *writing*. Period.

<sup>1</sup>For professional online discussions of *Depression Quest* see the UBC Faculty of Medicine Department of Psychiatry on “Working with depression”; *The Lancet: Psychiatry* (October 2014); and the Journal of Medical Internet Research (2014 Sep 23).



Lean on  
by Henry Peters

# SK programs featured at Conference

**PHYLLIS O'CONNOR**

**F**all has been a very busy and exciting time here at CMHA SK Division Office.

In September several Board Members and CMHA Staff were able to attend the CMHA National Conference in Toronto. It was exciting because three of our Saskatchewan Division programs were invited to present. David Jones and his staff presented regarding our Justice Community Support Program. Rebecca Rackow and Dave Nelson presented regarding our work with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission about an investigation into systemic discrimination against the mental health system. Julius Brown presented regarding our OSI-CAN PTSD Support Project. CMHA National Office has expressed some interest in making this into a national flagship program. All the presentations were well received, and delegates attending learned of some of the exciting and innovative things happening in Saskatchewan.

Work has started in the partnership with the Service and Safety Hospitality Association (SHSA). At the end of September CMHA SK Division presented "Mental Health 101" to the group. This was followed by a presentation by Elizabeth Rankin-Horvath who was the CSA Group Project Manager on the development of the National Standard of Canada on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. The group was very appreciative of these presentations and we look forward to working closely with them as the individual members move their workplaces towards adopting the Psychological Safety in the Workplace Standard.

CMHA Saskatchewan Division has also recently joined the Maternal Mental Health Implementation Committee. This group meets every two months to discuss issues regarding Maternal Mental Health in Saskatchewan. The group is regionally, professionally, and culturally representative. Significant professional associations and community organizations participate, and there is representation from Aboriginal Health

Services and women with lived experience of mental illness. We look forward to seeing what the future brings with our partnership with this group.

We are also busy working with groups such as the Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC) and the Program Implementation Advisory Team for SAID, the Saskatchewan Mental Health Coalition, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and others to move the agenda forward for appropriate and accessible supports for persons experiencing mental health issues.

October is set aside as a special time of reflection and thankfulness. I am grateful for the individuals and groups who have stepped up to advocate for the needs of people with lived experience. I am grateful for all of our wonderful donors and sponsors who make our work possible. I am grateful for our Provincial Board, dedicated staff and volunteers who give tirelessly of themselves to support our work. Most of all I am grateful to live in a time when the conversation and acceptance around mental health issues is becoming more open. However, now that the conversation has opened, we need to ensure that the necessary supports are available when individuals ask for help. In that area, we still have a long way to go.



**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.



*Fancy masks were the order of the evening at the Wade Moffatt Memorial Gala in May 2017.*

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

# DISC works to improve SAID program

**DAVE NELSON**

A great deal of activity has occurred since the last report. Our participation on the Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC) has continued as we work towards improvements to the SAID (Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability) program. We are also pushing Government to reverse its decision to remove persons 65 and older from SAID. We believe this unfair and discriminatory based on age alone and removes much needed supports just as persons may need them most. We are also participating on the Program Implementation Advisory Team for SAID working directly with the Ministry of Social Services to improve the program.

We have hired two consultants to work with the Association to help put together a case for adequate funding into the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan. Partners in this effort include the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission

and the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate.

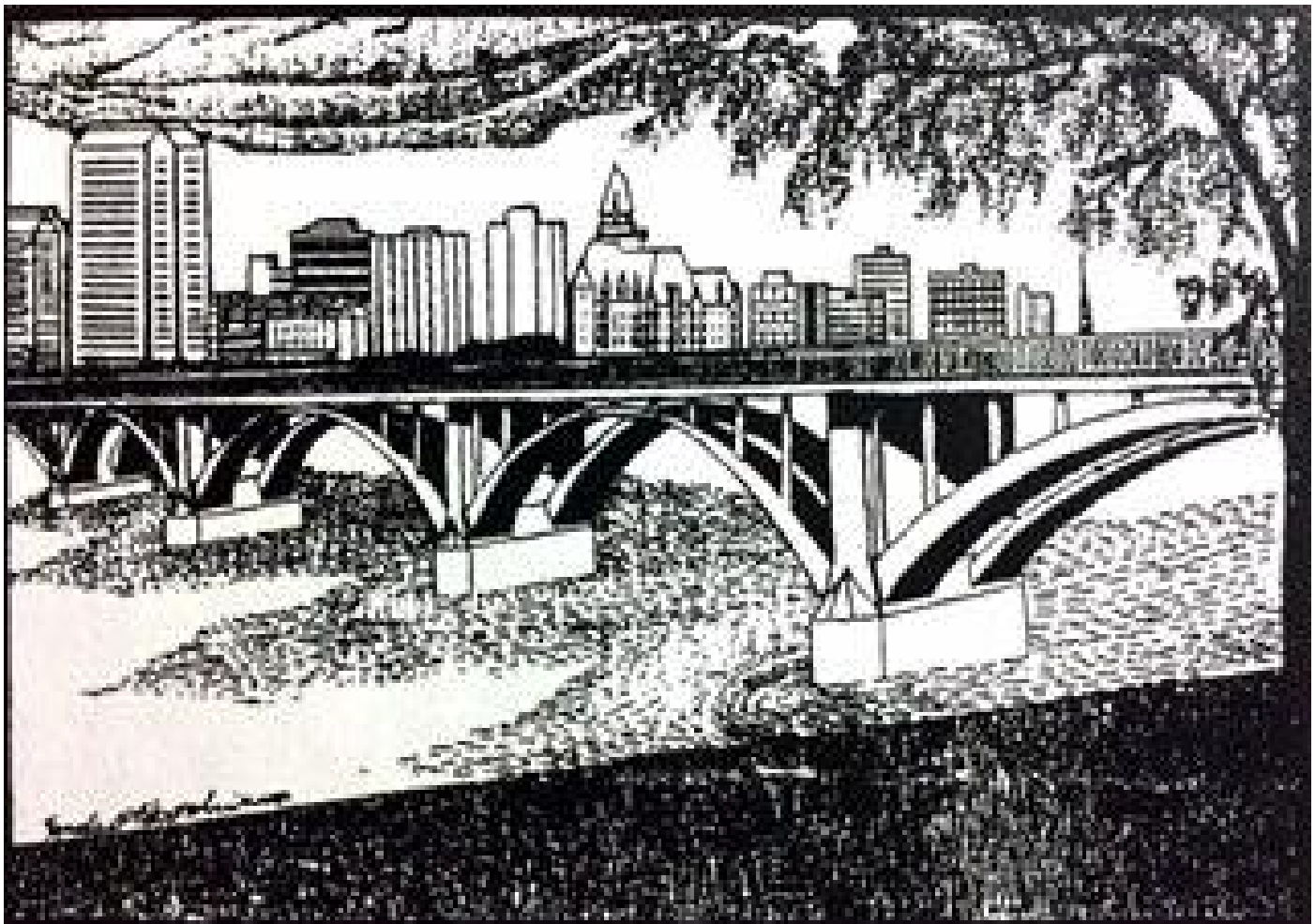
We continue to sponsor the Saskatchewan Mental Health Coalition to broaden the advocacy to improve the mental health and addictions system in the Province.

An exciting new direction we are involved in is to work with Saskatoon based business Refresh Inc. which is developing a mental health app with the potential to help thousands find appropriate supports. We have also partnered with Saskatchewan Polytec to do research on the effectiveness of this approach to assistance.

We look forward to continued work in these critical public policy input areas in the New Year 2018.



**DAVE NELSON**  
**ASSOCIATE**  
**EXECUTIVE**  
**DIRECTOR**



*Saskatoon skyline by Jacek Grabowski*

# Small branch - big foot print

## INTRODUCTION

CMHA Moose Jaw is a small branch with two main focuses.

The first is Peer Support. We have two types, Group Peer Support and One on One Peer Support. Within our Group Peer Support we have:

- Come Together – for people with life experience of mental illness
- Family and Friends Peer Support – for family and friends of someone with life experience of mental illness
- In addition, we host OSI-CAN on a weekly basis.

Our second focus is on education, training, and reducing stigma around mental illness. We do this through presentations and workshops.

In order for us to be successful in these two foci, we need to have partners to work with, both formal and informal, throughout the community.

## FOCUS: PEER SUPPORT

### 1. Group Peer Support

#### (a) Come Together

Come Together is peer social recreation program that teaches life skills, independence, recovery and learning.

The Support Group meets three times a week on Mondays, Tuesday, and Thursday, primarily evenings. We do barbeques, movie nights, potlucks, billiards, have coffee nights, drumming, story telling, crafts, walking group, and many others.

All social programs are peer led. We have four trained

volunteer peer supporters who have become key in the success of the programs. They encourage and foster a much brighter light in our social recreation group. In every group they attend they role model recovery. We also encourage our members to take additional training that we offer in the community.

Everyone is welcome to join in on some food/snacks, coffee and fun. Come Together gives encouragement, and acknowledges the skills and abilities that each of our members have rather than focus on the illness. Their participation helps to reduce isolation, creates friendships, and gives them the support to stay well. We have seen some amazing people move from illness to recovery.

#### (b) Family and Friends Peer Support

Individuals that support a loved one who is experiencing mental health challenges often feel isolated, and misunderstood. Our Family and Friends Peer Support Group offers a venue to meet, discuss, celebrate, and support each other.

At each meeting we share, using the rose, thorn and bud outline:

Rose: what has happened since our last meeting that has brought you joy or pleasure.

Thorn: what is irritating or causes you pain.

Bud: something that you are looking forward to

This year we are looking at taking time at each meeting to discuss an article or having a guest speaker.

### 2. One on One Peer Support

One on One Peer Support connects group members to a person with Peer Support Training to help them begin their road to recovery. The Peer Supporter understands what the person they are working with is going through and helps them identify what goals are important, and what is manageable for themselves. Peer Supporters help individuals move toward their personal future.

They meet from once a week to once a month, depending on their needs, for coffee, a walk, or an activity. They talk about successes and barriers. The Peer Supporter gives them hope and empowers them to move forward. The successes of the program are seeing people move away from addictions and symptoms of mental illness toward healthy friendships, increased self-confidence, and employment if that is their goal.

## FOCUS:

## EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND STIGMA REDUCTION

### 1. Workshops

CMHA Moose Jaw does presentations and workshops on mental health/illness for individuals and groups in Moose Jaw and the surrounding area. We have taught individuals of all ages from youth to seniors. We have partnered with non-

*Continued next page . . .*



*Les Lasonde, Peer Supporter*

## ... programs benefit Branch members



*Living Life to the Full offers people help in making a positive difference in their lives in eight 90 minute sessions. This group is the Grade 10 class from Kincaid. Sessions are facilitated by Donna Bowyer, the Program Director at CMHA Moose Jaw.*



*Peer Supporter Felipe Potasame entertains*

*... continued from previous page*

profits, businesses, government institutions, and local celebrities. Some of our workshops include:

- **Living Life to the Full** - Living life to the Full is a program for people with anxiety and depression. It provides life skills in a fun but workable way to enhance problem solving and build solutions. It is an eight-week course, and every session presents a new package to learn a new skill for the week.

- **Art of Friendship** - The Art of Friendship is an eight-week course. The course is designed to identify and be a good friend. Participants learn how to decide to whom and when to disclose their personal or public information. This workshop teaches communication skills, boundaries, self-disclosure, and confidentiality. The course is an engaging and/or eye opening experience. These are skills everyone needs to have.

- **Tattered Teddies** - A program for adults who work with children under the age of twelve that have suicide ideation and behaviour.

- **Straight Talk** - For adults that work with teens and young adults that have suicide ideation and behaviour

- **safeTALK** - A half-day of training that prepares anyone over the age of fifteen to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources.

- **ASIST** - (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)





- Two days of training to learn how to do a full intervention.
  - **Mental Health First Aid** – Two days of training for adults to recognize when someone is experiencing mental distress and to help them find resources and support.

## 2. Leaving Trauma Behind

Leaving Trauma behind was presented on June 2 as a Provincial CMHA Workshop. It taught the basics of trauma recognition, strategies for working with individuals with trauma, and trauma-related issues. Presented by Pricilla LaLonde and Stephane Grenier, it was a great opportunity to gain a better understanding of children, youth, and adults with trauma; their needs; and appropriate non- medical strategies for working with them.

## 3. Partnerships

We continue to partner with many different agencies in the community to bring awareness and support to anyone needing support. Some of our partners are: Five Hills Health Region, Moose Jaw Warriors, Journey to Hope, Prairie South School Division, JJ Sports, Moose Jaw Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Optimist Club, 15 Wing Military Base, Moose Jaw Multicultural, and many others.



*Gabriel Turcotte is the Peer Support Manager for CMHA Moose Jaw*



*Drummers practise for their participation in Moose Jaw's Hometown Parade on June 21, 2018*

*Drummers Shannon (left), Gabby, Judy and Bernice*



# Coming Together . . .



*CMHA Moose Jaw took part in the 2017 Hope Summit where people with thoughts of suicide found hope and shared their stories. These can be found on YouTube and at <http://journeytohope.synthasite.com/hope-summit.php>*



*Supporters return from their contemplative walk. CMHA Moose Jaw is a partner in the Journey to Hope Walk which raises awareness of issues around suicide.*

## 4. Journey to Hope

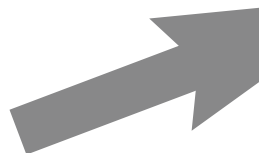
CMHA is a partner of the Journey to Hope Walk and the Hope Summit. This is a walk to raise awareness of issues around suicide. Once a year we have an opportunity for people to get together to honour those who have died by suicide.

Join family, friends of those who lost their life to suicide and people in the community that care and want to change the environment where people feel so alone and hopeless that they choose suicide as their only option.

The upper picture shows people listening to stories of survival; the lower picture shows people returning from their contemplative walk.

CMHA also took part in a Hope Summit in which people, who had thoughts of suicide, found hope and shared their stories. These can be found on YouTube and at <http://journeytohope.synthasite.com/hope-summit.php>.

**ATTENTION  
SONGWRITERS!!**





# ... at CMHA in Moose Jaw

## HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

### 1. Keeping in touch

We are in the process of planning a new dimension to our Peer Support programs.

The members have decided that they want to establish phone contact with those who are no longer taking part in CMHA Moose Jaw's programs. The reasons members stop attending may be a result of anxiety or depression, physical health or any other barriers. We want them to know that they are not forgotten.

A plan will be made for group members to have regular contact with them, hopefully reducing loneliness and encouraging them to come and take part when and if they are able.

We also hope to contact people when we have noticed they aren't taking part in previously enjoyed programs.

We want to let them know we miss them and if they have positive things going on we want to celebrate with them. We noticed one of our regular members wasn't coming out and when he was contacted and we found it was because he found a job and was working - reason for us all to celebrate his success.

### 2. CMHA 100 Years

We are partnering with Journey to Hope on our second Hope Summit this fall and as a part of CMHA's 100 years celebration we are asking our community's talented songwriters to enter a competition to provide a song of "Hope." The winner will sing it at the opening of the 2018 Hope Summit. We are also working on some other exciting awards to the winner which is too soon to disclose. Watch for details.



*Lorna Keeler (top, left), CMHA Moose Jaw board member Lorelei Rendall and Brenda Clemmenson enjoy a moment a quiet conversation.*



*Tina, Nicole and Donna (front from left) attended the Second Annual Masquerade Ball held May 6, 2017 in Moose Jaw. Those in the back are members of the band, the Bromantics who provided the entertainment at the event. The Third Annual Masquerade Ball will be held May 5, 2018. Watch for information.*



**Canadian Mental Health Association**  
Saskatchewan  
*Mental health for all*



years of  
community

# A ton of paper:

## CMHA Saskatchewan Archives 1985-2002

JAYNE MELVILLE WHYTE

I set my goals for the project: “I want Saskatchewan to have the best mental health archives in Canada. I want to create the kind of record that I’d like to use for my research.”

With that purpose, I set out to organize and inventory the files and resources of the Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) Inc. from 1985 to 2002. This article looks at some of the contents of the files and then describes the process of preparation to move the papers from CMHA to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, the government agency responsible for acquiring, preserving and making available records significant to the history of Saskatchewan.

The National Committee for Mental Hygiene began in April 1918.<sup>1</sup> By 1950, the name changed to the Canadian Mental Health Association; around the same time, Saskatchewan became the first province chosen for a Division. Saskatoon members of the National board had already established a Branch in that city. In 2018, the Canadian Mental Health Association celebrates 100 years of education, advocacy and action to improve the lives of people living with mental illness.

Archival records preserve the stories, in this case, the story, of the Canadian Mental Health Association and other agencies that have interacted with CMHA (Saskatchewan Division). Archivists use the term “fonds” for a collection of files and other materials from an individual or organization. In 1989, Saskatchewan Division and Saskatoon Branch turned over 35 (1950-1985) years of files and records to the provincial archives. A lot of paper has gone over the desks since then. The current CMHA (Saskatchewan) collections cover the period from 1985 to 2002, more or less, and will be linked with materials donated in 1989.

By the end of 2017, the new boxes will be received by the Provincial Archives for the use of scholars, students, and the public who want to research the story of mental health in our province and beyond. Anyone wishing to access the fonds must ask the permission of the Executive Director of CMHA (SK) and complete an access request at the Provincial Archives.

### CMHA Archives: The Content

“What treasure did you find today?” was a question I was often asked at coffee breaks. For over four years, I spent two or three afternoons a week “working on archives” at the Division office. Many days, the answer was about notes and reports and minutes of an organization with staff, volunteers, professionals, consumer/survivors, families, government departments, and community agencies, all circulating routine correspondence, and communication records.

The collection tells stories of how CMHA has tackled issues related to mental illness and health promotion. It



JAYNE MELVILLE WHYTE

contains the raw materials for accounts of the Association’s purpose, structure, actions, advocacy, as well as the people working to improve the living conditions and lives of people with mental illness. What was the debate when the Mental Health Act went through its revisions, when Rehabilitation Standards were introduced, when “health reform” changed the administration of services? When did the provincial Board change to the Carver model of governance? What key policy papers still shape the delivery of services and programs today?

For example, a speech from Leonard Stein<sup>2</sup>, guest at the 1989 provincial conference explored the minimum expectations placed on a mental health system, based on the Dane County, Wisconsin, model still underlying the Saskatchewan system:

Thus, the county provides only those services that each patient requires in order to make a stable adjustment to community life, and it uses the least expensive service or combination of services to accomplish that goal. Obviously, the intent is not to give everyone the same service but to give as little as necessary in order to achieve the goal . . . . If resources are extremely limited, the goal might be simply to ensure that people were adequately fed, clothed, and housed and that they were not harming themselves or others.

CMHA briefs, presented to a succession of commissions and committees, trace persistent efforts to ensure that minimum standards are upheld and conditions are improved. Rather than keeping all the government reports, the CMHA files often refer readers to official documents available through Provincial or Legislature archive collections.

History can be discouraging. For example, The Task Force of 1984, informally known as the McDonald report, titled *The Forgotten Constituents*, could be presented to Cabinet today with only a few changes to update statistics.<sup>3</sup> The Forgotten Constituents are still forgotten. When Saskatchewan Hospital Weyburn was closed, and North Battleford downsized, the mental health dollars went back into general revenues and not into developing the promised community services. CMHA continues to advocate for a continuum of non-government

<sup>2</sup> Stein, Leonard I, M.D.; Ronald J. Diamond, M.D. and Robert M. Factor, M.D., Ph.D.

Pre-publication Chapter for *Handbook of Schizophrenia*, Vol. 4, Psychosocial Therapies (Elsevier, 1989). Communication to Dr. David L. Keegan, Saskatchewan Commission on Directions in Health Care, July 31, 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Copies of key documents, like the Task Force and DOHMS reports, remain in the Division office as well as in the Archives because we continue to refer to them.

<sup>1</sup> CMHA National archives are stored at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto.



and government services that meet the needs of people living with emotional distress. Appropriate resources can range from timely support in life transitions to more facilities for persons with long term and severe mental illness.

Yes, there were treasures. The most unusual might be the phonograph record that a pharmaceutical company had distributed to doctors with education about alcoholism. VHS videos and audio-cassettes in the collection preserve the pictures and voices from our history, trusting in the Archives' access to obsolete players. One box contains photos, unfortunately too often without identifying names and dates.

A series of boxes track CMHA Branch histories and development. The Education Committee's efforts to increase awareness and reduce stigma contain examples of campaigns. The Awards Committee files feature the nomination biographies of key figures in the Association. Another box holds documents that would allow the Autism Society to research their beginnings. A researcher in changing technology would find a slim file about the introduction of computers and internet to the provincial office. The fond includes papers of former executive director, Dr. John Hylton, who was also active in justice and mental health, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and as an elected member of the first Regina Health Board. The value of the treasure depends on the searcher's quest.

Personally, with my particular interest in hearing the voices of people with lived experience of mental illness, a treasure was a publication from the Vancouver Mental Pa-



Jayne with just a few of the boxes being sent to the Provincial Archives.

tients Association with a how-to for setting up a consumer/survivor-driven agency for housing, employment, self-help support, and community activism.

Archives hold the resources, the original documents, waiting for someone to retell the stories that illustrate both past and present situations. Where and when did we start? Why are we still asking for reforms that were necessary 40 years ago? How did we get here? What have we learned from good and bad examples of policy and activism over the years? The success of research depends on asking a good question and seeking available resources.

### CMHA Archives: the Process

When I wrote *Pivot Points: a fragmented history of Mental Health in Saskatchewan*<sup>4</sup> (CMHA Sask, 2012), the records at the Provincial Archives were a valuable source of historical material. At the book launch, attended by two contacts from the Archives, I expressed the desire to read all the files stored at CMHA. So in consultation with an Appraisal Archivist, I took on the task of a thorough review and inventory of the materials before donation to the Province. Usually, a group or individual would place their papers and other materials into boxes to be arranged and described by staff at the Provincial Archives. As the contact at the Provincial Archives noted, "Much of this process has already been completed by Jayne, with some guidance from the Archives, including the preparation of a very detailed 'finding aid' and index. In a time when Archives is faced with an enormous backlog of unprocessed material, this detailed finding aid will be an enormous time-saver when the records are processed."

In a labour of love that began in August 2013, I handled every piece of paper stored in the file drawers, boxes, and paper piles. I didn't read every word, but prepared a finding aid that listed each file folder and most of its contents. There are many different styles for guides, and I adopted a format that would meet my needs for researching this material. My work will be reformatted to the Archives standards to create a Finding Aid to be used by researchers looking for information.

My Finding Aid for CMHA (Sask) 1985-2001 is a four-column table on about 440 pages, recording the contents of almost 500 file folders stored in 101 Archives boxes.

- The second column of the Finder Guide identifies the official file name.
- The third column lists the contents with the date created or received, along with the title of the article, the key words of the paper, or the "Re" words of a memo, identifying the subject, and sometimes the author.
- The fourth column of the Finder Guide contains Notes. For example, acronyms change over time and might be confusing to a future researcher, so the notes might clarify

<sup>4</sup> Copies of *Pivot Points* are available from CMHA Saskatchewan office, or from Jayne.

# ... moved to Provincial Archives

“PSB = Psychiatric Services Branch” now called “MHSB = Mental Health Services Branch.” Or the notes might say, “These files were in a box marked A.E.D.” indicating that contents were not from the main office file drawers but were inserted where they would supplement the official record. By the way, “A.E.D. = Assistant Executive Director” who piled some of the papers from the office into a storage box.

Wondering about the first column of the Finder Guide? It contains the Box numbers, from 1 to 101. The Box number gives the Archives Reference Staff an “address” to find the files. An Archives box is half the size of a bankers’ box so that even when full of paper, probably about 20 pounds, it can still be lifted on and off shelves. In the non-metric system, 2000 lbs. is a ton, so we could say that CMHA is donating a ton of paper to the Province.

It could have been more. On the advice of the Appraisal Archivist, duplicate copies were often removed so that if there were seven copies of the minutes, only one or two were left in the folders. Culling the boxes from the library “Resources” gave preference to materials directly related to CMHA, and to materials that were not also available on the computer search engines or in published journals. Always, the purpose was to tell the story of CMHA and the context of policy, philosophy, and actions in which CMHA did its work.

No count was kept of how many papers were sent to Shred or Recycle, but an estimate would be at least ten banker’s boxes. Archive storage measures the size of a file in millimeters, and fonds in meters, so the advance preparation at CMHA saved the Archives at least three meters of shelf space (that’s almost 10 feet in pre-metric terms).

## CMHA Archives: Next Steps

Over the months of archive work, I drafted chapters and articles based on the materials. Saskatoon branch requested a short history for their Board manual. CMHA National is considering my “centennial proposal” for a book summarizing the various documents created from 1984 to 2004 for the Framework for Support project: this National program introduced the concept of a community resource base around the person with mental illness in the centre of his or her own life. Another unpublished draft tells the stories of Crocus Co-op in Saskatoon and By Ourselves, self-help groups, one that survived and one that was dissolved into the Regina CMHA Members’ Club. When the boxes are hauled away, I plan to take time to edit some of the research.

The file drawers, binders, and boxes from 2002 to 2012<sup>5</sup> will be catalogued and filed for the next donation to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. The next step will require a process for files that exist only in electronic form. More progress, more history, more stories, more treasures!

*Jayne Melville Whyte, member of CMHA since 1975, has also connected with alternative mental health organizations including National Network for Mental Health, the Mad Society of Canada and a History of Madness collaborative. Jayne was recently chosen as one of 150 Difference Makers in Mental Health in a national nomination process sponsored by CAMH [www.camhdifferencemakers.ca](http://www.camhdifferencemakers.ca)*

<sup>5</sup>These dates were chosen because Dave Nelson became Executive Director in 2002 until Phyllis O’Connor was appointed in 2012 and changes were made to the file categories at National and Division levels.

Box #	File Name	Contents within files (back to front) Files within Box by file number (front to back) Year-Mo-Day	NOTES
Start Box 32			
31	CMHA Saskatchewan 2002-01-01 3032 CMHA SASKATCHEWAN Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) 3032-0002	85-07-05 Memo to Ad Hoc Committee on Consumer Representation 85-10-11 Memo re lunch meeting at Oct. 19 Board Meeting 86-02-12 Memo with notes of Consumer Participation Committee 86-07-17 The role of expatriants and consumers in Human Resource Development for the 1990s by Western Massachusetts Training Consortium 86-05-12 Memo re applnt of Barb Owens to National CAC 86-06-21 Memo re travel expenses for committee work 86-09-12 Ltr from Centre to Branches and Self Help Groups re membership on newly formed CAC 86-06-05 Facilitating Consumer Participation: A Resource Package for CMHA Divisions and Branches from NCAC 90-15-02 Memo re Robert Anderson's application to CAC with clipping of column by Prince Albert CMHA Coordinator 90-04-23 Saskatoon Star Phoenix "Overcoming mental illness can be heroic feat, 100" 90-07-04 Minutes CAC n.s. CAC Terms of Reference 90-10-10 Memo from Evans to Dennis Page, NCAC staff 90-10-10 CAC Minutes 91-01-29 Topics for Future National Policy Statements Memos and correspondence 92-05-19 CAC Minutes 92-05-13 Memo re possible partnership with Bipolar and Unipolar Support Group incl. bylaws of Bipolar group. 92-05-29 Invitation to next CAC on June 16, 1992 92-06-19 CAC Minutes 92-07-02 Ltr of support for Unipolar/Bipolar Association application for funding from Sask Health 92-06-19 CAC Minutes	Note: the main files and files from Barb Evans, Branch Development Officer responsible for CAC were consolidated for the CAC files, including chronological filing of two miscellaneous file folders  CAC = Saskatchewan Consumer Advisory Committee NCAC = National CAC  See other CAC Advisory Issues file below

A sample page of Jayne’s ‘Finding Aid for CMHA,’ a document built to help the Staff at Provincial Archives process the files

# Good Old Clock

**GORD BRAUN**

Though my tribute to recycling has its back against the wall,  
it makes years of old batteries and won't lose time at all

Take you any double-A whose glory days have waned,  
long after other gadgets have declared the battery drained

For there is 'dead', and then there's DEAD <-- Good Old Clock understands,  
and though it has some facial ticks, it also has three hands.

When a cell is dying down, the clock is no slowpoke  
but it marks the very moment when the battery had to croak

Dig down deep in dusty drawer, and time has soon returned!  
most any double-A will do, where Good Old Clock's concerned



*Super Moon by Judy Swallow*



Canadian  
Mental Health  
Association  
Saskatchewan  
Division Inc.

# THREE MORE JIMMY BANGS

VICTOR ENNS

## Jimmy Bang's same old blues

I used to be an angry young man, same old, blues, I got now  
I used to step on toes, same old, blues, just heavier and how!  
I got the same old, older and older blues that I'm living on.

I used to be a piss-poor husband, same old, blues, I got now.  
The fourth one's gone, same old, blues, left me, none the wiser  
I got the same old, same old blues, half-hearing how I ruined their lives.

The wives loved their black coffee in the morning, no sugar no cream,  
leaving after too many nights not liking how they looked in my eyes,  
I got the same old, same old blues, my retirement booked

in the bone-yard. I got the same old Jimmy Bang Jimmy Bang Blues,  
same old same old Jimmy Bang blues, no matter how I play them  
no-one wants to hear the same old Jimmy Bang Blues.

## Jimmy Bang's no shoe blues

I've given up my cigarettes and whisky too  
I've given up my cigarettes and whisky too  
for pain, painkillers, pets and you.

You know where this anger comes from  
You know where this anger comes from  
I've stopped throwing tantrums, dishes – that's dumb.

Barely have patience for loud rock n roll – and these blues  
Barely have patience for loud rock n roll – and these blues  
I was raised No! never to need any NO! no rock n roll shoes. – lucky me!

Because I can crank the volume rockin in my wheelchair  
So I can crank the volume rockin in my wheelchair  
Hard enough to get through this nightmare.

No shoes, No shoes – Jimmy my my Jimmy  
You're naked! Naked with the No Shoe Blues!

## Jimmy Bangs twelve o'clock high

The thin air in my ears,  
My eyes look for a safe way to cross  
from the Discreet Boutique to the Giant Tiger.

All I can do is smile and listen  
to my broken boots shuffle  
my self across the street.

What's left after whiskey makes peace  
with what used to be called  
the soul; I have so little

use for it now. My eyes  
mirrors with the amalgam  
showing through.





# Five short poems

SUSAN IOANNOU

## Get tough poem

Don't collapse  
black petals inward.  
Nerve and muscle  
toward the light.

Living's no greenhouse  
except for a plaster bird.  
Sing louder  
through your teeth.

Take trees:  
ninety percent  
dead bark,  
yet their sap still runs.

So what if your bones  
grind and crumble?  
Seed courage  
in their dust.

## Minefield

Words lie in wait.  
Who will trip an invisible wire  
and shatter the surface  
open before dazed eyes?

## Winter song

Bird,  
burst from the snow apple's core,

dust ice flakes off ripened skin  
and light into whitening night.

High as the ice moon's curve,  
fly to its dark humming.

Silence will open, black fur, white paws,  
tail looped around a crescent yawn.

Melt  
on its rough red tongue.

## Hers was a house

Hers was a house  
of a hundred windows  
but no door.

## Slow dying

Inch by inch  
down the scarp you slip,  
clutching at a tuft of grass,  
a chunk of dirt, a stone,  
as each, in turn, gives way.

*Reach! Reach!* A swooping seagull screams  
and swerves in through one eye.  
Between your ears, swift wings beat  
until you cannot think, not feel  
but, looking up, let go both hands

and fall, fall, slow and full  
into the sea's roll and calm  
from which love came.

## Chagall's *Solitude*

MARK ANTHONY KAYE

*For Martin and Ali*

Alone but for a white cow  
I think upon the word of God  
the cow plays the fiddle and  
I learn the bundle is void of answers  
contemplating on this loss  
I fail to turn and miss the angel  
in the black sky behind me.

# There's a pig in the field

CARL A. KRAUSE

"You never see just what you saw," Henry said.  
As, looking over summer fields,  
We noted how the green was turning yellow.

"Ripening already," he said,  
And I agreed;  
And then, from out of the blue, he mused,  
"It's like a giant pig  
That's sitting in the wallow."

Whoa! I'd followed him this far,  
But now his path had veered to somewhere else;  
I didn't know of what he spoke  
And didn't quite know how or what to ask.

A pig? I looked around.  
There was no pig!

I was about to ask  
But chose instead to follow his gaze  
That fixed upon a building  
Out beyond the waving wheat –  
Upon a barn that, once majestic, long and lean,  
But now long since abandoned,  
Had collapsed – one end into the ground,  
The other end still up, but tilted back.

Why, yes, of course, a pig it is –  
Its buttocks – hams and tail –  
Immersed in the wallow, cool and black,  
Its forelegs jauntily sustaining head and back

"You're right," I said.  
"You never see just what you saw."

# Six times four

TIM MISSAL

1.  
Memories fade  
To sunset shade.  
We squeeze to the last ounce.  
He co-operates.

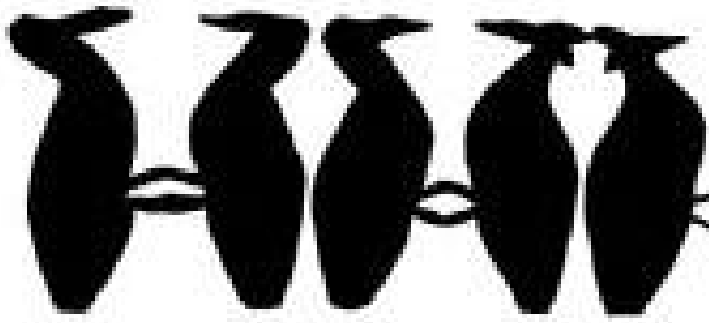
2.  
Steady falls the rain,  
Unobtrusive, air in motion.  
Transparent.  
The ground is happier for it.

3.  
A peck here, a peck there,  
Earnest goes the sparrow.  
A lunch here, a lunch there,  
Earnest goes the sparrow.

4.  
Chapters written,  
The stories age,  
Book upon book,  
Page by page.

5.  
...majestic and kind,  
From heaven to mind,  
He's reachable  
... Father be the glory.

6.  
Water, rivers running,  
Winding along,  
Minding the path.  
... Father be to glory.



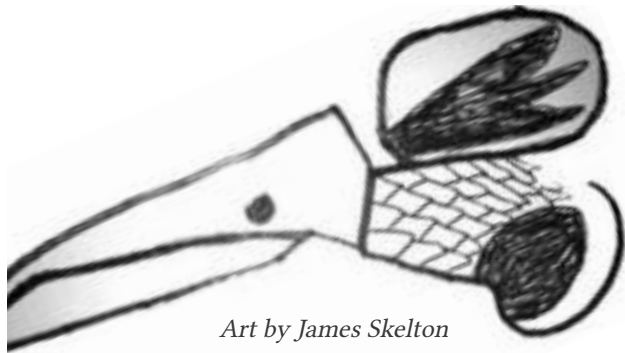
*Animal folkart*

# A father's dreams come true

**KIRK TAYLOR**

I once had a dream  
To have a little girl like  
You and my dream came true.  
To watch you grow  
To watch you play  
And to watch you go  
To your first day of school  
You made your daddy cry

You will always be  
My little princess  
Til the day I die  
It will be hard to let you  
Go but always know, Joyce,  
Daddy will always love you  
And that will never go away



*Art by James Skelton*

# I cannot wait to have Saturdays with you

**KIRK TAYLOR**

I cannot wait to spend my Saturday with you. To watch you play with all the different animals at Petland makes me happy that you are having so much fun. I can see you in the near future becoming a veterinarian. Then we went to the park and seeing you playing on all the playground equipment and showing me all the tricks you can do; I am so proud of you. But when it is time to let you go back to your mom, I feel sad that Daddy does not see you for a whole week. I wonder how you are doing in school. And when you are upset, it is sad because really, Joyce, I don't know what to do. But in my heart I know that you will always love me. And that will always be true.

# What it knows

**LISA TIMPF**

the heart knows  
what it knows  
and the la-la-la of denial  
is a form of delay  
but not forgetting

an inverse alchemy

a twisting within

the heart knows  
what it knows

and it will not be  
denied.

# Only this moment

**LISA TIMPF**

today, like always  
when I bring out the tennis ball  
my border collie crouches low,  
waiting

and when the sphere is airborne  
she tracks the flight  
making the catch  
on the hop, like an outfielder  
gathering in a line drive  
with perfect concentration

I bend and grasp the ball  
wet with dog-spit, now, and round  
round like the Earth that spins the seasons  
and that makes me think  
of how she's getting older, day by day—

not now, I tell myself  
not this perfect afternoon  
under brilliant sun, peacock sky

I throw denial  
she runs joy  
and her paws drum the earth  
like a heartbeat or a song  
and I realize she is my guru,  
showing me how to live for today  
as she runs and leaps as though  
there is only now  
only this moment

only this brief  
and shining  
moment

# Where the bodies are buried

JANET GARBER

## Uncle Lenny

You were an adorable kid. Maybe a little spoiled. The baby of the family. Spoke out in class. Well, you were smart. Your favorite subject was Math and you did well in Latin. "He had a good heart," recalls my mother, your big sister. Six years older, she took you to the park, babysat you, coddled you. "He was my baby."

At six feet, you loomed over your diminutive Jewish immigrant family. Whose kid were you? Chris, the mail carrier's? So went the family joke, everyone but Grandma laughing. A corny joke that you just shrugged off. You were the Man: a big guy, handsome, with your bushy black eyebrows. I remember you best dressed in a mafia-style black sports jacket, smoking a big cigar.

So tell me, exactly what happened? You got derailed? Ten years tucked away in an upstate psychiatric institution, your entire twenties. Was this some kind of joke? Easy in; not so easy out. Like the roach motel.

Somewhere along the line psychotropic drugs came into vogue and they must have been a godsend for you. You came out of the asylum, found steady employment in construction in Detroit, stayed out of trouble (except for a truckload of parking tickets) until you died of alcoholism and diabetes and who-knows-what at age fifty-seven, my mother clutching your swollen hands.

Yes, you drank. You whored around a little. You were smart enough to tell my mother you were not going to marry, that you couldn't take on the problems of another person. Your coworkers were fond of you; your apartment was clean, and your papers, well organized.

An early end—what did you do to deserve that? You dropped out of high school to join the marines. You were very sorry to have missed the war. WWII. You spent less than a year in the Marines. Look who you were: a Jewish teenager with a big mouth. The brig for you, my boy. Weeks and weeks of it. When Grandma found out where you were, she went to Washington, straight to the Secretary of the Navy and pleaded your case. She secured a bad conduct discharge for you, but you were free.

I bet you weren't happy about that—you got it reversed years later. Out in civilization once again, somehow you weren't the same cute kid. You did what you were supposed to at first: got your G.E.D., enrolled in Brooklyn College . . . But where were all those fancy clothes coming from? You started running with the wrong crowd; bounced some checks, then robbed a neighborhood store (!) For your coup de resistance, you stole my father's German Luger from his closet and shot up a neighbor's front door. Then you barged into my parents' apartment, screaming, "Get out of the house!" You claimed you had killed someone, that we'd all better hide. Dad was at work; Mom was very pregnant with Howard and trying desperately to distract three-year-old me from the your yelling, turning up the volume on the little record player so I

could dance to the music. She gathered me up and ran to the candy store where she called the police on their pay phone. What choice did she have?

Mom, your sister, signed you into that place. Your parents had, it turned out, been taking you someplace for therapy/shock treatments? Why? Those pesky voices in your head. Ah, those. Your sister, with her big belly, toddler, her not-interested husband. Your own parents, struggling to get by in their grocery store in the Depression while their customers took a dive off high buildings, couldn't deal with what had to be done. They left the day after the "incident" to open up the small kosher hotel they ran in the Catskills. They blamed my mother forever for doing what had to be done. Close to a breakdown herself, she went to stay, with me tagging along, at her in-laws' for a month where, thankfully, no questions were asked.

Uncle Lenny, I want to talk to you. Prodded by my mother, I wrote you letters my whole childhood, addressed to My Favorite Uncle. I waved to you up in the tall building from the parking lot below. When you came out, after ten years, and lived at first with your parents, I was shy around you. I was shy around all men. We probably never had a real conversation, did we? Now though you haunt me. Enigma that you are. Either you "cracked up" in the Marines (family lore) or a schizophrenic time bomb went off in your head. Which is it? I tend to favor the second explanation over the first, given where the "family curse" next revealed itself.

## Brother Howard

Howard, you never felt like one of us. You were blond and hazel-eyed; we were dark. You were a picky eater; after hours of sitting with you, coaxing you to eat, Mom dumped the spaghetti over your head. I couldn't believe it. You didn't even like ice cream!

Frail and sickly at first, from day one you were a target for bullies at school.

"Hit him, Howard," Mom commanded, holding one bully's arms behind his back. "C'mon. You can do it."

You just stood there. Finally you threw a weak punch. Mom was satisfied and let the screaming seven-year-old go. The boy's parents threatened to press charges, but did not. Dad was disgusted. "You're wasting your time," he told my mother.

When you were ten, your teacher complained that you were crawling under the desk and humming to yourself. You never managed to copy down the homework assignment. You were slow and walked around in a daze. You never fit in at school, nor at home though possessed of a quick mind, inquisitive eye and gentle nature. Mom took you for an assessment. Verdict: "Howard needs to spend more time with his father."

You should have been born into a rural family – you loved animals and nature, books about geology, sculpting dinosaurs out of clay, reading almanacs. But in the city whether inside or out, you failed to forge any real friendships or connections.



Mom spent hours and hours with you, trying to teach you “study habits”; Dad tried to whip some sense in to you. Both failed.

“People make me nervous,” you admitted to Mom.

Yet . . . you did “normal” for your young adult years, managing to move out of the house, graduate college, work here and there at low-level jobs, collecting unemployment more often than not. You dated a girl once or twice in college. You travelled cross country as college students in the seventies were wont to do, had a few adventures on the road, then . . .

Abruptly you dug a hidey hole for yourself in Denver, a basement apartment near the furnace, and lived this way for years, cut off from family. You steadfastly refused to seek treatment. For . . . depression? Dad said all you needed was a good woman to straighten you out. Once we sent a care manager to assess your situation: “All he needs is a friend. And I don’t think you want to pay me to be his friend.”

Still, you hurt no one in the years you spent in Denver, even made a few friends. At first, you taught yourself how to swim, participated in a triathlon, wrote a guide to health food stores, ran for assemblyman! You worked as a customer service representative for six years, then abruptly quit, saying your coworkers picked on you. You preferred to spend your time on research into conspiracy theories circling around the Kennedy assassination, later on genealogy, finding long-lost cousins here and there – time spent mostly indoors, in the basement, looking at books, combing the internet.

The curse, however, was not so easily tamed. At age fifty, you developed Parkinson’s disease which is all you needed! The meds in their own right cause delusions and hallucinations so now you have psychotic episodes. Your last years are being spent locked away in a nursing home with ninety-year-olds. You’re safe; you can do no harm to yourself or others; we can keep an eye on you.

Far from being grateful for being looked after, you make no bones about telling the family that you hate every moment of your existence, wish you would die, hate your dependence on others for sustenance. You steadfastly refuse treatment for your paranoia though you have nothing to lose. At times you seem barely recognizable as human, grunting like a cornered animal as you swivel your head from side to side, narrow your eyes, study your visitors, readying yourself for an attack that never comes.

“You don’t know what they’re doing to me here. My days are numbered,” you insist. You manage to scare some of the staff most of the time and alienate the others. “They’re stealing my papers. The food is terrible, probably poisoned.”

Or you sit with your eyes pressed shut, chewing a sandwich like a cow her cud, mumbling about some urgent matter, not quite coherent.

Inside your frozen mask of a face lurks the sweet confused boy you once were. I catch a glimpse of that boy now and then.

Mom does not visit or seem to think of you at all. “It’s your turn now,” she says to me and my youngest brother,

Gary. She lost a brother, now a son; she can’t risk revisiting the memories. Dad has passed away. We were forced to take up the slack. “Howard, let the doctors help you,” we repeat. “Take the medicine. It may stop the hallucinations.”

“I’m afraid of the side effects. I can read. Let me show you the MDSS. I have it here somewhere. . .”

Or you whisper over the phone, “Don’t let them know where you live. I think you might be in danger too.”

The doctors, half a century later, still have no label to pin on someone like you – they toss terms in the air like coins; some fall to earth as heads; others, tails.

### Son, Alex

My heart breaks as I segue to you, my son, Alex, love of my life, my precious/precocious one. I raised you as a single parent with much compassion and hope, you who seemed destined to be a lawyer or psychiatrist, an architect, builder or artist. Alex, you sequester yourself in Israel after hiding out first in backwater Maine and then California; you can’t seem to snare a girlfriend to your dismay and ours or a paying job or profession; you live with ten cats; you have many friends mostly younger; and you’ve decided the U.S. is a dangerous place while the West Bank of Israel is not. My heart breaks into a million jagged edges. I always wanted you to be happy



Art by Allan Noullet

and whole. You were my priority for so many many years. Yes, I sacrificed romance and did not remarry until you (wonderful boy!) found me a mate during your second semester of college. Into every life a little rain must fall?

Saddest so far is your story, afflicted in your prime like your forbears. With fine Gallic features, a noble brow, a straight strong back, with a heart as big as an ocean, you were making your way in the world. Or so we all thought. Did you fool us? Unlike your great uncle, Lenny, or uncle Howard, you were/are a veritable magnet for friends, girlfriends (though you could never seem to pick just one), and had diverse adventures (from Maine to California to France, from the Caribbean to Israel) on land and on sea. You were embarked on the road to being an architect, a seaman and a freelance artist. . . . We even thought you might become engaged one September. . . to an eye doctor's daughter.

Relatively late in life, at thirty, the curse made itself known. Some saw it coming; most did not. Sure, you were a little choleric, very obstinate, a little too affected by the rising tides. . . the Dow Jones Industrial Average, the phases of the moon. But the symptoms were never overt. No one ever felt they had to lock you away. Or be afraid. But you did.

In your teenage years, I enlisted the help of a counselor to get you over the usual humps. You were quite willing to talk to the woman, kind and maternal as she was. Never once did this counselor, your pediatrician, nor any teachers give the slightest signal that something was very wrong. True you were distracted at times, wild at others. Mostly though you were gentle and compassionate and nurturing. Until . . .

"I'm going to live in Israel. Drive me to the airport." You demanded one day while visiting us.

"What? Don't you want to spend some time there first? See if you like it?" I asked.



Shrink 44 by Rolli

"I'm making Aliyah! Israel will be my home now."

Like Howard, you abruptly deserted family, girlfriend and friends, and located your own hidey hole in the desert, 5,700 miles away. You distanced yourself from friends and family for a variety of reasons and made-up excuses:

"You don't keep a kosher home. You don't believe in God. You're an enemy of our people. Yes, don't deny it – I saw your picture on that you tube video! Your government is keeping tabs on you."

Lightning quick, you took yourself out of our lives, moving away from the very people who had so loved you. You profess to love us still; you say you know what is best for all: Step to your drumbeat or step not at all. You invite us still to climb into your hidey hole with you! But, if we do, we must not forget you're the Alpha Male.

Apparently, you think you're strong enough to battle the curse yourself. You dare not speak to anyone of your internal battles, keeping your own counsel. Sometimes you fly into rages over trifles. You confess to grinding your teeth at night.

I say, "Alex, you definitely need to take something."

I consult a doctor/friend who states simply: Alex will only get worse. "What's wrong with him exactly?" I ask.

"This or that," the doctor says.

You've found a "dating counselor" that you see regularly. The family pays. We see no change in your actions or planning for the future. So we do some research.

"There's a male doctor in your neighborhood . . ." We mean a specialist.

"Yeah, sometimes it would be easier to talk to a man . . . . But I'm not taking anything!"

(Oh, that familiar refrain!)]8

You live alone in a dangerous zone. You claim to have friends, work hard, but barely get by. You've had altercations with roommates, landlords, bosses, government workers, doctors, people in authority. In eight years you've found no one to date or to marry.

I know you have faith it's all going to work out, even as you accept handouts from the family to pay the rent or replace your car. I want so much to believe you. To help you.

And so it goes. As of yet, you have no heirs, male or otherwise, so maybe that's the end to the curse; it does seem to be weakening as it skips from generation to generation. You refuse treatment, as your uncle Howard does. You too fail to see the downside of the curse or its effects on your life and prospects. It is the others—the family members—who need to adapt, who are mistaken and to blame.

"Beware," you warn. "You are in danger."

Is that why you left?

We were in danger all along. We forced out of our minds the history, the ease at which we could lose beloved uncles, brothers, sons. Next chance, we hope to spot the changes.

Will the next male accept treatment, a cure, at the minimum, a diagnosis?

Will you just snap out of it?



# Over the Rockies

LEIF GREGERSEN

It was a heartbreaking thing to realize that even in my own home town I didn't matter much. That was twenty-seven years ago and I still don't seem to matter much despite that back then my activities were confined to going to school with or weeping and celebrating with everyone from the town drunk to the mayor and never doing anything more than trying to get good grades and earn a living.

A lot of people thought the insanity was my fault. Some thought I was on drugs, others felt people with mental illnesses were wanton, dangerous, violent killers. The truth was that I actually had no idea I had an illness. I had depression, I had bouts of mania where I would stay up for days. I had sadness and loneliness and fear that I thought was something everyone goes through. Until they put me away.

It wasn't a pretty thing when my breakdown finally came. I did get violent, I beat up a guy for dating a girl I was in love with. After being taken to the office they had two cops come down to arrest me and take me to the mental hospital. I fought them, not out of insanity, but out of a strong feeling of unfairness over the fact that they took me out of my school right in front of hundreds of my peers.

I didn't last long in St. Albert after that. I was kicked out of school and shunned by all but a few close friends. And when I got out of the hospital my dad and I no longer got along. One night came and I had slept all day and my dad wanted me out of the house. I knew that was coming, I had a bag packed with a raincoat and some sandwiches. I had sold my motorbike for \$20 and some old hockey cards for \$50. I wasn't broke, but \$70 even back then was woefully little to travel on from Edmonton to Vancouver, never mind that it was November.

What stands out the most for me now is how I left. My dad told me he was going to call the police and have me sent back to the hospital and I threatened him with a closed fist. Right then and there I began a 1,200 km journey that wouldn't end for nearly three days. A plane ride takes an hour.

I walked out to the highway wondering when the moment would come when the police would stop me, when I would go back to being drugged up and locked up, drooling on myself and waiting months to be even considered for release. A few months before, I thought my salvation would come in joining the military, but once they heard I was mentally ill they refused to recruit me.

As soon as I left town I got a ride to the main highway, and soon after that a trucker picked me up. It was the first time I had ever been in a big truck and I loved it. I got more rides, some of them took longer than others, and I would walk down the highway while I was waiting. Outside Jasper a Christian member of the Gideon Society picked me up and we had a long fascinating conversation. I think that was one of the key turning points of my life. When he dropped me off, he gave me a bible and wrote his name and phone number in it. He said I could call him and ask him for anything. I kept the

bible and even read it a little, but I never called.

My next ride after that was a drywaller who kept a jug full of mountain spring water handy and added whiskey to it as we careened down the road. I had never said so many hail Mary's without yet being a Catholic at the time. The next hours after that were pure hell.

I walked up a steep road on the side of a mountain, unable to get any kind of a ride due to signs being up saying, "No hitch-hiking, fine for pick-up." After walking for nearly six hours I camped by the side of the road and had the worst nightmares of my life. In one of them I dreamed I was in my own back yard, not out in some strange far-off place on the side of a mountain with little gear and less food.

My next [last] ride took me into Vancouver. It was in an old MG and I had convinced the driver to put the top down so we could drink in the rocky mountain scenery. He dropped me off right at a place that charged just \$8 a night for a Hostel bed which made the difference between sleeping in a bed and a dumpster for me. Vancouver became my new home. The only problem was that in my rush to escape what was going on in my head I mistakenly brought my brain with me, only now I was off my medication. Many people went through extreme sadness as they watched me deteriorate into something hardly recognizable. I am sure I put both of my parents through hell as well. When I finally got too sick to care for myself, I had no choice but to hitch-hike back to Edmonton only in the middle of winter.

It took me some years, but I eventually discovered that psychiatry has its good points. Somehow it brought me back from the brink, somehow I got well enough to write my story and get it published. I'll never forget that first journey I ever took away from home, with the firsts and the nightmares, the fear of going over the edge of a cliff because I had no money to pay for a ride. All that is part of who I am now, and I can finally say I like that person.

*Shrink 26 by Rolli*



# Obsessive compulsive soldiering

VINCENT MASSON

A little over a year after leaving the Army Reserves, I received a pension cheque for approximately \$2600 for two and a half years of service. I debated its use for a while - figuring that whatever I spent it on would, in some introspective way, symbolize the whole experience. I ended up going out for dinner, buying a video game, and putting the rest towards that month's rent.

One thing had remained of my service after I left - The scars on my wrist from when, feeling particularly depressed in Artillery school one afternoon, I cut myself with my Army issued multi-tool in my quarters. I had been a bad soldier up to then, to be sure, but I was also unknowingly battling something else at the time, which, untreated, had brought me to a boiling point of sorts.

Everything in the Army is done with the maximum speed and proficiency - something that naturally conflicted with the strange and illogical routines and thoughts that someone suffering from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder might display.

One may in fact, mistakenly believe that the overly specific and uniform ways of the military might be compatible with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder - if people with OCD like to be neat and clean, for example, then why should it matter where the neatness and cleanliness is being performed? (My mother often joked that she would happily welcome someone with OCD to come and clean our house). This, however, relies on the misguided belief that OCD is a disorder of cleanliness and orderliness, rather than one of anxiety and routine. In any case, cleanliness is one of the ways my condition manifested itself.

Cleaning my hands became an important staple of my disorder - and an enormous source of anxiety throughout my

stint in the Military. On more than one ruck march, I used my sparse and very limited supply of canteen water to clean my hands - seeing the ritual in equal significance to staying hydrated. Often times I would lick my hands, then scrub the saliva furiously to get the dirt off, only to dirty them moments later. I was only questioned about this bizarre habit once - and I dismissed it, claiming I was cleaning a cut. The need to have my hands free of dirt in a profession that practically thrived in it, struck me as strange, but little else.

My fellow Reservists would no doubt have been surprised to learn that a soldier that needed help with the smallest tasks and duties - who couldn't even be trusted to roll his sleeves properly - was actually regimented and neat to the point of mental exhaustion in other areas of his life.

But the Army is made up of soldiers, not doctors, and my disorder intensified, along with the training. More days were spent out in the "field" - and therefore more opportunities to get dirty. A pathological irrationality seeped into everything I did, and I became convinced that trouble was lurking around every corner, at every possible moment, when there was little reason to believe so.

The camaraderie and brotherhood that exists between soldiers is very real. There are days when I long for the kind of tribal bond I felt then, that I don't think I'll ever experience it ever again. However, the Military can also be punishingly alienating if you're not accepted into that tribe, as I felt at that moment in Artillery school. It's justifiably assumed, of course, that if you're not enjoying yourself, you can leave at any time, but I stubbornly refused to concede, and the scars on my arms will be a reminder of that - a reminder of my refusal to ask for help, but also a reminder that I'm lucky to have endured long enough to seek the help that eventually saved my life.



*Night enchanted by Jacek Grabowski*





# Those impressionable early years

KAY PARLEY

It doesn't need a psychologist to tell us that a child must have lots of love and security in the early years if he is to develop the sense of worth he'll need to meet the challenges of life. I was one of the fortunate ones. Not only was I born to loving parents in a well-socialized neighbourhood, but I also had grandparents living just a mile and a half away in a fieldstone house that just seemed a picture of security. And it was the twenties, when the world was an exciting place and Saskatchewan farms were flourishing. Even that is not all. I was an only grandchild on Dad's side, so you can imagine how much I meant to those grandparents.

It wasn't to last.

In my introduction to *Inside the Mental* I gave the impression that my father's illness and his removal from my life were alone what let to my own psychiatric problems. There is no doubt it played a major role, but, to be honest, it was the tip of the iceberg. In a sense, I lost my mother too. She was so harried by what had happened and so burdened with responsibility for the farm that some women would have fallen apart. Mother just toughened up. She told me she would have to be both mother and father from now on and that I would have to obey her. A schoolteacher with backbone of steel, Mother meant exactly what she said. From then on she seemed less the loving mother and more the disciplinarian. She was so unhappy that the very house seemed to take on a defensive air.

That's not all. My grandparents' fieldstone house was not simply my "castle," it was a place of so much love and had a great feeling of permanence. Well, first Grandpa died. Then my Aunt Milly, who was probably my favourite person in the world, married and moved to Manitoba. (At 45, we had considered Milly a spinster and never expected her to depart. That was another terrible blow.) Then Grandma died in 1934.

And the "Dirty Thirties" were upon us. No crops. No money. Only worry and desperation. To call it a time of despair would be an understatement. In 1937, Dad's brother Alex died. That would have ended my connection to the old Parley farm and the community I'd known, but my mother's brother had gone into partnership with Alex and he stayed on the farm for several years, so I was able to spend summer holidays in my familiar community.

Why would it have been the end? Because Mother and I moved to Indian Head in 1933. That was traumatic in itself, adjusting to a large town after the country and adjusting to age-graded classrooms. I missed the wonderful country school where all of the grades studied and played together and where I'd had the same caring teacher for grades one to four. To top it all, I now had one of the most punitive teachers ever in the system. You could be given the strap for having one spelling error. I could spell. I was one of only four in the class who

missed getting the strap that year. (They found out the following summer that the teacher had had a brain tumor.)

So far I've listed the loss of my dad, his parents and his brother, my home, my familiar school, my aunt, my whole sense of security – and I'm still on the top of the iceberg.

Because my mother's family was traumatized too. In fact the move to Indian Head was only partly to leave the hopeless situation of the farm; it was also because my mother's youngest sister was dreadfully ill with an illness doctors knew almost nothing about in 1930: Osteitis Fibrosa Cystica. She fell ill in 1929, soon after my dad went to mental hospital, and she just grew worse and worse. It was 1933 before a Winnipeg specialist heard of the case, came to Indian Head by train and performed the surgery that saved her life. (I once wrote the story for *Folklore* magazine, entitled "A Miracle at Indian Head.")

Mother was the oldest of nine, and that baby sister meant the world to her. Small wonder my memories of the Indian Head years leave me feeling I was one problem too many. My young auntie was a family favourite and when the operation proved successful the hospital staff suggested she'd had only ten hours to live. No wonder I'd felt unbearable strain in Mother and her family.

I have Manic-Depressive Psychosis. I might have had a breakdown anyway, but I've just explained that my father's illness was not the only childhood trauma I had to endure. All that by the time I was ten.

I haven't written this account as a bid for sympathy, but only to point out that children are resilient. Somehow I managed to survive all that, but there were plenty of positives. There were those early years of stability in a well-functioning

community with people who cared. There was that first teacher who was a wonderful friend to her students. There was the farm itself, beautiful and nourishing until the "thirties" began. My mother's family were very supportive, too, and they were highly intelligent. Mother and four of her siblings were schoolteachers. They all read a lot and kept up with things. Their father had been a Methodist minister and their mother had been raised by Quakers. I may have felt shunted aside and expected not to make a nuisance of myself when the adults "had so much on their minds," but at the same time things could have been worse. I could have been subjected to ignorance or physical abuse, and I never was.

I also had the good fortune eventually to have guidance from excellent professional psychiatrists. And I had the invaluable support of friends. Bad start? Or some kind of impetus? The fact is I have a very good start. A Scots Presbyterian, Grandma was rigid and demanding but she was also very kind, and Aunt Milly and my Dad had made me feel very special. And Mother's family knew what it meant to be well socialized. It was the stability and acceptance of those first five years that really saw me through.

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# A day in the life . . .

CATHERINE WHITE

When he looked in the mirror in the morning he didn't see himself; a complete stranger looked back at him. How did that guy get in here? But he took a deep breath, waited a moment because he knew by now that the situation would resolve and things would go back into place. "Don't panic" he urged out loud and then was somehow struck with the humour of it all. "What a stereotype you've become – talking to yourself."

He thought about getting some breakfast. He had bought cereal yesterday but when he examined the box it didn't look familiar. He remembered the man beside him at the supermarket, both of them packing up their groceries at the same time. He had seen him there before. Strange that the guy was always there when he was – watching him... checking him out was what he was doing. It gave him a creepy feeling, like he was being followed for some reason that he couldn't figure out. Perhaps he meant to harm him – otherwise, why would he be following him? And now, for goodness sake, that guy had switched his cereal boxes when he wasn't looking. The box did look slightly suspicious. The seal appeared to be loose – hard to tell really. Can't be too careful he thought, but wondered vaguely if it was like the image in the mirror. Still, he didn't want to take any chances so he threw it all out in the garbage. This was a serious threat. Time to switch supermarkets, even if the other one was a longer walk.

He did have trouble making sense of his life very often. There were so many things that happened that were real, only that they turned out not to be. He had to be careful, take his time and try to sort things out so he didn't overreact. Just try his best to walk the tightrope.

The milk in his tea tasted slightly sour. He couldn't remember when he had bought it – a while ago he guessed, but he hated clear tea. He added six spoons of sugar and noted that he was certainly going through a lot of sugar lately.

His first cigarette of the day. He dragged the smoke into his lungs, feeling the nicotine working its magic. The incessant noises receded and he felt calm, almost "normal," although that was so long ago he hardly knew what it meant now. Of course cigarettes were bad for his health, but it was a trade-off and he preferred the instant relief to the vague health issues sometime in the future. Lots of people in his group felt the same.

He needed to go to the post office. He had remembered his brother's birthday and bought a card but he needed a stamp. He had some old ones, the kind that you lick with your tongue, but he preferred the peel-off kind. Then he didn't worry about what might be in the glue. It's complicated, arranging life.

He put on his coat, but not before he remembered to check the windows to be sure they were locked. He seldom opened them, that was true, but he always checked and if he ever forgot he would just have to go back before he set out again. He sighed. "What a life - it's all stopping and starting.

Still, I guess I'll be OK just so long as it keeps starting again . . ." He didn't like to pursue that train of thought. His doctor asked him about that every time they met and the words were always the same. "If you ever feel you want to harm yourself – or someone else – I would be obliged to ..." Yes, he knew what he would be obliged to do. He had been down that path a few times.

He said good morning to the elderly lady in the next apartment and helped her manoeuvre her bundle buggy into the elevator. He inquired about her stomach pains and hoped she was feeling better. They had become friends, although it took a long time for that to develop because she was a foreigner and he had a healthy suspicion of people who were different. Lots of smiles and nods to compensate for her lack of English - that seemed to do the trick. She liked to pat his arm and tell him he was a "good boy" and although he didn't much like anyone touching him he had concluded that she was pretty harmless. Naturally, he always refused her invitations to dinner and had never been inside her apartment. That would have made him too anxious, but once in a while she brought a cooked meal to his door. She indicated that he was, after all, a man alone and he was very thin, so probably not eating well. He always thanked her and returned the washed dish the next day. But, of course, he couldn't eat it because he didn't know if what was in it was safe. So complicated.

She wanted to know when he was going to get married and looked so sad when he said "no". He just let that sadness drip slowly down into the deep hole inside him to join all the other sadnesses, regrets, lost dreams. The whole mess churned slowly in the black well that he hardly ever wanted to contemplate or visit, knowing where that might lead.

It was really impossible for him to eat other people's cooking because he had no idea what was in it or what had been added. The only person that seemed to understand this was his brother's wife. She always asked him into the kitchen "to help" so he could see exactly how the meal was prepared. She was a good cook too, so he always ate everything there, but you can't expect them to have you for dinner every day. He knew he was lucky to have a brother who stuck by him, even when his life got strange. When he went to his group, so many people had no family left. So many losses in a life like this. For those people, the group was like family. Most of them had been together in the group for at least five years, so no-one had to go into a long explanation about the eating, the voices, the compulsions. They all knew about medication side effects like the sugar thing and all about the rejections and the never-ending sadness and loneliness. They mostly talked about how to navigate the world.

At the group, he said that he tries to go out of his apartment every day even when he feels watched and scared. He told them about the person in the green sports car that followed him one day. He had phoned his brother's house in a panic but his sister-in-law helped him to see that the person was probably lost and just turning his car around. So real and then not real. It sure helps to have someone who is grounded

in reality at times like that. They all had a good laugh about that incident.

Another group member said he reads the newspaper every day, cover to cover, to take his mind off things. He used to get it on his computer, but then he just knew that someone was using it to send hostile messages to him, so now he goes out and reads at the coffee shop. They let him sit there for hours. Someone else had a telephone with similar problems and now he just doesn't use the phone. But no one wants to get in touch with him anyway, so it doesn't really matter.

One of the women went to a dance and met a real nice man but then he wanted to have sex with her and when she said no because he didn't have protection and she didn't want to get pregnant he called her a whore and told her to get out of his car. She walked home. She said she was raped once when she "wasn't right" – and everyone understands what "wasn't right" means, without having to go into details.

The trip to the post office went well. He was pretty sure people couldn't tell by looking at him. If he is going out he is always careful to dress neatly and shave, even if his shoes are a bit down on their luck. The post office was pretty empty, so he didn't have to wait in line with a lot of other people crowding him and making him anxious. He never goes to places like that around Christmas with so many people pushing and crowding in on each other – impossible to navigate that type of situation. Today he even made a bit of small talk with the woman behind the counter – she had a nice smile



Art by James Skelton

and reminded him of someone he once knew, but that memory was way down there in the black pit that he rarely visited.

He used to own a car; a sports car and it was green too. That was a long time ago when he was actually a broker and worked in an office tower downtown. He wondered if that person in the green sports car had somehow got hold of his old car. Now he can't afford to buy another car on a disability pension and he couldn't drive even if he wanted to. Far too many distraction on the road and in his head too. The last time he drove a policeman pulled him over because he was driving too slow and impeding traffic. And to think that he used to get speeding tickets! His doctor did the paperwork to cancel his license so then there was no more driving for him. Keeping the noises and conversations under control is his full time job now.

He walked a lot when he went out. Taking the bus was just one more hurdle that he didn't feel up to most of the time, what with people watching him and crowding him and, sometimes, even talking about him. He could hear them, but if he looked at them they just stared straight ahead. Once he missed his stop because he was so upset. He decided then that it wasn't good for him to get into these situations if he could avoid them. If you react there could be consequences, especially on the transit. If someone calls the police, it won't turn out well. There had been enough of those incidents that they all knew that.

He felt like a coffee, but could he actually go to a coffee shop? They all looked pretty crowded and he wouldn't share a table. He liked it best when he had a table in the corner and no-one sat in the next table, but that was unpredictable. The coffee was OK but he was always iffy about the food, even if his brother had told him that the food at coffee chains was regulated and the same everywhere. And, of course, you couldn't smoke in a coffee shop and that was a problem. He decided it was best to go home and open a tin of soup. The tin was intact, the label exactly as he remembered it, so he felt confident as he heated the contents on the stove.

He was proud of himself that he had gone out today and managed his business. A few weeks ago he had gone to bed and stayed there – getting up was just too much. Too many losses, too many worries, too much trying to fit in – what was it all about in the end? He didn't call his brother like he usually does, so his brother began to wonder if something was wrong and came banging at his door, scaring him half to death. The place was a mess and so was he. He hadn't had a shower in days, or anything to eat for that matter but he didn't care. He could hardly talk and it took so long to formulate any thoughts – he just wanted to stay in that murky space and make the world leave him alone. His brother said he needed to go to the hospital and he had resisted, naturally. His sister-in-law came and it took hours to get him to go. He dreaded the familiar routines that he knew would take place – blood tests, which he detested because they were taking part of his body, the questions – “do you feel as though you

*Continued on next page . . .*

# ... and today was a good reading day

... continued from previous page

might...?” and the inevitable transfer to the “Psych floor.” Such a degrading term and it made him feel ashamed and worse than before. Of course it was a medication screw-up and it all had to be sorted out – once again. More blood tests, more talking with well-meaning professionals when he just wanted them to go away and leave him alone to his own life – such as it is. But you had to play the game if you wanted to get out, so he was polite and tried to appear co-operative. Some suggestion of a “group home” he rejected smartly. Imagine living in close quarters with a bunch of loonies like him! It would drive him crazy. And at last he went back to his apartment and was thankful.

He always liked to read and have a lot of books around him, even before. Mysteries mostly, but also some of the best-sellers. He could spend an entire day reading, so long as he had enough cigarettes to help him deal with his “distractions” as he liked to call them. People gave him books and since he couldn’t afford to buy them, he got books out of the library regularly. If he went in the morning there were very few people in the library so he felt comfortable and he and the librarians knew each other by now.

Today was a good reading day and he settled in. But first, he had to inspect his chair. The chair was a Salvation Army find – upholstered in some tweedy pattern with a couple of cushions for extra comfort. Why anyone would get rid of it was a mystery to him, but, one man’s misfortune is another man’s good luck he guessed. The only thing was – he had heard that there were bedbugs in some cast-off furniture. It kind of freaked him out, but he looked carefully each time before he sat in it and never saw anything to alarm him. One day he had woken up with some itchy spots on his arm and was sure he had to ditch the chair, but they turned out to be mosquito bites – or so someone in the group said – so he just inspects the thing regularly, turning it upside down, removing the cushions, hoping for the best.

Once, and he hardly wants to remember when, he had a condo in a swank part of the city, furnished from the Arte Shoppe – nice new sofas and chairs, designer drapes, a well-stocked bar with elegant drink glasses. An upcoming star in the business scene they described him. But that was before... when that thing had just started to insert itself into his life ... softly, gently it moved in and he hardly noticed at first. Surely it was overwork or stress – everyone in high-powered jobs has these moments, don’t they? But it crept on, inexorably encompassing portions of his life, his thoughts, his ability to do his job. Like a jealous lover, it seduced him, even as he resisted, wrapping him in soft arms of steel, gently probing his tender spots, drawing him into a strange world where he had no anchors and no controls... until finally in one chaotic climax the world broke apart and in terror, he tumbled blindly into the black pit that remains forever within him. It took no prisoners and it was a very long time before he could climb the slippery sides of that pit, shedding parts of himself as he struggled. Everything slipped away so long ago – his life,

shattered into a million little pieces, blown away like a puff of smoke. He looked at the towels that covered his windows, his Salvation Army chair. No more fancy drinks for him. Soda water was the best you can allow yourself with this condition.

Around dinner time he called his brother – now he always checks in with him about this time each day. Perhaps his brother asked him to do that, after the last “episode,” but he really does it to be sure everyone is safe and in the right place, otherwise his world turns upside down. Once he called his sister-in-law in the afternoon and when she didn’t answer, he knew something dreadful had happened to her. He kept calling and then, in a panic, called his brother at his office to tell him that his wife was missing. His brother reminded him that his wife was out of town visiting her mother and he had known that, but forgot. He was embarrassed but relieved that his little world was still intact. It didn’t take much to get that world out of kilter.

Dinner was another tin of soup – that was the safest plan. Tomorrow he would have to navigate his way to a new supermarket to avoid the cereal-switching guy who had been stalking him. That was a worrying thing. He hadn’t told his brother about it just in case the reality wasn’t really real. You have to be careful not to sound too crazy. But if that guy turns up at the other supermarket he is going to need to talk to someone about that – a dangerous situation that might need the authorities to intervene. You can’t be too careful.

In the end it’s just so hard to make sense of it all when life has become so unpredictable. Some consistency would be a relief -- but he knows there are no promises about tomorrow. He only hopes that tomorrow the person in the mirror is the same one that he saw this morning.



*Lady Melancholy by Rolli*

# My dear, Grayson

SHIRLEY CALLAGHAN

Becky edged her way down the back stairs of the old restored clinic. Red exit lights glowed at the end of each hall as Grayson guided her through the passages until they arrived at the last exit. “The nurse manager is out front and does not need to see us together,” he said. “We’ll meet in two weeks at the same time.”

How many years had she been seeing her counselor and workmate? He was the idol of many female patients, not to mention the overzealous nurses on staff who preened themselves before coming to work with him. Grayson could have had his pick of admirers, but he remained aloof, tending to his clients with expertise and commitment. His excellent skills had been noted before he came to work in this town, and the CEO knew he was well suited for the job. Becky felt jealous that he was so pursued, but coming to work was a pleasure for her as well since he came both to the hospital and clinic.

*He has helped me through my depressions, and watched over me when I was manic. Grayson is more than a counselor to me—he is my best friend. Not only that, he is tall and lanky and, with his dark hair and eyes, reminds me of Heathcliff. He also respects me as a professional. Because he appreciates my nursing assessments, I feel a valuable part of the team. Work is a joy with him on staff.*

Grayson dropped by Becky’s office almost every day to share hospital news with the well-connected nurse she was. They were good workmates. Staff could see they related well both in “rounds” and on the unit. Becky’s friends suspected that she adored him, but they didn’t know she was his client—this would not be looked upon favorably. In a small town, however, boundaries and lines were often crossed.

Grayson’s private life remained a secret. He was never seen with anyone, but a curious orderly uncovered the fact that Grayson was divorced from a beautiful but promiscuous Norwegian doctor after a troublesome marriage which left him almost penniless. When he had come to town four years ago, he had to start anew. He rented a bachelor apartment and lived frugally, trying not only to build up funds, but to regain his confidence and self esteem. He would not get involved again, at least for a very long time.

*No wonder he is so alone and never smiles. He has been hurt. I never thought I would care for another man, but Grayson has restored my belief in relationships. It is so easy to talk to him—to tell him everything. What a treasure he is! I know I shouldn’t give him gifts, yet he is always on my mind. Finding cards and flowers and etchings is such a pleasure. I dare not tell my friends of my way of filling in the gap of having no one to love. I know my past is in play as well, is part of the therapy. All that pent up anger—maybe that is why my romances fail—No! I am not the only one to blame! Grayson, may you never leave me!*

“I don’t know quite how to handle, Becky” said Grayson to his colleague. “She is thirty but not as worldly as she could be. She seems so innocent—so fragile. She has a major illness

to treat and wants me to guide her every step. Another problem is that she has a strong transference to me and I am afraid she will be deeply hurt. What was she like with you? I feel like I should refer her to another therapist. You don’t agree? Nothing to do, then, but carry on with her?”

Becky wore her prettiest sweater to her appointment with Grayson. He had no tie today –just an open shirt with an undershirt showing. Becky felt stirred, but Grayson turned aside so as not to look at her. He cleared his throat.

“Becky, I’ve met someone and I may move away if she can’t find work here. It happened quickly, and I should have told you earlier. If needs be, I shall have to refer you to another therapist. Is there anyone else you would like to see?”

Becky started to say something but all that came out was a low guttural wrenching that tore at her throat. She ran from the office and bolted down the clinic stairs. No Grayson came to lead her through the dark corridors. By the time she reached her apartment, her mouth was dry and she was gasping uncontrollably. She forced herself to exhale fully, again and again, until her racing heart slowed. Until she realized that she was much more than deeply embarrassed.

*He didn’t even tell me! I have known him for four years and he never even warned me. My attentions meant nothing. I know he was honest last fall when he took my shoulder and told me he was not interested in me romantically. But I didn’t want to believe him.*

*I’m still a loser in romance. I just want to go away and never see any of the staff again. They’re most likely laughing at me behind my back. I feel like I want to die.*

It took a month-long sick leave for Becky to recover. Only when she was merely embarrassed and slightly hurt about Graham did she dare return to work. Six months later she formed a friendship with a new male nurse at the hospital. She found a female therapist whom she liked and again gave her cards and gifts despite a former painful experience doing just that.

Although Grayson had planned to go to another province with his bride, she found work in the town and Grayson continued with his practice. And Becky slowly learned to work amicably with him at the hospital. Again.

## Our apologies to Linda Biasotto

In the Fall 2017 edition of TRANSITION, the last line of her fiction piece titled *The coldest night of the year* on page 24 was omitted.

It should have read:

She tucks the blanket about herself until only her eyes and the top of her head show.

**She’s warm now. She’s safe.**

# Low-pressure front

DANIEL LAWLOR

Jimmy sat at the big metal desk in the back office filling out paperwork. It was the perfunctory end to an otherwise unspectacular shift at Couldn't Chair Less, the sleepy little furniture store he managed. Jimmy was their top salesman. Today he'd sold two sofas, one mattress, and three used refrigerators.

He looked up and noticed a few drops of water on a stack of brochures. He looked around but couldn't find the source of the water. The windows were closed and everything else was dry. He was puzzled, but he wiped the water away and didn't think about it again.

A week later, Jimmy stood in line at the DMV to renew his license. He was stuck between a breastfeeding mother and an overweight man with a patchy beard and a bad need for deodorant. Jimmy tapped his foot, he drummed his fingers against the wall, he fidgeted with his keys. The line would not move.

A drop of water hit Jimmy in the head—big, fat, and cold. He looked up with a start but again he couldn't locate the source of the water. He'd half expected to see a leaking pipe but saw only a white tile ceiling and flickering fluorescent lights. He wiped his head and went back to drumming his fingers.

It happened again. A drop of water on Jimmy's head, followed by another on his shoulder. The large man to his left wiped his arm. "What the heck?" he said, looking up.

The drops continued intermittently for the next hour or so until it was time for Jimmy to take his license picture. By then his hair was matted and his shirt was damp. To Jimmy the photo resembled more a drowned rat than a respectable suburban furniture salesman.

Things progressed rapidly after that. On Friday afternoon, Jimmy was doing inventory in the back warehouse when Mr. Dam, the furniture store's eccentric owner, dropped in for a visit. He came to congratulate Jimmy on his latest Salesman of the Quarter victory but stopped short when he noticed all the moisture on the ground.

"What is that?" he squawked. "Is that rain?!"

Jimmy tried to play it off. "I, uh—I noticed that too. I think we might have a leaky pipe somewhere." But the extra pair of dry socks he'd taken to keeping in the trunk of his car said otherwise.

That night was his second date with Cheryl, a CPA who he'd sold a chaise lounge to a month earlier. Their first date had gone well. They'd gone bowling, walked and talked down by the reservoir, and she told Jimmy that he seemed like "a perfect gentleman," something he'd found himself repeating each night in the bathroom mirror as he brushed his teeth. Tonight he was looking forward to one-upping this. Like a true gentleman, he'd planned dinner at a fancy Italian place, an opening at a swanky art gallery, and a night cap at his favorite wine bar. If all went according to plan, their third date would be a gourmet home-cooked meal by the fireplace culminating in an overnight stay.

They met at Peppino's at eight sharp. Jimmy compli-

mented Cheryl's earrings, pulled her chair out for her, and made her laugh with the overexaggerated Italian accent his grandpa had used when he was a child, much to their waiter's chagrin. "Arrivederci! You take-a your meatball and get out!"

Jimmy tried to impress her with his more positive attributes. In an attempt to sound knowledgeable, he began to educate her on something he knew all about: furniture manufacturing. Halfway through a soliloquy on the merits of different kinds of upholstery, he noticed her attention was flagging.

"Is something wrong?" he asked.

"I—" she started, an embarrassed flush creeping into her cheeks. "You're a little flaky, is all." Cheryl brushed a few fine white flakes off Jimmy's shoulder. He was momentarily embarrassed but he pressed on, returning to his one-sided discussion.

Jimmy was explaining that most cotton blends find their sweet spot between forty and sixty percent actual cotton when he stopped. There were more white flakes on the tablecloth. His mostaccioli was cold and a frost had formed on his water glass.

Cheryl shivered. "Does it feel cold in here to you?"

Within five minutes their table was buried in an inch of snow and soon the whole place was inundated in a heavy blizzard. Freezing customers demanded their money back. Children made snowballs and threw them at the maître d'. The waiter calmly explained to Jimmy and Cheryl that they were not longer welcome at Peppino's—ever again. "Arrivederci!"

Jimmy did not get a third date.

Jimmy's sales figures began to decline. It wasn't due to a deterioration of his salesmanship skills or an unfriendly demeanor. It was just tough to sell wet furniture. Jimmy would be pitching a newlywed couple on a fabulous contemporary linen living room set and wham! a monsoon would sweep through the showroom. Or he'd have an old retiree halfway asleep in a cozy new recliner when an earthquake would rumble him right out of the chair and onto the ground. Jimmy went from second, to third, to dead last. He recorded the worst quarter of his career.

Things came to a head when Jimmy was showing a dinette set to a family of four. He was moments away from closing his first sale in months. Never mind that he was so desperate that he threw in enough discounts and extras to make the sale practically worthless. He just needed a taste of his old mojo back. The family was sitting around the table, about to sign on the dotted line, when a typhoon washed right through the store. Jimmy, the dinette set, and the whole family—mother, baby, and all—were swept clear out onto the street and deposited in the gutter. Jimmy was fired on the spot.

He didn't even towel off before driving home. He didn't see much point. The moisture had left a strong musky smell in his Toyota sedan and a fungus infestation had taken root in the trunk. It looked like a tiny mushroom forest.

Jimmy sped down the freeway, barely paying attention. A fog rolled in—right in to Jimmy's car. Visibility got so bad that



he could barely see his hands on the wheel.

He rolled down the windows but that only made it worse. The water condensed on the windshield and ran down in small rivulets. Jimmy tried wiping it off but his hand slipped on the wheel and he swerved. He ended up two lanes over, where he collided with an old woman on her way home from yoga.

The resulting fifty car pileup made the national news. Drivers kept slamming into the mile-long mass of steel in front of them, unable to see what was right in front of their eyes. Survivors were interviewed on TV. Many of them complained of a thick fog.

The next day Jimmy woke up to a bedroom that was freezing cold. His blankets were frozen solid and large icicles menaced from overhead. Mother nature had turned her back on him.

Jimmy couldn't take it anymore. He knew what he had to do.

Nothing if not studious, Jimmy went to the one place he'd always felt comfortable: the library. He loaded up on books about true crime, poisons, and remote wilderness locations, determined to find the most efficient way to kill himself. He didn't linger in the stacks for fear of getting the books wet and getting kicked out.

He sat under his own raincloud in a quiet corner in the back of the library in a yellow rubber jacket. His books were on a chair next to him under a tarp. He had no idea he'd been spotted.

A girl wiped off the chair across from him and sat down. She had big brown eyes, long hair, and she was very tall. Her shoulders jutted out at awkward angles and her chin pointed too far forward. Her clothes didn't fit very well. To Jimmy, she was beautiful.

"I don't think you want to do that," he stammered, motioning to the seat. "It's— Uh. It's taken."

She opened an umbrella and didn't say anything. She took a book out of her waterproof bag and began to read. *The Loser's Guide to Ending It All*.

Her name was Elsa and she had a lot in common with Jimmy. She worked in marketing for a flooring company and could pontificate for hours on the relative benefits of Saxony carpet versus a blended wool frieze. She enjoyed imitating European accents and swore she did a spot-on cockney, though most people couldn't tell it from her Irish brogue or Australian twang. Her car, a sensible four-door grand tourer, had recently developed a serious toadstool problem in the trunk.

For their first date Jimmy took Elsa to a bowling alley, which was difficult for him. He'd grown very nervous of appearing in public, afraid a freak tornado or devastating mudslide would come along and sweep innocent people away to their deaths. But he didn't want to seem timid.

Their first game progressed awkwardly. Elsa refused the bowling alley's smelly rental shoes, insisting on wearing her heavy galoshes. Jimmy threw several gutterballs. Halfway through he'd barely cracked thirty points.

But then, halfway through, a miracle struck. Jimmy sailed one clear down the lane, dead center, and it hit home hard. Pins flew every which way. It was a strike.

Elsa cried out happily and put her arms in the air. Jimmy fist-pumped gleefully. But as the sound of pins died down, another sound took over. *Plink, plink, plink*. It began to hail.

Jimmy hid the embarrassment on his face. He turned away and shrugged into his jacket. He knew where this would end up. "I've got to go," he said.

"Don't be ridiculous," said Elsa, unflappable as the other customers began to slip and slide on the small ice pellets. She steadied herself, lined up, and threw a perfect ball down the lane. Her galoshes glided effortlessly on the little ice pellets. She won the game 121-60.

The next time they saw each other, Jimmy picked Elsa up. He'd hastily tried to clean his car but it was no use. The mold had taken over. In the end he settled for tossing a towel over the seats and hanging no less than a dozen tiny pine tree air fresheners.

Elsa smiled when she got in. If she noticed the smell she didn't say anything. "Where to?"

"I figured we'd head to the reservoir," said Jimmy. "See what we see."

As they drove, storm clouds began to form. Big, heavy ones, spreading out menacingly from the edge of the horizon. The sky grew dark and it began to rain, slowly at first. Gradually it became more intense.

"It's really coming down out there," she said.

"Yeah," echoed Jimmy. "Out there."

They arrived at the park next to the reservoir. There was a swimming pool and two park rangers were desperately trying to drag a nylon cover across the pool. Jimmy and Elsa strolled past them, heading up the path toward the top of the hill. They left their umbrellas in the car.

They mostly walked in silence. The wind whipped through the trees around them and leaves streaked through the air. Animals dove for shelter.

They reached the top of the hill and Jimmy spread out a blanket. Down the hill, the two rangers gave up on their swimming pool and retreated inside for safety. Water streamed down the hill, taking with it mud and leaves and branches.

Jimmy and Elsa stretched out on the blanket. Elsa produced two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and a cheap bottle of wine from her bag.

They looked out over the city. Houses were shuttered and the tornado warning sirens were barely audible over the roar of the storm. Whole trees were being uprooted in the force of the winds, dragging power lines down with them in some cases. Lightning split the sky, followed by bone-rattling thunder.

Jimmy's hand found Elsa's and their fingers intertwined. He closed his eyes and lay back. The sun shined brightly down, warming them, as flowers bloomed in the sweet green grass.

# Marcellus

## ROLLI

They're dumb because, at the top of the stairs, behind the wooden thing, I can hear everything.

"He's come a long way."

"He's come a long way."

"But..."

"Jeffrey?"

"What are you thinking?"

"Jeffrey?"

"I'm scared. I am scared to death for my son. I'm scared to death."

I can hear everything.

\*

*Blood drops everywhere. On the big window. The boy looks out the big window at the bloody dog. The bloody dog looks at the boy and thinks he's bloody. It barks and the boy starts crying. It howls. The dog thinks the boy is crying blood. It stands on its back legs. It licks the window and tastes blood. It howls one more time. It drops dead.*

\*

Dr. Verma lives with us now, which is dumb. Her room is next to my room. It's got a bed and a desk. The bed is always smooth but the desk is a mess.

"I hear you wrote a story?"

She had some peppermints on her desk.

"And drew the pictures? All by yourself?"

They were the striped peppermints not the white ones I hate.

"I'm curious about your story."

"What's it called?"

"What's the story called?"

"I know you read it."

She wrote something down.

"Can you tell me what it's about?"

"I KNOW YOU READ IT."

"Where did you get the idea from? To write the story?"

"Can you remember?"

"I made it up."

She kept on writing.

"What's your story really about?"

"You can tell me."

"It's okay to tell me."

"Is it about what happened—"

I kicked the desk. Dr. Verma jumped.

When her pen quit working, she opened a drawer.

She didn't even see me take the peppermints.

\*

*The boy looks in drawers. He looks in cupboards. Then he finds the rope. He slips on his rubber boots and sits by the door. When the blood stops dropping, he goes outside. He's still crying. The dog's still lying there. The boy pets the dog then ties the rope to its collar. He walks down the street, dragging the dog behind him. He steps over the puddles or goes around them. He tries not*

*to pull the dog through them. He sees the mailman and a fireman and a cop. They're just lying there. The boy keeps going. He can't do anything for them.*

\*

Dr. Verma kissed Dad, once. She held onto his butt. She didn't think I was watching. She kissed him and rubbed his butt. Before she turned all the way around I ran back up the stairs.

\*

"Have you decided?"

Even when they close the sliding door I can hear them. Only the bottom step squeaks. Only one spot on the floor squeaks. I put my ear on the door.

"I don't know. I need to think."

"You need to *decide*."

"He'll understand. He will. It'll be better for him. All of us. You'd be . . . He can't remember his mother."

"You just need to—"

"I will."

"Tomorrow?"

"Alright. Tomorrow."

"This tomorrow?"

"Yes."

"We'd be happier. All of us. Wouldn't we?"

"Wouldn't we?"

I KNOW EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THIS HOUSE.

\*

*The boy walks into Shop-Mart. He leaves the dog outside. No one's in the store. The lights are off. It's hard to see. There's flashlights by the door. The boy grabs one and turns it on. He finds the umbrella section. He picks out a big white umbrella. He puts some quarters by the cash register. There's sunglasses by the cash register. The boy sticks them in his pocket and sits more quarters down. He puts the flashlight back. He goes back outside.*

\*

"Of course. There's always hope. Always."

"Time. It takes time."

"It's alright."

"He'll be alright."

"There's a good chance..."

"He just needs time."

"Just give him time."

\*

Dr. Verma talks funny. Her smile is dumb. Her glasses are dumb. She has dark rings around her eyes.

"What do you think?"

"Would you like to?"

"Would you?"

"Would you like to go back to school?"

"It's been a long time, hasn't it?"

"I think you'd like it."

"It's different now, a lot different. Did you know that?"

"You have to press a button, to get in."





“There’s a sort of policeman. His name is Big Tom. Big Tom goes to the school every day. He’s there all day. He has a big smile. He’s a nice man. He likes children.”

“And they have something . . .”

“Do you know what a metal detector is?”

I kicked her desk. I kicked it again.

“I’d like you to stop that.”

I kept kicking.

“Could you stop that, please?”

“Please?”

“Could you please stop?”

KICKING, KICKING, KICKING.

“Please?”

“Would you like me to get your father?”

“Should I call him?”

“Should I call your father?”

“Jeffrey!”

“Jeffrey!”

\*

*The sun is sitting at the end of the street. It’s stuck to the pavement. The boy walks towards it. Blood starts dropping so he opens the umbrella quick. It’s dropping hard. The umbrella can’t reach the dog. It can’t help him. The boy lets go of the rope. He holds the umbrella with both hands. Through the blood, the sun looks red. Bright red. It’s too bright. But he remembers the sunglasses. He slips them on. Blood drops faster and faster. The boy reaches the sun. He touches the sun and a door opens. He steps inside. It’s nice, inside. It’s not too bright. He shuts his umbrella. He takes off his sunglasses. The walls in the sun are white. The boy touches them. The door closes. There’s a sound like a siren. There’s a flashing light. The sun goes up, like a rocket. It goes higher and higher. Then it’s gone.*



Freud by Rolli

# Assessing Christine

LINDA WHITE

Nothing turns out the way you think. Christine had thought when Gord died, she'd sink into the oblivion of widowhood. Instead, a whole new chapter opens and she feels like she's 25 again. Not that she *looks* 25. Until she meets Ross, she avoids mirrors. When you are sixty-ish and female, mirrors are not your friend. Now she pays attention to her looks, brighter new hair colour, careful make-up, modern clothes. She's become quite stylish and that lingerie she thought was an extravagance? Now she has a collection. In soft lighting, lingerie is quite flattering. One of Ross' favourite teddies is a camouflage print.

Ross snores softly beside her and Christine drifts in that serene state between sleep and wakefulness. The phone shatters the silence but Ross just snorts and rolls over. Christine grabs it from the night table and says, her voice thick, "Hello." Her eyes widen and her mouth opens into a comical "O."

Then she says, "I was just leaving. Don't worry."

"Whaaa...?" mumbles Ross. Christine is already out of bed and pawing through her underwear drawer. She grabs the first items she sees and puts them on.

Ross squints. "Nice," he says. Christine ignores him and the fact that she has grabbed a lacy black bra and wispy red panties. She's going to be late to her granddaughter's dance recital. Her daughter, Chelsea, is holding her seat but the recital starts in fifteen minutes.

Christine finds a parking spot on the street and sprints the couple of blocks to the hall. On her way in, she catches a glimpse of her reflection in the glass of the doors. Her hair is bed hair, even though she brushed it; the new product her stylist talked her into has failed overnight. Her make-up is restricted to the lipstick she grabbed without thinking about its shade. Lips of hooker red slash her pale, lined face. And the black shoes she popped on don't belong to the same pair. Her blouse is wrinkled and her pants a little short. She looks like a bag lady.

"Where have you been?" Chelsea's voice is low and angry. "You look like hell."

What can Christine say? She's late because she was languishing in bed with her lover and completely forgot the recital. "I...I lost track of time," she says.

Chelsea says, "Hurry up, they're ready to start."

Christine enjoys the recital even with the waves of disapproval that emanate from her daughter. Chelsea won't stay mad, she tells herself. Not true. When the last curtain call is over, Chelsea's face is set like cement. Rosalie, her granddaughter comes over and stops short.

"Grandma!??? Is that you?" Rosalie's face turns red under the heavy stage make-up. "What happened?"

Before she can stop herself, Christine blurts, "I...I lost track of time but I'll make it up to you. I want you all to come over for supper tomorrow. It'll be worth it." She smiles but no one smiles back.

Then Chelsea says, "I'll have to talk with Greg. He might have something on."

"What about me?" says Greg arriving with his phone still in hand from videoing Rosalie's dance.

"Mom's invited us to supper tomorrow night."

"Wonderful." Greg's appetite is phenomenal and though he eats like the proverbial horse, he never gains weight. A supper of Christine's isn't something he'd miss.

He looks at Christine for the first time. "Sure you feel up to it?" he asks.

Christine says, "O, yes and I have a little surprise." She claps her hand over her mouth. That isn't what she'd intended to say at all.

"I'm looking forward to it," said Greg and spying a potential client whose daughter was also in the recital, he moves off.

"I think you should go home," Chelsea says, "Don't embarrass Rosalie any farther."

Christine ducks her head and scuttles for the exit, ignoring a couple of her friends who whose puzzled eyes follow her out of the hall.

Back home, Ross whistles in the kitchen. He isn't much of a cook but his western omelets are to die for. And the coffee smells heavenly. She drops her purse by the door and Ross turns and says, "Hi, hun. How was the recital?" That was the thing about Ross; he *remembered*. When Christine told him something, he actually listened.

"It was awful. Not the recital, me, I was awful. Look at me." She feels like crying.

Ross ponders a minute. "Your hair's a little messy," he



Art by James Skelton



says mildly. "Go have a shower and after an omelet, you'll feel like a new woman."

Christine lets the hot water cascade over her for a full five minutes before she even reaches for the shampoo. She can feel the heat drawing the tension out of her muscles and she sighs. It will be all right. When Chelsea and Greg and Rosalie come over tomorrow, she'll have a meal ready that will blow them away. It's a good thing she can't hear the discussion in the SUV as Chelsea drives home.

"Greg, I'm worried about her." Chelsea checks the rearview mirror to make sure Rosalie has her earbuds in.

"Hmmm," says Greg. "Who?"

"My mom. She forgot the recital today. She was late and when she did get there, she looked like she just crawled out of bed."

"Maybe she had," said Greg.

"No, I know what I'm talking about. This weird behavior isn't her first lapse and tomorrow I want you paying attention. Mom is getting forgetful and she's, she's not acting normal."

Greg didn't say anything for a few blocks. When Chelsea catches his eye and gives him "the look," he says, "She seems okay to me. More relaxed. I always thought she was too busy trying to be perfect."

Christine purses her lips but they are home. She'll continue this later.

Over the omelets, Christine tells Ross what happened. "How could I have forgotten?"

Ross leers. "Other things on your mind?"

Christine doesn't respond to his teasing. Instead she takes a breath and says, "I invited them over for supper tomorrow and I promised a surprise. Will you meet them? I hope you don't mind . . ."

Ross grins. "At last," he says. "I can come out of the lover's closet."

Christine doesn't sleep well and she's out of bed by 6:00. The pie has to be baked and she wants to run the vacuum through the house. Today, she promises herself, it will be perfect. She has a new turquoise top (the colour that Ross says is like her eyes) and pants. Casual but stylish. The menu is roast beef, garlic roasted potatoes, salad and vegetables. It's not upscale but she's going to make her special devilled eggs for the appetizer. Ross will pick up the wine. He's way more knowledgeable than she is and it's important to make up for her behavior yesterday.

Ross steps up and looks after some cooking prep and vacuuming. By late afternoon, everything is ready. There's time to relax with a glass of wine.

Christine doesn't want to admit how nervous she is. Chelsea is old-fashioned in her ideas; she takes after her father that way. It might not matter how charming Ross is, how happy he makes her mother. All she might see is the age difference. It's only ten years but to Chelsea . . .

"A splash more?" asks Ross. The wine he's chosen is

light, yet flavourful. Red wine for the beef is all Christine can think. She nods.

The top-up to her glass goes down fast and when the doorbell rings, Christine is less nervous. She and Ross go to greet her family together.

When she opens the door, Rosalie stops short, almost dropping her phone. "Whoa, Grandma," is all she says. Chelsea and Greg are dumb-struck but Greg manages to hand the bottle of wine to Ross.

"Hi, I'm Ross." He offers his hand and Greg takes it. "You must be Greg and Chelsea." To Chelsea, he says, "You look like your mother; that's a good thing."

Chelsea's expression doesn't change and Christine feels herself tensing up. O, God. She was afraid of this.

She gulps from the glass in her left hand and a little wine spills unto her chin. Chelsea glares.

"Come in, come in." Ross saves the day. Chelsea's forehead furrows and she'll regret the parallel grooves between her eyes when she's older.

"Let's have glass of wine before we eat," says Christine, hoping that Chelsea will loosen up.

Ross delivers the wine, topping up Christine's glass, too. The conversation is stilted and Christine talks too much. She raves about a concert Ross took her to and she can't help mentioning the new restaurant they've found in the city. Chelsea corrects her mother twice and disagrees totally once. Ross gets more wine for everyone while Christine excuses herself to make the gravy and put the final touches on the meal.

She curses under her breath as she sways slightly getting up. Next Chelsea will be accusing her of drinking too much.

The kitchen is hot and beads of sweat gather on her forehead. She lifts the roast onto a platter to rest and starts to make the gravy. It develops lumps and as hard as she whisks, they will not disappear. She can hear her own mother's voice, 'Who eats most gravy, gets most lumps.' Christine rolls her eyes.

Ross carves the roast and Chelsea appears.

"What can I do mother?"

"This is a celebration. You let me do the work," says Christine.

Chelsea watches her from under lowered eyelids and then does as her mother says.

When her family leaves, Christine says, "That went well."

Ross smiles. "You were pretty nervous. I think we should go to bed."

He offers his hand and Christine takes it gratefully. She does feel a little woozy and when they get into bed, she falls right to sleep.

On the way home, once Rosalie has her earphones back in, Chelsea says, "So what do you think?"

"About what?" Greg can be so aggravating.

"About Mom. Ross must be 10 years younger and, and Dad's only been gone a little over a year. She mentioned that

*Continued on next page . . .*

... continued from previous page

restaurant three different times and the gravy was lumpy.”

“Yeah, Grandma rocks. She got herself a toy boy. She did drink quite a bit of wine, too” Rosalie, earphones dangling, pipes up from the back.

“I don’t remember her liking wine,” said Greg. “I don’t think she knows how to handle it.”

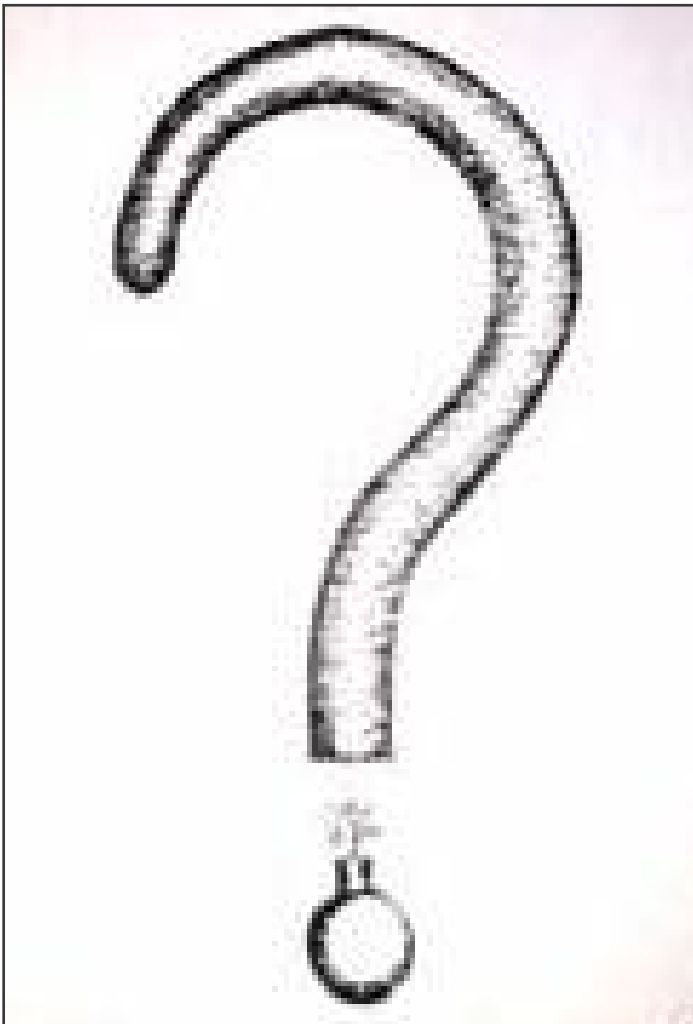
“You two are no help. I’m making her an appointment with the doctor. She needs to be assessed and if . . .”

Chelsea tears up and turns to look out the passenger window.

Fortunately Dr. Baker has a cancellation the next week. When Christine answers her phone, she has no idea that Chelsea is about to drop a verbal bomb.

“Chelsea,” she says, the pleasure in her voice apparent. “We so enjoyed having you and Greg and Rosalie over. We have to get together more. How . . . how do you like Ross?”

“Perhaps,” says Chelsea to the first part of the conversation; ignoring the question about Ross. “Do you know that you told us about that restaurant three times? How old is Ross?”



*Burning question by Jacek Grabowski*

“I enjoyed eating there and what does it matter how old he is?”

“O, mother.” Chelsea calls her mother when she’s done something gauche or disappointing. “It matters. I’ve made an appointment for you to see Dr. Baker Thursday.”

“Whatever for?” Christine is shocked. If she’d been a different woman, she might have hung up on Chelsea. Instead she listens and the hand gripping her phone turns white. The longer Chelsea talks, the worse Christine feels.

From a distance, she sees herself, small and helpless. Could Chelsea be right? After all these years of making do and hanging in, just when she finds real happiness, could she be losing her mind? It seems too cruel. It can’t be true. But what if it is? In the end she agrees to see the doctor.

Dr. Baker is the geriatrist in town. Christine knows why he’s interested in older people; it’s his own youth. He still believes in his own immorality the way the young do and he has a morbid curiosity about the failing bodies and diminished capacity of the aged. She’s incensed by his condescending manner and lame attempts to put her at ease.

Christine isn’t losing it. She notices the patch of stubble he missed shaving. His too casual tweed jacket is baggy at the elbows. Thick black eyebrows that will spring wayward hairs soon enough crowd his eyes. Deep set and cold blue, not to be trusted. Dr. Baker is slightly overweight and soft. Nothing about him inspires confidence. Why? Why did she let Chelsea bully her into keeping this appointment?

“Mrs. Bentley,” Dr. Baker begins with a false, wide smile. “Do you mind if I call you Christine?” He doesn’t wait for her to answer. She does actually mind because Christine is what her friends call her and Baker is no friend.

Christine starts paying attention when he takes out the actual test (or whatever it’s called). She feels the perspiration gathering in her armpits and her mouth is so dry she’s afraid she won’t be able to speak. Then he’ll note that she’s non-verbal and that’ll be the end of it. The end of everything.

The first part of the assessment is word association and word recall. Christine is a reader and she’s always enjoyed words. She relaxes, feeling that she’s done well.

But then Dr. Baker says, “Count backwards from 100 by 7’s.” and he waits, his blue eyes hard and critical.

Christine freezes and she can’t count backwards, period. For a moment, she struggles silently and then she is hit by the enormity of what Chelsea has done to her. Anger hits red hot and fast. This is what’s crazy. She doesn’t need this assessment and she doesn’t like Dr. Baker and she is so done with it.

Shaking with fury, Christine jerks her purse from the floor and stands up. Before she leaves his office, she favours Dr. Baker with a contemptuous glare. Then holding her head high, she strides through the waiting room and into the parking lot where Ross is waiting.

Like the crazed Ikea shopper, she shouts, “Start the car, start the car.” Christine doesn’t run but speed walks to Ross’s Lincoln. She yanks the door open and throws herself into the passenger seat. Ross lays rubber as he accelerates onto the street.



# The high human cost of alcoholism

KEITH FOSTER

Johnson, Harold R. *How Alcohol Is Killing My People (And Yours)*. University of Regina Press, 2016. 180 pages. \$16.95

Stories have power. Intense power. When combined with alcohol, the two can unleash a reign of destruction. Harold Johnson is fully aware of the devastating effect of both stories and alcohol, as he makes clear in his book, *How Alcohol Is Killing My People (And Yours)*.

A member of the Montreal Lake Cree Nation north of Prince Albert, Johnson resides on Treaty 6 territory. Having experienced the pain wrought by alcohol through the deaths of two of his brothers killed by drunk drivers, he knows first-hand what he's talking about. Rather than launching a tirade against drunkenness, however, he compiles a reasoned, logical analysis of the causes and effects of alcoholism on Indigenous people.

Johnson hits hard at a topic many people prefer not to discuss. But discussion is the only way we can fight our way through a problem. Although directed specifically at Indigenous people, Johnson's comments apply to non-Indigenous people as well. We would all be wise to listen carefully and act on his message.

Johnson explains that the word "firewater" is derived from a Cree word literally meaning "fire liquid." He notes that Indigenous people would test the potency of the liquid by spitting a mouthful into a fire. If the flames flared up, the whiskey was pure. If the fire went out, they knew the fur traders had watered down their product.

Drawing on the historical record, Johnson quotes from early explorers and notable writers such as Benjamin Franklin about the devastating effect alcohol has had on Indigenous people. By providing the full text of Treaty 6 in an appendix, Johnson clearly shows that when Indigenous leaders signed the treaty in 1876 they insisted that alcohol be banned on treaty land. This all changed in 1967 when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the law that made it illegal for Indigenous people to have liquor or go into a bar, ruling that not allowing Indigenous people to drink was discriminatory.

With experience as both a defence attorney and as a Crown prosecutor, Johnson examines the high cost of alcoholism, noting "The money the [Saskatchewan] government receives from the sale of alcohol does not come close to paying the cost of policing the inebriated" (68). The police officers he spoke to said they spend three-quarters of their time

dealing with intoxicated people.

But there is an even higher human cost. Johnson estimates that "every second person in this Treaty 6 territory is going to die from an alcohol-related death, whether they drink or not" (70). The statistics don't get any more alarming than this.

Banning alcohol won't work, says Johnson, noting that communities which have banned alcohol seem to be the ones where alcoholism is most prevalent and thus suffer the most. "Bootleggers bring in alcohol by the truckload," he notes, "and it's our own people doing it" (108).

To solve the alcohol problem, Johnson says we need leaders who are sober, leaders who will set the proper example. If leaders don't set the example by following the laws they make, neither will the people. "We do not make change in the world by preaching and passing laws," Johnson says. "We change the world with what we do" (117).

As a storyteller himself, Johnson uses Indigenous tales as parables to get his message across. No single story is absolutely true, he advises, so he recommends that we take the best of each story and use that to grow and become better.

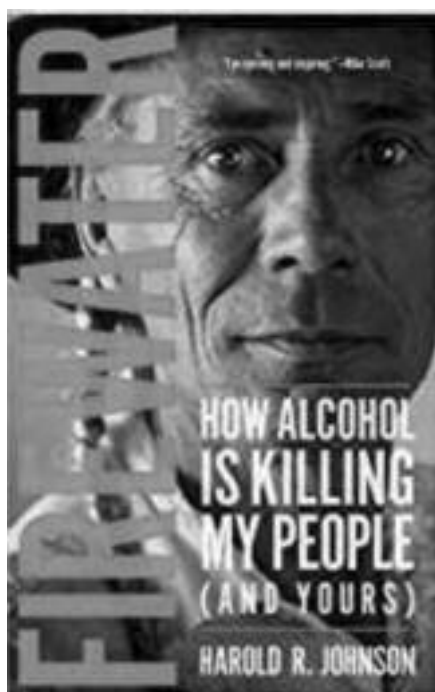
The stories we tell ourselves, insists Johnson, determine our future. If we repeat the same story often enough, we begin to believe it. Because we believe our own stories, we become the product of those stories. Johnson emphasizes that we need to change our stories. He recommends that we tell the story of the person we want to become.

Johnson includes testimonial from two other Indigenous writers – Tracey Lindberg and Richard Van Camp. Lindberg describes the changes in her life when she stopped drinking. Van Camp explains that the reason he doesn't drink is because he's terrified of the power alcohol has over Indigenous people.

Johnson reiterates that we need to change the story we tell ourselves, proposing that "the only way forward is to take full responsibility for ourselves and our present position and begin to tell a new story about ourselves." (ix) His message is, literally, a matter of life or death.

Time may not heal all wounds, but talking will. If we can talk about our trauma, we can overcome it. Sometimes all that is needed to get started, according to Johnson, is a safe place, a cup of tea, and someone to talk to.

Like fire, stories can be a destructive force or a force for good, depending on which stories we prefer to tell ourselves. As Harold Johnson makes clear in *Firewater*, we are more than just the product of the stories we tell ourselves; we are the stories we tell ourselves.





HP 15

*Wander on by Henry Peters*



# Judge's comments

**TED DYCK and  
RAFE RING**

ON THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TANKA  
[This note was sent to all contest facilitators.]

Roughly: a *tanka* is a *haiku* plus a couplet. More precisely, it is a 5/7/5/7/7 poem (31 syllables) with a significant turn, a *pivot*, in line 3.

An example: A TANKA ON THE TANKA

*A three-line haiku  
Which pivots on its third line  
Into a new world  
Complementing the haiku's,  
That's the form we call tanka.*

This tanka has as its subject the *tanka*, which is treated in two ways: first, as beginning with a *haiku* part (first 3 lines); and, second, as ending with an additional *couplet* part (last 2 lines); the parts are linked by the pivot *world* (in line 3), as the old world of the *haiku* is turned into the "new world" of the *tanka*.

Another example: WITH APOLOGIES TO BASHO

*Even in Kyoto  
When I hear the cuckoo's cry  
I long for Kyoto.  
The way I miss you deeply  
Even when you are close by.*

The subject of this tanka is *anticipated nostalgia*, exemplified in two ways: first, as anticipating *homesickness* even before you leave home (Kyoto was Basho's home); and, second, as anticipating *lovesickness* even before your beloved leaves you; the pivot is the shift of the desired object from one's home to one's beloved.

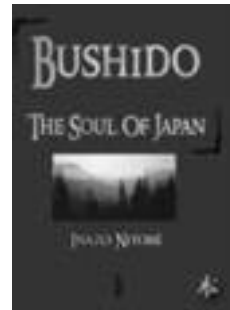
One last word: the strict syllable count per line is often relaxed into shorter and longer lines: shorter / l-o-n-g-e-r / shorter / l-o-n-g-e-r / 5. l-o-n-g-e-r.

## THE JUDGING

As usual, I consulted a friend who is better versed in things Japanese than I. A returned Saskatchewan-born writer, Rafe Ring has lived and worked in Asia for more than thirty-five years. That Japanese culture remains a challenge and inspiration to him is demonstrated by his long study of Kendo and its foundational ethical code, Bushido.

The beginning point in his evaluations of the *tanka* entries was reflection on a particularly significant passage from Yamamoto Tsunetomo's *Hagakure* (1716): "There is something to be learned from a rainstorm. / ... / This understanding extends to everything."

Rafe judged the *tanka*, blind, of course, on three specific criteria: (1) cleanliness - minimalist language and imagery containing at least partial metaphor; (2) metaphor - interesting



and/or compelling (potentially multi-level) pivot; and (3) discipline - syllabically tight 5-7-5-7-7.

I followed a similar blind, if slightly less rigorous approach: I read the *tanka* first for their appeal as poems and noted about a half-dozen of them; I read this half-dozen very carefully several times for a distinct pivot that related the *haiku* and *couplet* parts; the winner, for me, emerged clearly.

We then met to compare our results: the overlap was strong, and we were able to choose a winner that satisfied both of us, and two runners-up, at least one of which satisfied each of us.

The \$100 winner is Stephen Duster (Saskatoon WFYL) for "Horses."

The two runners up are Camille Golden (Saskatoon WFYL) for "The Seasons Change," and Elyse Dyck (Prince Albert WFYL) for "[a gentle wind]."

We offer our congratulations to all contestants.



**TED DYCK**  
WFYL  
DIRECTOR



Canadian  
Mental Health  
Association  
Saskatchewan  
Division Inc.

## ANNOUNCEMENT: WFYL S/S18 CONTEST

Thanks to Lynda Monahan for volunteering to be the sponsor/judge for the Spring/Summer 2018 contest to write a flash fiction, or super short story.

"Flash fiction attempts to condense a story into the fewest words possible."

Details will be forthcoming from your group facilitators.

**CAITLIN ARNAL**

Macy caught a fly  
In her little mouth and spit  
It onto the world  
She took it back and swallowed  
I often feel like the fly

**MAREIKE NEUHAUS**

**Going home**

all so long ago  
time has passed is standing still  
going home to strangers  
the house familiar the window lit  
I miss you come back to me

**BASIL BALLANTYNE**

if I were an animal  
I'd be a fawn  
I see them on TV  
they're so cute and fuzzy  
just like me

**ELYS DYCK**

a gentle wind  
melody of honeysuckle  
and wild rose  
sweet aromas surround me  
soft as a hug from a friend

**DEBBIE COCHRANE**

(1)  
summer gone  
autumn already here  
let winter come  
so clean and clear  
covering this dreariness

(2)  
I'm back to where  
the land cries out and I am lost  
in the forest  
I've gone so far in that  
what I miss is no longer there

**SHERRY FAVREAU**

(1)  
the wind blows  
trees naked and brown  
autumn is here  
geese are singing  
my heart grows cold

(2)  
the deer pass by  
they see us and act shy  
out of the wild  
now in our space then  
without a trace they're gone



**WENDEL GUEDO**

there's nothing wrong  
 that a little bit of love won't fix  
 my beast will be tamed  
 now it can't be long I won't be afraid  
 with a little bit of love in the mix

**DONNA MAE JOHNSON**

(1)  
 here I am  
 I like the rain  
 so I stand outside  
 what do you think?  
 am I insane?

(2)  
 I know that I've been feeling down  
 about my self  
 like I'm looking through a window  
 from the inside out

(3)  
 getting chilly  
 and the leaves are on the ground  
 I look around  
 all the trees are very bare  
 and in me changes everywhere

**HOLLY KNIFE**

(1)  
 as I was walking  
 down by the ocean  
 down by the sea  
 I saw a man who sang to me  
 it was his song that set me free

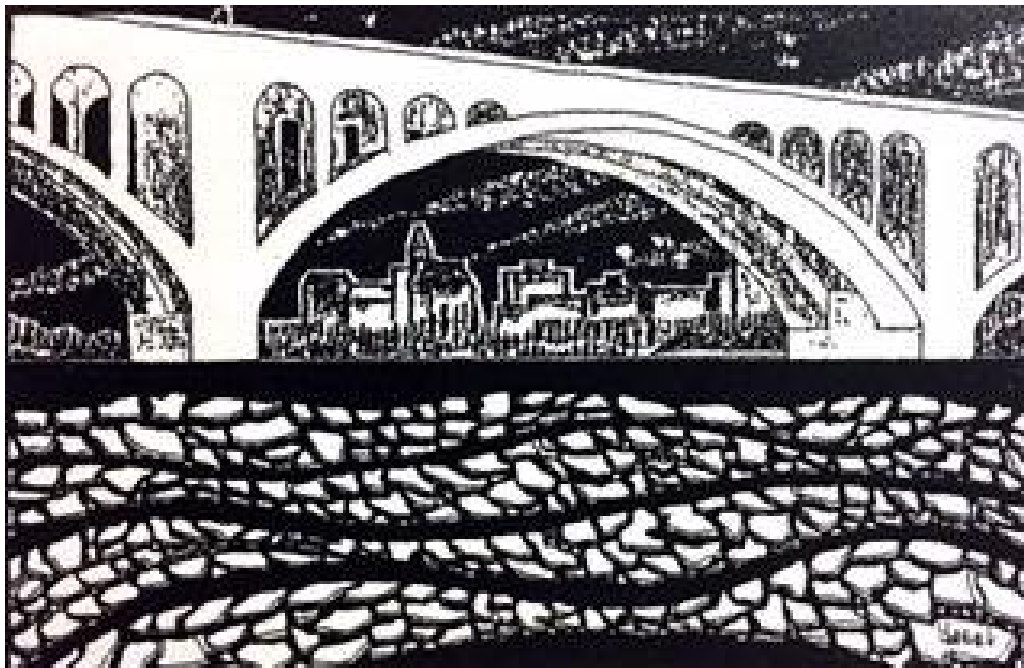
(2)  
 a perfectionist  
 and sick of being one  
 still learning  
 to let go of things  
 the autumn trees do

**IAN MCINTYRE**

forever  
 is not eternity  
 not in view  
 class of nine leave now please  
 guts spill

**DOT SETTEE**

peeping out  
 of father's backpack  
 some small thing  
 what could it be?  
 my bear cub Timber, see?



*Winter night in Saskatoon by Jacek Grabowski*

**MYRNA HARVEY-OPPER**

A long time ago  
We had pride in our own land  
Even though it was stolen  
They cry for what was given  
Reconciliation calls

**JENNIFER NIXON**

**The lie**

Angry, I feel hurt  
I get triggered by the lie  
Why to catch my eye  
I just want honesty, please  
I just sigh, tell it good-bye

**PAIGE HOWARD**

Leaves are cascading  
Crunching beneath my old boots  
Melancholy song  
Anticipating sadness  
That will appear with the snow



*Serena by Rene Diedrich*

**LINDA BECKETT****(1) Forest Fires**

Bright, burning, flaming  
 Animals running fast, faster  
 Eyes full of liquid  
 Run faster, they're in danger  
 Death is here at my back door

**(2) Advice**

So you want advice  
 My sister, my own, my dear  
 Just ask, I will help  
 But only if I can do  
 Breath in deeply, inhale

**COUNCE BROMPTON****Facility of pyres**

The part of the art  
 Gives pyres to their start  
 In which marks the skill  
 Of rouge combust on the hill  
 Where capable flints make sparks

**LISA CURRIE**

Zerina, my girl  
 I love you more than you know  
 With your wild Afro  
 Your background is African  
 So we must go to Ghana

**STEPHEN DUNSTER****Horses**

I like to watch them  
 Galloping or standing still  
 Faces to the wind  
 They shake their heads up and down  
 You whisper and they will come

**YANNICK GODIN****Yin yang**

Economic vile  
 Retrospect yang "tuned" face blur  
 Quest wrecks pestilence  
 Yin vases oppression light  
 Moon type ode fleshed flowered beak

**CAMILLE GOLDING****(1) Breaking silence**

Guns in Saskatoon  
 At three in the afternoon  
 Three shots fired. Bang!  
 Broken glass, police chase man  
 Ambulance rushes downtown

**(2) The seasons change**

The geese honk outside  
 Flying south to warmer skies  
 White snow falls down now.  
 Summer sun scorches the earth  
 Mai tais and sandy beaches

**BELINDA IRVINE**

## Pumpkin Tanka

Melon on melon  
 Three two hundred-pound pumpkins  
 Grew on Glen's garage  
 The vines are dead from front bite  
 With frost, pumpkins are three hundred

**KEN IRVINE**

Decaffeinated  
 A hottest mug of Sanka  
 Near in your computer  
 Drinking your favourite brew  
 Mud freshly ground this morning

**ASHTEN KINDRAT**

(1)  
 It's happening soon  
 The day I'm transitioning  
 I am transgender  
 Born a woman, but a man  
 My life is just beginning

(2)  
 Things have been rocky  
 I didn't feel loved by you  
 I'm not good enough  
 But in hard times you've shown me  
 That a mother's love is true

**JAMES SKELTON**

## (1) Close friends

True intimacy  
 Attained through friendship's closeness  
 We are now good friends  
 Appreciating you more  
 Now I find I'm not alone \*\*

## (2) Memories

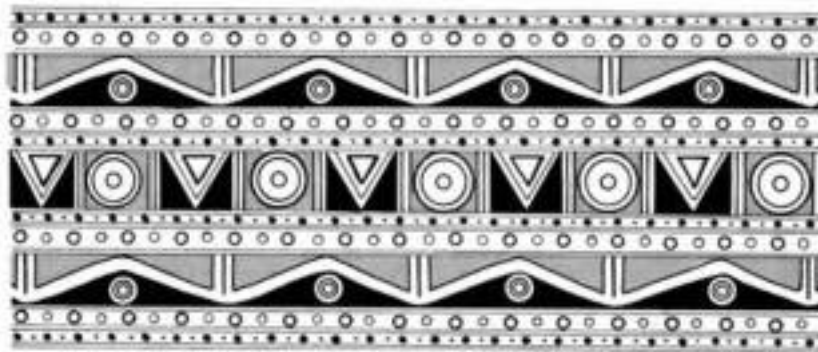
Shadowy and soft  
 Emerging from soft shadow  
 Memories surface  
 Stirring from my mind's corners  
 Dusted and shadowy hues

**JAMES SNYDER**

Respect, respect self  
 The respect we give to all  
 Great big, tiny, small  
 Cause we give what we get, bet  
 On the horse of chance chosen

**KIRK TAYLOR**

Parents love people  
 Parents care about their kids  
 They want to help them  
 Parents help their kids out  
 Caring about their children



*A Métis quill work design from the 19th century*

## WEYBURN

FACILITATOR: TASHA COLLINS

### TASHA COLLINS

My heart aches for you  
Sadness in your eyes so true  
Searching for your way  
Like a lion hunts for his pray  
Finding love again some day.  
*[not considered in the contest]*

### TIM MISSAL

The songs that call me,  
Many times I hear their chirp.  
Wings flit, colours call.  
Sounds that sing from petal's ring,  
Married to the air of spring.

### JEFF MITCHELL

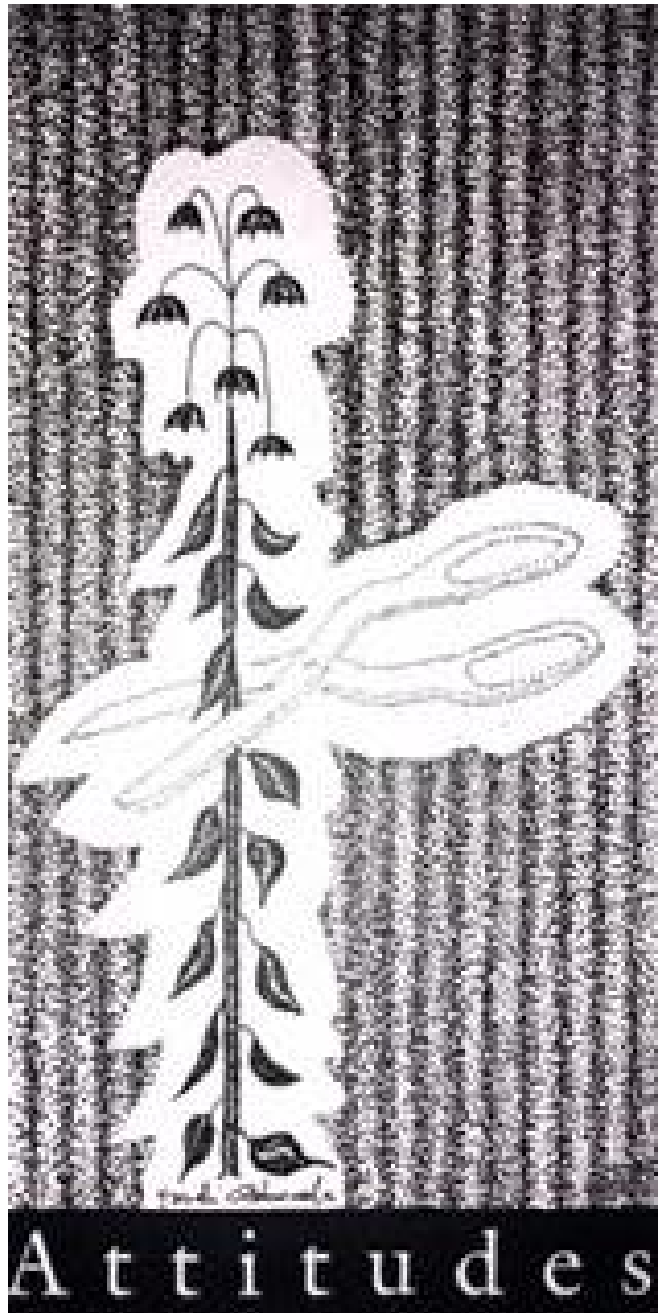
My favorite dish  
Would have to be lasagna  
Cottage cheese inside  
This along with garlic toast  
And creamy caesar salad.

### KEVIN PROKOPETZ

She melted my heart,  
As she slipped though the doorway,  
Not even a glimpse,  
Was brought to my attention  
My love overstated hers.

### NINA SCHAD

She's feeling lonely  
Almost like a nobody  
Not quitting smoking  
It's the only thing she has  
Sits by herself like a lump.



*Attitudes by Jacek Grabowski*

# Notes on contributors

## ARTISTS

### **DIEDRICH, RENE**

World traveller presently in France.

### **GRABOWSKI, JACEK**

Saskatoon artist and writer

### **NOULLET, ALLAN**

North Battleford artist and writer. Frequent contributor to TRANSITION

### **PETERS, HENRY**

Winnipeg MB artist  
Long time contributor to TRANSITION

## AUTHORS

### **BRAUN, GORD**

Our witty, skeptical poet from Yorkton, SK

### **CALLAGHAN, SHIRLEY**

Regular PE contributor turned reviewer turned contributor again. New children's book, *Kaleigh Brings Joy*, privately published. Pursues photography.

### **ENNS, VICTOR**

Former Winnipeg now Gimli MB writer, editor (*Rhubarb*), and literary provocateur. Widely published in litmags and collections of poetry, most recently *Afghanistan Confessions* (Hagios 2014).

### **FOSTER, KEITH**

Regina writer of reviews and plays, three of which – all one-act comedies – have been produced by Regina Little Theatre.

### **GARBER, JANET**

Baby Boomer, semi-decrepit/ex HR exec/writer (finally). Also knitter, cook, hiker, biker, music lover (yay Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Lucinda Williams, Blues and Rock & Roll!). <[www.janetgarber.com](http://www.janetgarber.com)>

### **GREGERSEN, LEIF**

Edmonton-based writer of fiction and non-fiction, and employee of the Schizophrenia Society of Alberta. See <<http://edmontonwriter.com/>>.

### **IOANNOU, SUSAN**

Widely published writer of stories, literary essays, YA novels, and poetry. Most recent poetry collections: *Through Stone: Poems about the Earth* (Your Scrivener Press), *Coming Home: An Old Love Story* (Leaf Press), *Looking for Light* (Hidden Brook Press). See <[www3.sympatico.ca/susanio/sioancv.html](http://www3.sympatico.ca/susanio/sioancv.html)>.

### **KAYE, MARK ANTHONY**

Birmingham (UK) sufferer of severe depression and anxiety currently on sick leave. Writes to try to understand these problems.

### **KRAUSE, CARL. A.**

Saskatoon writer and editor published extensively in local history, including three books: *Two Apples in a Jar; Who was George White?*; and *Benjamin Ralph: "One of God's Gentlemen."* Last contribution to TRANSITION – in 1995.

### **LAWLOR, DANIEL**

Hails from Detroit, Michigan, currently lives in Los Angeles, has no cats.

### **ROLLI**

See Author NOTES.

### **SKELTON, JAMES**

Saskatoon artist and poet. Member of Saskatoon's WFYL Group

### **SWALLOW, JUDY**

Artist and illustrator from Alameda, SK. Online at <[www.swallowsartnest.com](http://www.swallowsartnest.com)>

### **MASSON, VINCENT**

Independent filmmaker and writer from Guelph, ON.

### **MISSAL, TIM**

"I love writing freestyle poems or poems in general. I wrote a little bit in grade 10, but after many years not writing, I am grateful writing has found its way back to me. It's good to have a magazine to share with fellow writers."

### **PARLEY, KAY**

Regular contributor from Regina and columnist for FREELANCE (SWG Newsletter). Author *Inside the Mental* (University of Regina Press, 2016).

### **ROLLI**

Regular contributor, and prize-winning author, most recently, of the inaugural Joan Betty Stuchner Oy Vey! – Funniest Children's Book Award for his novel KABUNGO (Groundwood Books 2016). See <[rolli-writes@gmail.com](mailto:rolli-writes@gmail.com)>.

### **TAYLOR, KIRK**

Saskatoon writer works at Crocus Co-op. Writes poems about his twelve-year-old daughter whom he sees once a week.

### **TIMPF, LISA**

Retired HR and communications professional from Simcoe, Ontario. Enjoys organic gardening, cycling, and time outdoors with her border collie, Emma. *Poetry in Good Times, Neo-Opis, Liquid Imagination, Star\*Line, and Outposts of Beyond.*

### **WHITE, CATHERINE**

Member of Peterborough Writers' Group ON writes flash fiction and short stories. "A Day in the Life" written to honor the courage of those who live bravely with severe mental illness."

### **WHITE, LINDA**

Small-town Alberta writer, busy with grandchildren, new puppy, and substitute teaching, finds time to "write about things I think are important" and enjoy nature in the country five minutes away.

### **WHYTE, JAYNE MELVILLE**

Regina mental health expert by experience and research. Saw her first psychiatrist in 1965. Still enjoys educating about mental health and advocating choices and alternatives for people with mental illness.

## WRITING FOR YOUR LIFE (WFYL)

### Judge's Comments

DYCK, TED  
RING, RAFE

### EASTEND

Facilitator Ted Dyck  
ARNAL, CAITLIN  
NEUHAUS, MAREIKE

### PRINCE ALBERT

Facilitator:  
Lynda Monahan  
BALLANTYNE, BASIL  
COCHRANE, DEBBIE  
DYCK, ELYS  
FAVREAU, SHERRY  
GUEDO, WENDEL  
JOHNSON, DONNA MAE  
KNIFE, HOLLY  
MCINTYRE, IAN  
SETTEE, DOT

### REGINA

Facilitator:  
Linda Biasotto  
HARVEY-OPPER, MYRNA  
HOWARD, PAIGE  
NIXON, JENNIFER

### SASKATOON

Facilitator:  
Jeff Park  
BECKETT, LINDA  
BROMPTON, COUNCE  
CURRIE, LISA  
DUNSTER, STEPHEN  
GODIN, YANNICK  
GOLDING, CAMILLE  
IRVINE, BELINDA  
IRVINE, KEN  
KINDRAT, ASHTEN  
SKELTON, JAMES  
SNYDER, JAMES  
TAYLOR, KIRK

### WEYBURN

Facilitator:  
Tasha Collins  
MISSAL, TIM  
MITCHELL, JEFF  
PROKOPETZ, KEVIN  
SCHAD, NINA



# 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 . . .



RBC  
**Children's Mental Health Project**

## RESOURCE CENTRE

Hundreds of books, articles, videos, games and programs are available for loan from the Friends for Life Resource Centre. Topics range from Anger Management to Suicide Prevention

All materials are available only in person or via telephone inquiry 306-525-5601 ext 223 or toll free anywhere in Saskatchewan at

# 1-800-461-5483

You can also visit the Resource Centre during regular office hours at 2702 12th Ave., Regina, SK.



Canadian Mental Health Association  
Saskatchewan  
*Mental health for all*



Canadian Mental Health Association  
Saskatchewan  
*Mental health for all*

### DIVISION OFFICE

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FAX 306 569-3788  
email [contactus@cmhask.com](mailto:contactus@cmhask.com)  
Web Site: [sk.cmha.ca](http://sk.cmha.ca)

### CMHA Branches

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[jane.cmhanb@sasktel.net](mailto:jane.cmhanb@sasktel.net)

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Estevan, SK S4A 0M1  
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Kindersley, SK S0L 1S0  
306 463-8052 • Fax 306 463-5506  
[a.w@sasktel.net](mailto:a.w@sasktel.net)

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Melville, SK S0A 2P0

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[donna.cmha@sasktel.net](mailto:donna.cmha@sasktel.net)

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[info@cmhasaskatoon.ca](mailto:info@cmhasaskatoon.ca)

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306 778-2440 • Fax 306 773-0766  
[director@sccmha.ca](mailto:director@sccmha.ca)

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Weyburn, SK S4H 1K1  
306 842-7959 • Fax 306 842-3096  
[cmhaway@sasktel.net](mailto:cmhaway@sasktel.net)

**RURAL COMMITTEES:**  
Duck Lake • Nipawin • Shellbrook

2017

# Online Therapy USER Fact Sheet

## Online Therapy USER

The Online Therapy Unit allows trained therapists to provide Online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to residents of Saskatchewan who have difficulties with depression, generalized anxiety, and/or panic. The Unit also provides education and training to diverse registered health professionals and students on how to deliver services online. This unit is also responsible for conducting research on how to best train therapists and deliver online-CBT.

### TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ONLINE THERAPY IN SASKATCHEWAN:

Call:(306)337-3331

Email:

Online.Therapy.User@uregina.ca

Or

Visit: [www.onlinetherapyuser.ca](http://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca)



Online Therapy USER  
Unit for Service, Education, and Research

University  
of Regina



The Online Therapy Unit for Service, Education, and Research (Online Therapy USER) is led by Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos from the University of Regina and makes use of online therapy programs that were initially developed in Australia, either at Swinburne University or Macquarie University

1 in 5 Canadian adults experience anxiety and/or depression every year (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2014).

Depression and anxiety can go untreated for a variety of reasons, including: a shortage of providers; client difficulties with mobility or disability; time constraints; rural and remote location; and client concerns about privacy.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is an evidence-based mental health treatment that has proven to be an effective method of treating many disorders (e.g., depression, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder). This approach helps people identify, understand, and work on thoughts, behaviours, feelings, and physical symptoms that are central to their concerns.

Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (ICBT) involves completing a structured (e.g., five lessons), short term (e.g., eight weeks) course. Material is presented over the Internet using text, images, and stories. A client is connected with an e-therapist who guides them through the course. Messages are sent over a secure online system. Clients are encouraged to practice the skills learned in the course in their daily lives.

ICBT has many advantages including: improving client access to providers; offering greater convenience and privacy; involving greater engagement of clients in their care; and taking significantly less time to deliver.

When examining the effectiveness of ICBT versus to face-to-face therapy, research has shown that individuals receiving ICBT found relief from their symptoms to the same extent as individuals receiving face-to-face therapy. Thus, the two types of treatment are comparable.

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