Fact•Simile

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Interview with and new poems from Bronwen Tate

+New work from: Hailey Higdon Iheoma Uzomba Jalen Eutsey & more

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader:

At the end of 2007, two students from the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics met at a Bombay Gin release party and began what turned out to be a lifelong collaboration.

They started Fact-Simile Editions at their dining room table in Denver, CO.

The first *Fact-Simil*e magazine appeared in early 2008. Since then, there have been six different dining rooms and at least three tables. They've published 12 issues, 19 chapbooks and poetry objects and 60 poetry trading cards.

Five years ago, they added a tiny collaborator. The energy and perspective he brings to the work is immeasurable. However, as so often happens, the shifting balance of this new editorial board has brought some changes, pointing the organization's creative vision in new and different directions.

Deadlines have been delayed. Production schedules derailed. Bedtimes have been missed.

Meanwhile, a whole new generation of literary journals has continued to build and make vital and essential spaces for the sprawling diversity of voices, reshaping and renewing the literary landscape. The work continues. In new and exciting ways we never could have imagined when we started.

So, with this issue (#12), the time has come for *Fact-Simile* magazine to close one chapter and look to the next. We're not sure what shape that will take just yet but let's stay in touch. In the meantime ...

Thank you for reading. Thank you for writing. Thank you for building community around words and art and everything else that makes the world and the beautiful, blessed work of being human better.

Onward!

In Solidarity,

Travis & JenMarie
The Editors

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Our Readers
Our Contributors
Our Community

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Collected Threads — an interview with Bronwen Tate

Fact-Simile: Hi! So, you just moved from Vermont to British Columbia, right?

Bronwen Tate: Yeah. We did it pretty quickly, too. A little hop to Binghamton, NY where we have friends and then three super long days.

FS: That's amazing.

BT: [laughter] We drove a thousand miles that first day. We left at five in the morning and then drove until nine at night — a thousand miles all the way from New York to Wisconsin.

FS: Wow! How many of you?

BT: Four. Me, my husband, a five-year-old, and an eight-year-old.

FS: That is incredible.

BT: The kids were basically glued to the Kindle the whole time. It was, like, no-shame screen-time, here you go, audiobooks, everything. But, yeah, they did really well.

FS: Wow. And how's the month been settling in?

BT: Well, it's been a lot. I'm a dual citizen, but my husband's U.S. I got the job offer right as everything was going crazy with the pandemic. I got the call March 12th, right when the college where I was teaching in Vermont was about to send its students away because of the pandemic. Then my children and husband didn't even have passports, so it's just been a series of "oh my gosh, how will we figure out this extremely complicated logistics thing?"

Jumping into new classes has been wonderful and exciting, but also a lot of work. I'm teaching fully asynchronous classes in an optional-residency MFA program, which I haven't done before. The students are all over the world—I have a student as far from me as Japan, Texas, and Nova Scotia! A lot of them have kids and are doing other things with their lives, have jobs, and are returning to do the degree after some time away from school, so they're amazing students, super interesting to work with. I provide little videos for them to watch and introductions to readings and prompts and discussion forums and then we all check in and out over a 27-hour "active window." It's wonderful and they're amazing, but it's been a ton of work to get all the pieces ready.

FS: Wow. I can imagine. Is it a little like time travel? Because it sounds a little like time travel with everyone coming in at different points.

BT: It is. The early risers chime in and then the people who stay up late chime in later, and we're all starting to get a sense of rhythm.

I invited students to record and upload audio of themselves reading their poems, and one was about sitting at a corner of a small town in Japan. We all heard the poet's voice and I thought, "how cool that we can still feel close that way," you know?

FS: It's amazing. That's lovely. And especially, you know, during the pandemic, when everyone is already engaging that way to begin with.

BT: Yeah. I think for a lot of the students, the degree feels like something they're doing for themselves and almost like a solace from their other work lives or their care lives, and so I'm trying as much as possible to make it a space that can support that.

FS: Well, thank you again for talking with us about your new book and sharing your work. We're totally fan-peopled out. We're so excited to share it here.

BT: Thank you.

FS: I wrote some questions down, so when I'm looking down...

[both laugh]

BT: It's ok. A student recently told me that she paints her nails during her Zoom law school lectures, and it looks like she's taking notes.

[laughter]

BT: So now whenever somebody looks down, I'm like, "maybe they're taking notes, maybe they're painting their nails."

FS: Maybe their nails look incredible now.

BT: You just never know. Yeah.

FS: Wow. Yeah, it's true. So, your new book *The Silk the Moths Ignore* won the National 2019 Hillary Gravendyk

Poetry Prize from the Inlandia Institute, and it's being published in 2021. Could you share its journey into the world? How it all started and where it went? I know once it was finished, it was a finalist a bunch of places, right?

BT: Yeah, it's been a slow burn. The earliest lines that are still in the book are from way back when I was in my MFA in 2006.

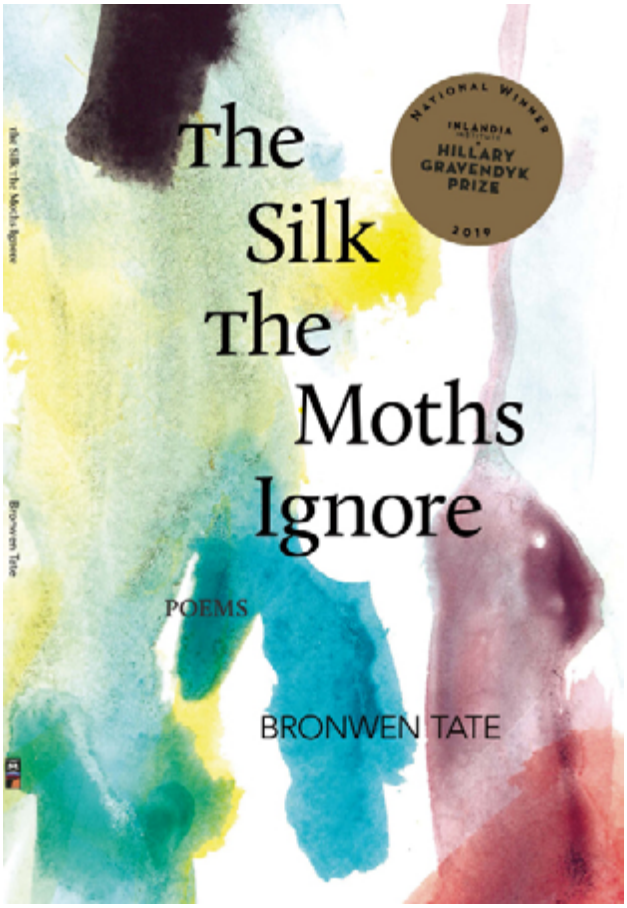
That's when I first started a process where I read Proust in French and looked for words I wasn't sure about. I spent a year of high school in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, so I speak French pretty well, and I studied Comparative Literature in college and later in grad school, but there were always some words (especially in Proust!) that I was uncertain about.

I'd read until I had about ten words, and I'd try to guess at them based on context, and then I would look them up in a French dictionary or French/English dictionary and take notes on what they actually meant.

Occasionally, the only reference would be to the sentence in Proust where I found the word in the first place, and then I would be like, *aha*!

[both laugh]

BT: I started from a place of "I don't know what to write about. I don't know where I'm going—when I sit down with my own thoughts, they're boring me. I want to start from material rather than from an idea."



In that early stage, I took pleasure in these weird juxtapositions between what I thought a word meant and how it turned out to be similar but different, or the opposite, or completely unrelated. I returned to this process on and off over the years. At a later point, a lot more of what was actually happening in my life came into the poems, but still at strange and oblique angles.

I continued writing them while I was having several miscarriages, at moments where I wasn't bored or searching, but rather in the grip of intense and overpowering feelings, and at those moments, the process offered something different: instead of giving me material to work with, it gave me an alternative to the established narrative for what I was feeling or the clichéd version or the platitudes of "it's going to be *this*" or, you know, "*this* is what you're feeling,"

Those poems hold an atmosphere of linguistic play that comes from Proust—an interest in arranging and etymology and sound and translation—but they also show how that atmosphere can hold these really bloody and painful experiences.

FS: One thing that I most admire about your poems is that you work in a lot of different formal modes of writing and use a lot of different structures. What other modes do you use in the book and why?

BT: I'd say there are three main modes in the collection: these prose poems I've been talking about, a few sonnets, and the small poems. The ones that I sent you for *Fact-Simile* were written later and came out of engagement with Lorine Niedecker, who I wrote about for my Ph.D. dissertation. I was writing about scale. You know, poems can be super long or super short, but how does that formal range intersect with how the poet thinks about art and life and what we want from poetry? As part of this, I looked at why American poets were so interested in haiku and what it offered them, and I ended up really excited with Niedecker's haiku-influenced work.

She doesn't really write haiku-as-such, but she has these poems that in *The Collected Poems* aren't identified as haiku, but then if you look closer, in journals, she often published them in groups called "In Exchange for Haiku." And I love that way of

thinking about it: "it's not a haiku, but I've gotten something from the haiku and I'm offering something back." Those poems have a structure of five short lines with a rhyme or a slant rhyme somewhere in the middle, but then they don't end on a rhyme. I was so interested in that form, in what it meant to have the rhyme there but then depart from the rhyme.

Those poems mostly came from moments during dissertation writing when I would give myself some kind of a challenge, like, "okay, you're gonna write one of these little poems every day." At some point, I started thinking about what it would mean to ask these poems to *do* something, so the titles became "To Prevent Choking" or "To Acknowledge Resemblance." I see them as amulets or worry stones to hold onto in moments of difficulty or invocations for something or against something.

There are also a few sonnets. There used to be *a lot of sonnets* written at various points as a daily challenge, sometimes in correspondence with a friend. At one point, someone read the manuscript, and she said, "You know, the sonnets get at something that isn't in the other pieces, which is the power of the actual, but they also arrive in these much more expected places."

That resonated with me, and I ended up cutting the vast majority of those and trying to push the ones that I did keep into less expected directions, as well as brining more of this "actual" into other modes in the book. Reading Terrance Hayes' *American Sonnets for my Past and Future Assassin* was helpful for me when I was revising. He has another book called *Muscular Music*, and he has this sonnet voice that's like THUMP THUMP THUMP, really muscular, and I wanted to bring some of that into my work. I would read him and then write about childbirth and nursing and still try to hold onto some of that tone.

FS: Were some of those sonnets related to the ones rob mclennan published? Didn't he publish some sonnets of yours? Am I remembering that correctly?

BT: Yeah! Totally. He did *Vesper Vigil* which was a collection of daily sonnets leading up to the birth of my daughter. I have mixed feelings about them now— some of them feel a little cringey to me, but at the same time, I'm interested in dailiness and projects that show the work, so I don't mind that they're out there.

[Both laugh]

FS: I really love the poems that you sent for this issue.

"Little poems can sometimes hold a period of time better than a bunch of pages of free-writing because of the rhythm."

BT: Thank you.

FS: That form is so pleasing, and one of the things I think about when I read the ones you sent is accumulation and how accumulation of what arrives in the poem can amount to a moment that can amount to a day and then to a day's memory, for example. I don't know if that's something you experienced or were thinking about when you were writing them, but could you speak about that kind of accumulation and how time operates in the poem?

BT: Sure. I see this in a couple of different directions. One is the unit of the book versus the poem, the way accumulation happens across the book with thread of different moments.

At one point in arranging the book, I faced a decision: I was writing in these different forms, so should I group the forms together or should I mingle them? A factor was this through-narrative about pregnancies and miscarriages and children. How much does a reader need to know? How much do you need to be located at different points for things to make sense? But, also, how to avoid a triumphant narrative of "it was bad and then it was okay," which is definitely not inevitable, right?

In arranging, I ended up looking for nouns that echoed across the poems. So, I put the poem with my son wanting to eat the onion because he thought it was an apple next to another poem that talks about onion tears.

Even if something's in the past, objects can hold the past for us and in seeing a skein of silk yarn or a peach, I might be brought back to earlier moments. So the book sinks down into moments and rises up to moments through its nouns. That's a kind of accumulation.

But you asked about accumulation and time, right? Little poems can sometimes hold a period of time better than a bunch of pages of free-writing because of the rhythm. They're memorizable and there's that Niedecker-like possibility of distillation.

FS: Definitely. Yeah. Full transparency, I was reading them while also parenting and so to read

(*continued on p. 31*)

Bronwen Tate

TO ACKNOWLEDGE RESEMBLANCE

Baby wants
the onion I'm peeling
says "apple" reaches
Each name
an object's round moon

*

Two years old
he thinks mirrors
are pictures
face flickers
to grimace

TO BE THE STORY'S TIRED MAKER

Toy boats the sink over-flooding
sop up sodden towels
water hot against cold hands
no heat I say no
story by tree glow
relenting speak that tired love so the wolf

TO ACCEPT DAILINESS

Evening fruit flies hover over
split banana legs tomato
Wash more dishes
take down fish skin
carrot tops cucumber peelings

overflowing diapers papers
Little daughter drops cucumber
warm bath for you
brand new left shoe
missing already

IN THE EXHAUSTION OF CARE

Night vomit
hot bath you say
colder than I'd rather
I lather
half your hair

*

Small hands all day
body unsovereign
How deep patience
mealy peaches
sweet thing

*

Sleep at last
rejected breast
my unconsoled
leaked milk now cold
against my wrist

Hailey Higdon

Services for Lee

The dream of the world forever so and so. Imagine the services for Lee. Helen's pregnant handbag. What folks would do right to be right. Lovers fold across the bar. Outside snow keeps visionless keys for repair. Untreated conversation cinches into bar talk. That combination of skeletons could pull the room together—just like a storm to do it so well. Tacking tires outside town and in the city. Each day it becomes crust falling off. Gives and takes away. How do you shuffle into another person? Bleed in slug hits like prions in a body. Clearly, the message is message enough: The world is a grave of grassy disguises. Wind under tables, wind past doors. The way we track the earth as jazz—a mother. "No two people, like those two people," some people shake their heads. Heavy. Need so little to melt ourselves.

Coated

our version of pick-up
is a cradle game
the sun burst colors before bed while we watched a movie about Greenpeace
dosed a coma to cope
not the kind of pain you imagine coating
glass runs slow
walk all day
hills
hills
hills
the trouble with your bloom
it's always pregnant
waiting to arrive
through tunnels and canals
no longer to hatch outside
but inside first, coated
Kansas is a land of lumps
the prescriptions outlast your soul
stretched pinks and yellows
small dug graves
letting us know how they feel about it
in signs by the highway
as if to say nothing
ever happens here but millions
of successions of covering things up
an unorganized way to clean up, coat
after a series of more violent
previous collisions

Further

I track further than my fertility. It's like this:
the moon will still do that thing
again and again. Men will still be loud
in bars. Causes still get me—terrible
how people stop each other from feeling things.
Back when we grew crooked, we cleared forests
towards the notion of a gratified thing.
What was it we did? Was it weird?
I'm not that weird anymore, I'm cleaner.
I want to have a baby. My girlfriend, she makes
me be good to myself. Tells me when she's vested
in deserts, drooping and I can't see it.
That year I was unschooled in closeness, ran meters out the birth
canals of vegetarians. Let Mondays mask
the coincidence of pain
and didn't sleep. The three of us
we meet for a drink. It's a bar with lots of wood.
Valves creep up
let off steam from our former selves. She's tired.
Has to work the next day. You are both funny.

Some Extinctions

dust runs the roof of the occasional home

inside a circuit

disconnected from its source

not magic

shark webbing

marooned

the boy knows

the habitat

but unable to tell the sheep

from the wolf

to free the window of nesters—get out

in some extinctions, we birth

the memory of a new century

chroma public

without the being

being there

other times that woman in the duplex

cries all night

the boy returns to his mother

but enough time in the foil

desert has made stark strangers, tumbled cowpoke

their past swiped and shown

the uses of evil in ordinary migration

Iheoma Uzomba

Autobiography as Multiple things Unhoused

Who else builds a moon with no idea of how long
it is caged behind ribs, how much water

causes diffusion and displaces a body at rest.
Oceans rise differently; sometimes to engulf

other times to smother the ache of running
away from itself. Either way, it is shooting far

into a variation with no bowstrings, no means
of arrival for a projectile. Imagine getting

stuck in a chest with no route to float back
homewards. With this, it is easier to wish

for death by zinging– say heaven decides
to outpour angels as makeshift bullets

because earth has crusted too long; say
melons lined on cliffs are rained

on a town of simpletons so no one
sees it coming and later it transforms

a book of myths into sermons, such that
names would ring and ring years after

and people would look back for a while
with framed lenses and historical texts

saying: once, long ago, this thing happened.

Synthesis

I watch you fold into the belly of your bedspread

———

and again I must remind you, this is just a poem

———

& everything must end the way it just began.

———

It's so dark here I fear we've gotten far into this century

———

we've been split alongside history and God's mouth

———

tending a bush of roses: no one orders things to be anymore.

———

This is why we're here; your face mapped

———

on the hole in your pillow, mine lighting the room

———

temporarily. I'm not sure if we're waiting

———

for the mail-delivery man or bells from the ice-cream truck

———

to push a sound through the keyhole.

———

But I see those bones contracting, faintly & I'm glad

———

this would do for a new poem; enough to ward off cliches

———

and celebrate the arrival of sound muse

———

enough to mourn your death in lines

———

& call you back when I'm tired of looping words void of resonance.

———

Lord, what am I even saying?

———

I promise this would be over when this poem ends.

———

But how do I know you're not gone already

———

and this is me paying homage, scooping the remains of flesh

———

into the spaces between these lines for keepsake.

———

How do I know I'm writing this

———

not writhing in a corner too small to house this madness deflated.

———

Are you sure I'm not fading into the grey of your bedspread?

———

Are you sure I'm not gone already?

Panorama of a Blood-line hinged 1967-1970

Here, the cry of restraint calls out to morning:
this is close to over and what are you
but the guts of your mother stoked out.

No one listens; we prep our spears
faces adorned with scabs and no air.

If you knew, you would swear this was all but picturesque.

A boy the height of roots
unseen above surface level
struts with a gun the size of his father's arm.

Boy, oh boy, this is only but the beginning
and how much shame could this extract afterall.

Like cannonballing
no one doubts this will end
with arms spread aster-wide.
We do not know just yet
what sky would house us all.

It's the time when cheeks hold
and everyone takes poses
awaiting the flick of camera light
for new smiles and postures.

Only this is different:

motion slows, hands steady
eyes rigid behind gun frames

& I tell you, you would swear this was all artfully contrived.

A flag dances from behind the scene;
whore-like, and who is blind not to see
halved suns peaking the horizon
in a way we are sure a god is born.

Biafra.

Emily Rankin

Dark and Deep

Tufik Y. Shayeb

Vintage Action Figures

picture it,
the gift exchange

a carefully wrapped
body

sealed in fraying cardboard
and yellowed plastic

full of holes,
the edges pulling apart

a relieved *here*
and an awkward *thank you*

the days shrinking,
and the value swelling

the seasons of gift-giving
swerving away, drunk

and the tides of dust crash
on your shelves

somehow, the past is now
a present again

Jalen Eutsey

Political Climate

Not the lyrical calm before birdsong
not even all the humdrum bodies on
the dance floor. Not the dirty, after-hours hour,
but the toe-the-train-tracks to-other-bodies
time of day. Not the yachts and the speedboats,
not even a tongue ring on a tourist, but cold
beach showers where everything is rinsed
clean except your feet.

You remind me of all this, all this negation.
No, never mind. I've written this poem before.
Have to figure out how to write one without
classic assets or muses, one where I avoid
making myself a man in these terrible-men-times.
I hate the feverish quiet. It's busier than anyone
would have you believe.

What if I want to be a sugar baby? How
does that describe our current political predicament?
Somehow, millennials have managed to ruin altruism
with their phone videos and meta-narratives—
I'd rather not get started.

Meet me outside the coffee shop
on Rivera Avenue, we'll put these half-mumbled
disputes to the test, see who's man amongst
the hooligans before we kiss and cry about it later.

Gilded

after *Expensive Taste* by Becky Rosa

What a less than fortunate fate to die young
yearning for excess or its blunted aftermath—
your palate rubbed raw from the pineapple's
yellow bite, the oversweet solution to every
one-knuckled knock at the body's door;

and the body, always answering in time
with the river and sea's dervish dance
at one mouth's edge or another. But of course,
there's a mouth—goldenly agape, pronouncing
desire as need, believing a sparkling trough

is anything but a handsome cage. Take
all my money, please. Just keep me spinning.
Keep me away from all that fog-infested river light,
the judgmental reflections rippling between water lilies.

Friday Night

1 a.m. and the local bar
was ablaze beneath two moody
strobe lamps, making every beating
body a helix of shadow and shimmer.

Every hot tongue starved
for a taste of regret. Every
sweat-slick soul found a home
on the rogue expanse of the dance floor.

A semi-mini-mosh broke out.

Black sapphire struck black opal
struck black tourmaline, no one
struck back, nothing burned down.
All I did was smile. All I did was love.

Some black boys got to be free
and dangerous and not get shot down.

Aimee Wright Clow

The light that's cast as we walk home

After an unsettling of publicity, director mass emails vague assurances concerning equity, the shape of our building. I eat piece after piece of glutinous snacks, knees to chest at my desk, while I open and absorb his confidences. Rest assured in minor stomachache. The tremors of change will appear first as father assuming our will. Maybe you mistook this premonition for a standstill, but light is coming. Light is surely gonna come. An office-window view of sunset is a compromised depiction. Better to imagine the sky as pulsing or yellow. Flat and paper thin. The pen is a compass. So too is a gun, a letter, demand, a hand, hunger struck. Peel back what he's saying, what you're saying: I'm sung. Director learned to speak in childhood too. I mean the father is product as much as division. I mean some equation, a balance, sign after sign after sign and we're hooked. If I knocked on his door, dressed up in glutinous crumbs, would I find you in cashmere, standing like you belong on that ornate rug? Has the power trickled down yet? Has the green, the song, the sun? Change is gonna. Like a water's fade. Foam bubbles at the surface. And we could all fall apart inside its current turned. Like reciprocal standing. Pushing, we never fall. Like unicorn's hair, silver and pulled. I am coming, we say, at the morning's long light. Glass shade upon us, all surfaced and raw. We are coming, I say, when the dew drapes the spade. Gonna stand so so tall. Gonna stand so so just so so small.

Fog shades the road in a haloed light casting day as a blurred display

At the stoplight between Home Depot and Lowe's I stare up too long, burning tears down my cheek. Foot off the gas and I look down, can't recall if it's fog or if the sun always shimmers this way.

Two sixty-year-old men I know lose their jobs at different ends of corporations. One is given a year's severance, the other, forms and suggestions. Assistance with interviews or assistance with welfare? and both know their chances of being hired: age & all, place & all, grey & the syntax of generations. How to interview in a bubble. How to curve opaque bodies into soapy walls.

Colonies of leaf-cutter ants retain memory in hives for three times the lifespan of any individual. So when one ant finds poison and dies in discovery, the hive remembers to avoid her site for three times the length of their lives. I read a bunch of Bifo, who proposes we follow the hive as a blueprint for memories the Net could encode. It's a warning more than a plan. We are beginning to arc around sites without reason but, of course, we also haven't been listening all that well. Dispersal or encoded refusal.

Have you lived too long to remember each reason? Three times the age of my elders is a language I can't decode but I remind myself to backwards gaze, contort my neck against my segmented frame.

This week, Lowe's fired all the back-house laborers that can be decentralized. I idle outside its local store after work and watch to see if the mousy man I buy wood from is still employed. If his sharp face and the smoothness of his skin is an insurance. As the union bug mumbles louder at work, I ask on the janitorial staff or the warehouse staff. Are we staff or labor? I read Bifo who reminds it's important to view the desk as the factory. It's important to see the standing insured. I shimmer and pause as I drive home because the road is gridded, gravel, and above there is this sky and it fogs and it rains.

It is euphoric to watch something so light fill and then empty.

Matthew Rotando

Staying

Tickling the ticking world, the giggling girl. The freak resonance of sequins in your hollow fists, the sheer butter of the pavement you feel when going fast. The trance of the past. Continuance of night deliberations. All and more, and more. Once you saw me enter and my talk dropped off, I was something beyond a telephone, and we bodied. It was effective and there was a slight intermission. Shady telegrams from the future quit arriving. The intelligence of cities and plays was all full of music. Even the movements of our hands overlaid us with pauses. We were some kind of void that time could fill. Then dim pillars buckled and hands opened on wings and someone's loved one passed away; then another; another. We held the beats within us. The wonder of the future is a crash of waiting and staying cold. Some knowing is too much. That's the brink we walk away from. How walking wakes our wonder, we may know.

Them Just Goes

We're not about giving up or giving away the mental. We're about correcting for echoes. We're about gathering details and the smoky bottom. We're about trash; like all the waters, we refuse to go down hoses...but we go. Them is a way to start; them raspy details. Deets. Hangtags wimpling in the storeshadows of a frantic year. The fervent all-out sureness makes us seem ugly to the bodies that grew up around us. We, in our bodies, in our aches and skin, in our swilling holes full of robbers and liars. We laugh and cry, return and pick some how-to chatter. Them is not a way to go, them just goes. The phone you were on was a stalling effect for doing what you do. If you touch only sheer things, you'll touch elusive fingers under your smoking ghost hands. Smoke, it really has a hold on your imagination. This is a problem, as your imagination is not an organ. Not a skinnable thing, just a skinning echo.

Jon Davis

Capital

It was in everything. Even the waves rolling toward the beach.
Welcome, we said, waving our green bills seaward. Welcome, we said,
your days of meaninglessness are over. Now you have purpose.
Lift these surfers and carry them beachward. Make these nachos,
these fruit drinks more resplendent. Welcome to your new life.
Lonely all these years, you tossed your white hair, pacing the limits
of your enclosure. Now we admire you, your steady plod, your sudden
boisterous passion, your reliable, if mild, applause. The parade
in your honor will feature orioles and meadowlarks. Deutschmarks
and calendula. Even the men in green tights are besmirched by capital.
Did you think their leaping was driven by art? by spiritual longing?
Did you think their relentless rowdiness was driven by joy?
The darkness lurks, its head hung low, like a scavenger smelling,
across the veldt, the downed impala. The fallen beast is not tainted
by capital, but hunger, which is the beginning of capital. Soon
the economy of carrion, trickle-down, last-scrap, bone-light.

(*cont'd from p. 8*) some of these poems where there's a child and seeing the child do or say things that were similar to things my child has done or said also offered an accumulation of reader memory into the poetry memory, too. That was kind of happening, which was really cool.

BT: Wonderful.

FS: Yeah. You mentioned the poem with the onion, "To Acknowledge Resemblance," and after that encounter with the onion, you write "each name an object's round moon," which, I mean, is so beautiful. It's like one of those lines that kind of sunk in and I felt in my body before it came to rest in my mind. I just love that line. Could you talk about the gravity that exists between an object and its name and also kind of describe that orbit?

BT: I was interested in differentiation and nondifferentiation, the way having children can be like a language lab where you see undifferentiated things gradually differentiating—or sometimes not or not in ways that are formally correct but that are interesting. My son, for example, learned "panda" and thought that all bears were pandas, like the base category was panda, and so he would talk about a polar panda.

The mistakes and category errors children make with language are fascinating to me. My daughter still thinks that it's "what" instead of "that," so she'll say, "She's the woman what told me to open the door." And I just think, "Oh, you sound like a little urchin from a Dickens novel and I'm never going to correct you."

In the poem, though, there's an invitation, seeing the apple, seeing the onion, to enter into that child mind that says "oh, why do we take a bite of one and the other one we won't?" How to look at things in a fresh way, which is maybe also what we ask poetry to do.

FS: Yeah. I just love that. I love that you bring up the way child language can provide that point of entry into looking at that relationship from a different angle or more deeply even, and I love the example of all bears are pandas.

BT: Sure. Like, why not, right?

FS: The world has changed a lot since you wrote these poems, especially since some of those first lines in 2006, do they still feel close to them or do you have a different relationship to them now?

BT: I feel connected to them partly because I've reworked them so many times! Even right before I sent the final manuscript to Cati at Inlandia, I reread the whole thing out loud, made little notes, added a few things. It's a challenge with projects, when to declare something finished and leave it alone. Over a long period, I kept working on other things and then coming back to it: the Ph.D. dissertation, articles, other poems. When the book kept being a finalist for things, I had to ask myself, had it just not hit its chance yet? Or was there something still there that needed work?

At a certain point, I had to resist the urge to crack it back open again, because, hopefully, we're always growing and changing, so we could return to anything with new knowledge and skills. But at a certain point, you have to ask yourself, "am I making it better or am I just making it different? Am I refining it or am I just catching it up to where I am now rather than letting it be what it was?" I've struggled with that.

"Hopefully, we're always growing and changing, so we could return to anything with new knowledge and skills. But at a certain point, you have to ask yourself, "am I making it better or am I just making it different?"

FS: What's the hardest part about that?

BT: Trusting, maybe? Sometimes you'll have a clear feeling of "okay, I think this one is done." But often I feel a sense of contingency, that "it could have been otherwise." Sometimes I dig back into my scraps—I use Scrivener and I have all these old versions— and I'll ask, "why did *that* line get cut? Maybe everything is contingent!" But then just recognizing, "yes, everything's contingent, and this is the book of the occasion, of the moment and the forces of that moment, and that's okay, too."

FS: That's really interesting and actually reminds me of something that you talked about in interviews with both Kate Schapira and rob mclennan. You talk about "that problem of where or how to start," the beginning of the poem. Is it similar to knowing how to end something like a manuscript? Or are they different feelings?

BT: The problem of beginnings and the problem of endings?

FS: Yeah.

BT: They're different for me. The problem of beginnings is, like I talked about with rob, "okay, I've written things in the past, but none of them are right *now*. So what am I doing *now*? How have I ever found my way before?" There's often a phase with any project where I have no idea where it's going, or what form it will take, and any form I'm giving it feels arbitrary and even like I'm faking it. And then there's some point where I realize, "no, okay, this is starting to have a structure and the structure does things that I want it to do. I'm committing to it. I can see the reasons why."

When I was teaching at Marlboro, writer and artist Claire Donato came out as an outside thesis evaluator for one of our students, and she used a term, I'm trying to remember, I think it was "post-rationalizing." Something like being able to say "I may have been working on intuition at the time, but now I know why I did this and why it needs to be here." I think with beginnings, there's the not knowing why, trusting intuition, trying to give in to that, make a mess, play. And maybe the challenge with endings is when to say, "yes, I'm fully claiming this and I'm not going to keep changing it. I'm going to let it be."

And then there's some point where I realize, "no, okay, this is starting to have a structure and the structure does things that I want it to do. I'm committing to it. I can see the reasons why."

FS: That makes sense, that one leads into the next. You mentioned that you are working on stuff now, both scholarly and more poetry, I'm guessing.

BT: Yep! And some creative nonfiction.

FS: Oh, yay!!

BT: Yeah!

FS: Tell me about it all!

BT: Sure, sure. Let's see. There's another poetry book that I think will gather several different pieces. One of them I shared as an along-the-way-draft in a gathering of Dusie chapbooks Susana Gardner organized in memorial for Marthe Reed at the New Orleans Poetry Festival in 2019. It has some instruction poems, or maybe self-instruction poems, that play with hinging, sentences that end with a word and then start with the same word but in different sense.

There's also a long poem: twenty-four ten-line sections. That poem started as a self-assigned apprenticeship in really working with line breaks—which I felt like I wanted and needed—and is also a meditation on long-term relationships, repetition, and what it means to stay in your life. [A section has since been published online in *Court Green* as well as a few print journals like *The Canary*, *Grain*, and *CV2*].

Do you know Hoa Nguyen? She does these wonderful correspondence workshops, and I did one with her around Harryette Mullen's poetry and ended up starting some pieces that are fairy-tale-inspired. They take found language out of daily notebooks and also use some anagram work starting from a keyword. The fairy-tale elements were on my mind because I was teaching a fairy tale and folklore class when I started them. These pieces are all different, but I'm hoping they will come together somehow.

FS: That's really exciting. What's the creative nonfiction?

BT: So, I'm not entirely sure what shape it will take yet, but my first tenure-track job was at this tiny college in Vermont, and soon after I arrived there, I realized that the college was in deep trouble. I ended up having three really intense and painful and beautiful years that were the last years of that college. The college ended up merging with Emerson in Boston, and some of my colleagues went there. Many of the students, too. If I hadn't have gotten this job in Canada, I would have gone there as well.

Even while I was in it, I was struck by multiple competing narratives at work: retired faculty who saw things one way, faculty who had been there for thirty years and were still there, students, staff, alumni who were deeply invested, people who lived in the town who were deeply invested. All these different perspectives and stories. I've been writing about those multiple narratives and about what's lost when these small experimental places can no longer survive.

FS: Oh wow. I'm so sorry to hear. Was this Marlboro?

BT: Yeah. Yeah ... it was intense. It really was. And, you know, I had a closeness with some of the students there and with my colleagues that I may never experience again. When the pandemic hit that meant we didn't get

to have our last graduation together, we didn't get to have all these final things.

FS: Oh, wow. I cry very easily, so ...

BT: It's alright! Yeah. And then all spring I was in touch with my students who kept saying, "I shouldn't be feeling so bad about a college. People are dying and protesting racial injustice." And I kept saying, "I know, but there's not a zero-sum game of sad. We can feel all those things."

FS: Well, I'm really sorry to hear that.

BT: Thank you. You know, I think it will be a while before any of that writing goes anywhere because it's complicated stuff that I'm really going to need to sit with.

FS: Yeah, that's a lot. I went to Naropa for my graduate work, and so I know how special those small, experimental places are. Definitely kindred.

BT: Yeah! The Wednesday before everything shut down, I went to the dining hall where we'd all eat lunch together, faculty and students. I'd just had my hair cut, and I literally had students yelling at me about my haircut from across the entire dining hall. And they weren't even in my classes, just yelling, "Oooh! Bronwen got a haircut!" And it's like, *Oh, this place is something.*

FS: That's really sweet.

BT: The long poem I mentioned gets into some of this. When I first started that job, I thought, "oh wow, I moved from San Francisco to this really tiny place and maybe this is where I'm going to live forever. How do I feel about that?" But then very quickly it changed to "oh wow, I'm definitely not going to be able to stay here and how do I hold that?" That poem is also all about snow. All different kinds of snow.

FS: That's exciting. I want to read about all kinds of snow. So, moving from that loss, you are now at the University of British Columbia. What is it like to start teaching somewhere new, and, now knowing the experience you were leaving, in the middle of a pandemic, the crisis of wildfires and air quality due to smoke brought on by climate change, in the midst of protests against racial inequity and violence, all of these things happening right now this year ... oh, here he comes. It's okay, you can come say hi.

[The FS child enters to say goodnight before bedtime.]

BT: Hey, friend.

[hellos and chatter]

BT: You know what happened earlier? There was a bird on my balcony. A big crow on the railing, and I got nervous that he was going to come into my house because the door was open, and so I ran over and closed the door and said, "Bird, don't come in my house."

[Laughter]

FS: And did the crow listen?

BT: Yeah, he flew away. And the door was closed at the point as well, but I had this image of what I would do if the crow came in my house.

FS: [asks child] What would you do if a crow came in?

[FS child shrugs]

BT: It was big!

FS child: How big?

BT: Like, pretty big!

[Laughter]

FS: [asks child] Can I have a hug and a kiss? What book are you going to read tonight?

FS child: All of them.

FS: [to child] Okay, well, you better go get started. [child leaves] Thanks for sharing the story of the crow. We have lots of animal friends around here that come up to the door to say hi.

BT: Cool! We did in Vermont too. We'd see foxes in the yard, and we saw a porcupine nursing its baby one time.

FS: Really?!

BT: Yeah! The baby was almost as big as the mother. It was the day we moved in—we arrived from California and were like, "whoa! Porcupine nursing its baby in our yard—where are we?!"

FS: Wow. Well, that was one beginning. I'll go ahead and ask this question again. So, you recently started teaching at the University of British Columbia. What's it like starting to teach somewhere new amidst everything?

BT: I was born in Vancouver, and my mother is Canadian, but I only lived here until I was about two and a half or three. My dad's U.S., and we moved to Oregon, which was their compromise because it was Pacific Northwest, which suited my mom, but it was in the U.S., which suited my dad. And I've grown up, well, secretly Canadian almost, but culturally I don't know how Canadian I am. I mean, I was raised by my mother, so I drink tea with milk after dinner. Ha. My mom never became a U.S. citizen and

always had a critique of the U.S., so perhaps from this, well, I'm still kind of Canadian.

Especially now, I feel very deeply the randomness and chance of national citizenship. At least in part, I got this job because Canadian universities prioritize Canadian citizens. And I have that citizenship through my mother, and, well, there are so many things that could have been otherwise. Always. It felt strange, you know, when everyone jokes about escaping to Canada, to be actually crossing the border.

The crossing itself was intense because it's a sealed border now, and almost no one was there. I only had an expired passport and my Canadian birth certificate, which made me nervous. I told you about the struggle with getting my kids' passports, right? We got them, but then with my husband, the border guards were like, "what's *your* status? Are we going to let you through?"

Arriving in Canada, I've felt spared certain things, some of the issues in the U.S. People are mostly wearing the masks in the supermarket, and it's not a big political act, just what you do to take care of one another. And the children are able to go to school here, while so many of my friends all over the place have a toddler or a first grader in the room with them while they're trying to teach online. So hard! But then also, before too many days had passed, these big fires started, and the smoke is here. Smoke doesn't respect borders. And it's funny, some of the Canadian reporting has this, "Even though they're not our fires!" tone. But, you know, smoke doesn't care; smoke doesn't hit the border and stop. You can't seal the border against smoke.

I've been thinking about belonging. A lot of my time right now is just in my apartment trying to unpack or, more delightfully, reading Ross Gay and reading Alice Oswald and writing introductions for my students, which is lovely but also ungrounded. I've been trying to think a bit about belonging—what do we belong to whether we like it or not? What can we claim? And what goes along with that? What do I notice here that's different? There's that freshness of a new perception. There are also ways that it feels not that distant, like an extension of Oregon, a return home. I'm closer to my family here than I was in Vermont, but I can't see them because they're across the border.

FS: Right. Wow. That's a strange proximity.

BT: Yeah, it's a paradox: I'm so much closer but so much farther away. But I feel really, really lucky to be here, and, as stressful as the work can be at time, lucky for my work to be reading and thinking about poems. Spending time with students who care about that as well feels like an incredible gift. Absolutely.

FS: That's wonderful. And what are you most excited about teaching?

BT: I love designing assignments that walk students through processes I've had to figure out myself without formal instructions. So, I'll often try to reverse-engineer how I do something. I've also been designing a sequence of habit experiments and reflections based on a book by Helen Sword called *Air & Light & Time & Space*.

FS: Oh, it's a beautiful book.

BT: Yeah. The subtitle is *How Successful Academics Write*, and I first read it as my scholar self. It draws on interviews with scholars in different fields about how they do their writing. I realized that these concepts would be useful and meaningful to creative writers as well. Sword talks about writing in terms of four pillars that form a house. She offers a goal of strengthening each pillar, but also acknowledges that even if you've got some strong ones and some weaker ones, you can still lump along quite well.

Her four pillars are behavioral habits, artisanal habits, social habits, and emotional habits. I've designed a sequence for students where each week they reflect on their current habits, then pick something new to try. The following week, they report back on how their experiment went. And they're just so lovely about it, so game to try new things and so supportive of one another. If we're only talking about the isolated piece of writing in a workshop setting, then we're leaving out all this other work involved being a writer and being able to keep writing through all the things that would make us stop. I love that this framework lets me pull more of that into our shared conversation. I feel like it's building community among the students as well.

FS: That's lovely that it's also fostering those relationships, too, not just the relationship that one has to one's work habits.

BT: Mmm hmm. There's a lovely feedback loop of "Oh, you struggle with that, too," or "Oh, you tried that thing? Maybe I'll try it," and it helps push back against that tendency to compare your beginnings and middles with other people's ends.

FS: For sure. I was just thinking again about the assignments that you give yourself, like the sonnet a day

or...

BT: I totally do! I totally give myself assignments. I've been reading Alice Oswald and some interviews with her, and she's so much more along the lines of "Oh, I just go out, and soak up the colors and the smells and I try not to even think about words and language, and later it just comes out." I'm paraphrasing here, of course. And oh, I wish I were like that but I'm not. I have to give myself jobs.

FS: That's really disciplined, though. How do you go about assigning those?

BT: Well, I can be scattered, but when I commit to something, I have super-good willpower. The trick is to make clear what I'm committing to, and if I have that clarity, I'll mostly do it. Sometimes I'll use a word-count. When I did a residency at Vermont Studio Center a little more than a year ago, my thinking was, "okay, I'm going to leave my children for multiple weeks, which is a big deal. I know I need to feel like I've accomplished something remotely worth having done that." I knew that if I wasn't careful, I would have a feeling at the end that I didn't accomplish what I'd meant to. So I set myself really clear expectations: 700 words of freewriting in prose first thing on weekdays, then work for a set amount of time on that long poem that I ended up calling "How to Stay."

Part of this was the self-assigned apprenticeship I mentioned earlier, wanting to push myself to do more with line breaks. I read James Longenbach's *The Art of the Poetic Line* along with poets like C.D. Wright and Mary Ruefle who do really interesting things on the level of the line. I've designed an assignment that grew out of that process: a poetic apprenticeship where students pick a specific formal element and particular poet and complete a series of steps.

FS: I love that idea.

BT: Thanks! I love to give people tools that they can keep using when they're not in school anymore. Structures that are freeing, that are sustainable.

FS: Tools that you can take with you.

BT: Yeah, exactly. I think my kids might be back, but they're trying not to disturb me, which is very sweet.

FS: That is very sweet. Having that space respected is a big deal. [laughter]

BT: Mm hmm. We have a system that they've been really good about, which is that, if the door is open, they can come in; if the door is closed, they knock; and—do you see my sign?

FS: Oh! That's so sweet!

[laughter]

BT: Yeah! They made the sign! If the sign is up, then don't even knock because it means that I'm in a meeting or recording a video.

FS: I love that they had agency, by making the sign.

BT: Yeah, my children are great. One can't quite write yet but really wants to, so I said, "maybe you could copy some of the titles of your books?" Let me show you one that she did because I love it. She wrote "Frog and Toad," but it's Tobether. She didn't see the g quite right. Isn't that great?

FS: So great!

BT: Yeah! I love the tobether.

FS: I love tobether, too! Somehow it sounds more accurate.

BT: Right? Yeah.

FS: That's such a good idea.

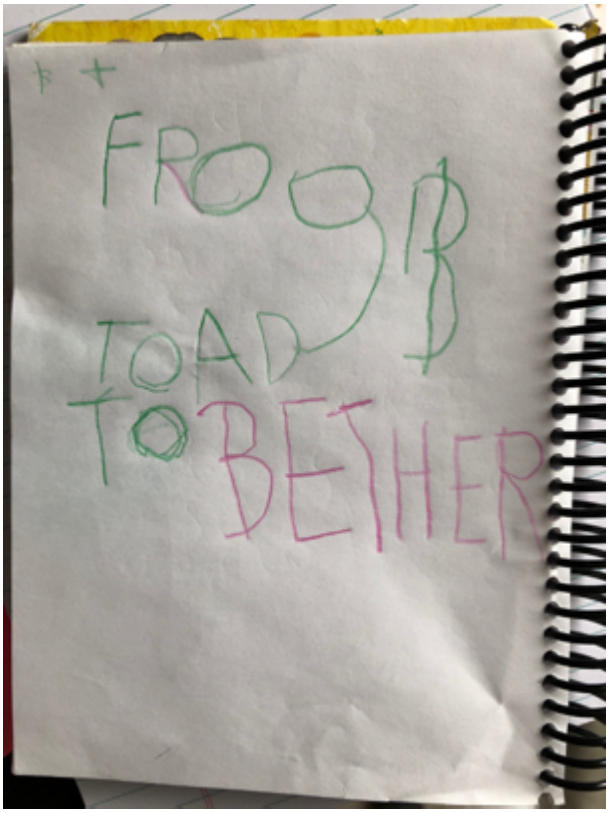
BT: She's also very performative with her writing sometimes. There was a moment when we were in quarantine upon arrival in Canada when she got really upset, and then she asked, "How do you spell 'sad'?" It was like, "oh, honey." And then she wrote it on a cardboard box.

FS: Oh, I know that feeling.

BT: Totally.

FS: So, we talked a little bit about your recent creative work, but I'd love to hear about your scholarly work because you have so much that you've written about the work of Bernadette Mayer, Lyn Hejinian, Lorine Niedecker...

BT: There's an exciting new Bernadette Mayer thing, actually, although more on the creative side. In December 2018, Becca Klaver organized a collaboration where poets wrote a real-time homage to Mayer's *Midwinter Day* together using Google docs. When we were finished, we realized we'd written a book! It's called *Midwinter Constellation*, and it'll be published by Black Lawrence Press in December 2021.



FS: Great! That's wonderful!

BT: Recently I've been spending mornings revising an essay about Harryette Mullen [This article has since been published in *Contemporary Literature* Vol. 61.3, Fall 2020]. It's about her *S*PeRM**K*T* poems and looks at feeling in those poems as well as critique. The essay asks what it means to be critical toward something and also see that you have to make your life out of that thing. I look at how Mullen deals with these ambivalent and complicated feelings and argue that affect can be conveyed through tone even when there isn't a clear unified lyric speaker.

FS: Wow, that's great. How long have you been working on that?

BT: A while as well! Partly because of a long writing and revision process, but then also partly because of the scholarly publication pipeline. The timelines for scholarly publishing are pretty troubling. So many people are applying for jobs and trying to send articles out, and not enough people are in stable enough positions to do the uncompensated peer review necessary for the process to move forward. I sent this article to multiple journals that kept it for a long time but had so much of a backlog that when I would check in after a year, they'd say, "oh, we haven't assigned reviewers yet but we're hoping to soon."

FS: But it's finally happening. Aw, that's exciting! Is there anything else that you're working on?

BT: I have another article about Lorine Niedecker and haiku, which I alluded to a bit earlier when we were talking about my book. I've sent that one out a bit, but I haven't placed it yet and might need to revise it. But you can only work on so many things at a time, and, as my former colleague William tells students, "to do excellent work we must make choices."

I'm also interested in perhaps writing reviews or using some of those analytic and critical muscles in a way that's less aimed at that incredibly slow writing-for-peer-review process. It's funny, also, thinking about different audiences. These days, I'm writing thousands of words about writers and poems and essays as I make my Canvas modules, and in some ways that's literary criticism, too, right? It's like, "look at this formal element, this is what it means, and this is what I want you to pay attention to," and yet because it's teaching and not scholarship, I can pound it out and my sense of my audience is crystal clear. The audience I have in mind is an excited poet who wants to think more about the formal element, instead of the mean academic who is going to judge me if I haven't completely covered my bases in every possible way. I had that compassionate yet curious observation this morning.

FS: Yeah, that is fascinating how writing to those very different audiences of open acceptance and judgement really can affect that time that it takes to do the thing.

BT: Good things can come out of the squeeze, too, you know, I've

been looking over the Mullen article and there are parts where I'm like, "this is *tight*!" And there's a joy to the tightness, too. But there's also something really lovely in feeling the fluency of writing for students right now.

FS: That's great. And, I was also going to ask, I'm glad that you brought up Niedecker and haiku in your scholarly work. Other than borrowing from those structures, how does your research and scholarly work affect your own writing and your own writing process?

BT: I think Niedecker might be the most obvious formal example. I would also say writing about Lyn Hejinian and Bernadette Mayer got me to question some of my own internalized anxiety about the feminine and the daily and the maternal. Writing about these poets and how they approached those materials, seeing how valuable I found their poems was a really useful antidote to moments when I felt like, "Oh no, like, writing about children is inevitably sentimental" or, you know, "who could possibly care about this?" Spending time with their work and writing critically about it pushed me to question my own anxieties and preoccupations and gave me some permissions.

FS: Mm. That makes sense. Wow. I really only have one more official question, but is there anything else that you're really excited about that you'd like to talk about or share that I haven't asked about?

BT: I don't think so. I mean, I didn't prepare a lot. I just wanted to be really open to what you were bringing and see what showed up, which is exciting and a little nerve-wracking.

FS: I was nervous on my end, too!

[laughter]

BT: There's something about being willing to be surprised by what comes out when somebody asks something. It's a gift to have someone give their time and attention to your work and give you that possibility to surprise yourself.

FS: It's also a gift to get to speak with you and get to hear everything that you're working on and what you are thinking about. It's very sweet. This is a big joy of my month, so. Thank you.

BT: Thank you.

FS: So, the last question I really have is who or what are you reading right now that you're excited about and want to share with other people.

BT: Sure! Most of what I'm reading right now is for the classes that I'm teaching. In the poetry class, we just finished Ross Gay's *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, which is a wonderful starting point for students because it lets them write about joy, you know? Then this week, they're going to be reading Alice Oswald's *Falling Awake*. Have you read her at all? She has this poem called "Fox" that I'm sort of obsessed with.

FS: I'll look it up!

BT: Yeah! It's short, but it's gorgeous and about being a parent as well. I've been pairing poetry collections with essays like a piece by Ellen Bryant Voigt on image. Reading Oswald, I'm asking the students to really look at image and the different things a poetic image might do.

In my creative nonfiction class this week, we're reading an essay by Amy McDaniel about being David Foster Wallace's student and trying to hold the complications of having her own experiences with him and then learning other things about him later, and a piece by Darcie Dennigan about Brigit Pegeen Kelly from the *Kenyon Review*, and a piece by Cathy Park Hong from *Minor Feelings* about Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. That little grouping is all about complicated attachments—what it means to sit with the ambivalence of having really beautiful memories of someone but then knowing that they weren't that way to everyone or, with Dennigan, the temptation to idealize Kelly and then trying to ask "What is it in myself that I'm looking for in her or projecting onto her?", and with Hong there's looking at Cha and especially ways her rape and murder have not been discussed in scholarship and asking why that is but then also asking "Why do I want to bring them up?" and "What does it mean to have found an example in this person?"

Later in the term, for the poetry class we're reading Hoa Nguyen's *Violet Energy Ingots*, Barbara Jane Reyes *Letters to a Young Brown Girl*, Jos Charles' *feeld*, and Brenda Shaughnessy's *The Octopus Museum*. And then in the creative nonfiction class we're also reading Anne Boyer's *The Undying* and Carmen Maria Machado's *In the Dream House*. I'm offering some Alexander Chee and some Sloane Crosley as well to get some things that aren't one hundred percent pain, but I think also there's a hunger for writing that can sit with difficulty and for structures that can hold it. As well as escape from it. Oh! I'm also really excited to read Aimee Nezhukumatathil's *World of Wonders*, which is just out.

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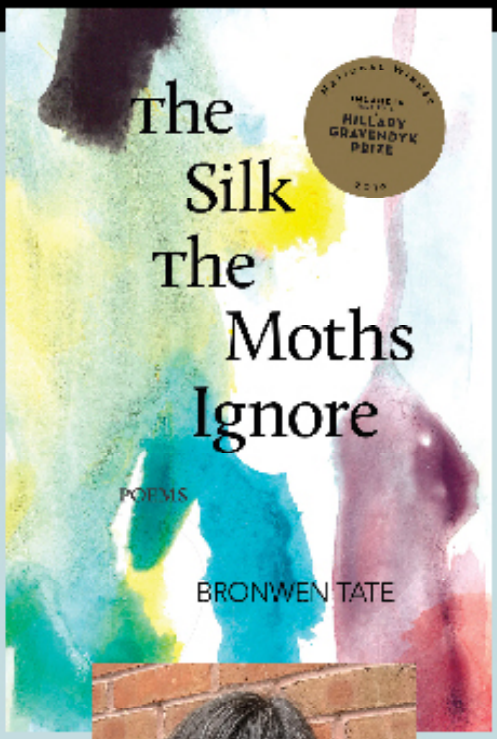
Hillary Gravendyk National Prize Winner: Bronwen Tate – THE SILK THE MOTHS IGNORE

Publication Date: September 2021



The Silk the Moths Ignore animates the liminal, sometimes gothic, spaces of miscarriage, pregnancy, and early parenthood with exquisite defamiliarizing detail. Weaving together prose versets, sonnets, and short poems with titles like "Against Choking" and "To Acknowledge Damage," the collection sings, bleeds, and casts spells to "carry hope like a weight."

Praise for THE SILK THE MOTHS IGNORE

Bronwen Tate's ***The Silk the Moths Ignore*** is such gorgeous and improbable and wrenching and alchemical music—the kind of languaging by which our knowing, our very lives, are re-made. These poems somehow illuminate the deepest interior while leaving dirt under your fingernails. They smell and feel and taste of the body, and the earth, of yearning and sorrow and change and care.

— Ross Gay

Stendhal famously described love as "crystallization," likening it to the process by which a bare branch left in a disused salt mine for months can be pulled out "covered in radiant crystals." Seen through the seemingly compound eye of Bronwen Tate's poetic gaze, the ordinary props of this world are similarly transformed into something prismatic, something rare.

— Monica Youn

In her magnificent debut collection, Bronwen Tate's rich textured language attends to the facets of her speaker's gleaming universe. Carefully collected images skitter across the page to illuminate the ache and intensity of mothering when the speaker's life revises this desire at every turn. In a voice of distilled triumphs and heartbreak she reminds the reader that rage and tenderness are of the same stardust, "Lace is made of holes."

—Rajiv Mohabir

Here is a poet who ignores nothing, whose description brings us into the immersive space of experiences that are not ours, but are nonetheless felt fully. The lived and the linguistic find a common articulation in this work, given that the "tongue is word and taste"; this is an exhilarating and perceptive book which values, as does Hillary Gravendyk's own indelible work, the homes we make within both nature and language.

— Jessica Fisher, 2019 Hillary Gravendyk Prize judge

Bronwen Tate's poems and essays have appeared in *Bennington Review*, *CV2*, *The Rumpus*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Journal of Modern Literature*, and *Contemporary Literature*. She teaches poetry and creative non-fiction in the School of Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

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BIOS

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Jon Davis is the author of five chapbooks and seven full-length poetry collections — *Dangerous Amusements*, *Scrimmage of Appetite*, *Preliminary Report*, *Heteronymy: An Anthology, Improbable Creatures*, *An Amiable Reception for the Acrobat*, and most recently, *Above the Bejeweled City* (Grid Books, 2021). Finishing Line will publish a chapbook, *State of the Union*, in 2022. Davis also co-translated Iraqi poet Naseer Hassan's *Dayplaces* (Tebot Bach, 2017). He has received a Lannan Literary Award, the Lavan Prize, the Off the Grid Poetry Prize, and two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships. He taught for 23 years at the Institute of American Indian Arts before founding, in 2013, the IAIA low residency MFA in Creative Writing, which he directed until his retirement in 2018.

Jalen Eutsey is a poet, book reviewer, and sportswriter from Miami, Florida. He earned a BA in English from the University of Miami and an MFA in Poetry from the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University. His work has been published in *Into the Void*, *Northern Virginia Review*, *Florida Review Online*, *Cellpoems*, and others. He lives in Baltimore.

Hailey Higdon's work explores belonging and the boundaries of the self within the moving targets of community. She is the author of the poetry collection *Hard Some* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2019), as well as several small press chapbooks. Her writing appears most recently in *TYPO*, *The Spectacle*, *Blazing Stadium*, *Ruminate*, and *Burnside Review*. Originally from Nashville, she currently lives in Seattle with her Instagram-famous brindle pug, Frankie. Find Hailey online at haileyhigdon.com (or Frankie @poetandthepug).

Emily Rankin was born in Riverside, California and attended university in Abilene, TX where she received a BFA in 2011. Her body of work ranges from Graphic Design and Scenic Painting to collaborative performances with Verstehen, an improvisational and interactive series which incorporates live painting, sound, and electronics. She is currently based in New Mexico. eerankinart.com

Matthew Rotando has published illustrated poems in *Drunken Boat* and *Everyday Genius*. He has written two poetry books, *The Comeback's Exoskeleton* (2008) and *Hail* (forthcoming), both published by Upset Press. He has also published poems in *The Tishman Review*, *Shampoo*, and elsewhere. He has a B.A. from Duke University, an M.F.A. from CUNY Brooklyn College, and a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona. He maintains a blog at tando.blogspot.com.

Tufik Y. Shayeb's poetry has appeared in numerous publications, including *Sheepshead Review*, *The Menteur*, *Lost Lake Folk Opera*, *Madcap Review*, *Heyday Magazine*, *Blinders Journal*, *Muzzle Magazine*, *Restless Anthology*, *The November 3rd Club*, *Lifelines* and others. To date, Shayeb has published three chapbooks and one full-length collection titled, *I'll Love You to Smithereens*. Currently, Shayeb practices law full-time in Phoenix, Arizona.

Bronwen Tate is an Assistant Professor of Teaching in the School of Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC. A citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, Bronwen earned an MFA in Literary Arts from Brown University and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Stanford University. She is the author of several poetry chapbooks, and her poems and essays have appeared in publications including *Bennington Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *CV2*, *The Rumpus*, *Journal of Modern Literature*, and the *MLA volume Options for Teaching Modernist Women's Writing in English*. Her work has been supported by Stanford's DARE (Diversifying Academia Recruiting Excellence) Dissertation Fellowship, as well as by fellowships from the Stanford Humanities Center and Vermont Studio Center. Read more of her work or get in touch at www.bronwentate.com.

Iheoma Uzomba is currently a student of English and Literary Studies at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Aside losing herself to literary pieces and travelling from world to world in the books she reads, she takes writing to be her core obligation. Her works feature in *The Muse* (a creative and critical print journal) and subsequently, elsewhere.

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